November 1, 2026

Current thoughts on illegal dumping:

The RVAMAC last year had a number of conversations regarding trash, derelict properties and illegal dumping which led to a resolution passed in January of this year. Quite encouragingly, many of the observations and complaints in this resolution are on the way to being resolved.

Redwood Waste Solutions is proposing to once a month provide a large container at the local transfer station to accept metal items, including most types of household appliances. This fixes one of the main complaints in the resolution regarding large household appliances not being accepted at the local transfer station and showing up dumped in the creek beds and off the roadside.

Another complaint in the resolution was the expense of responsibly dealing with household garbage. Some individuals and families may simply not be able to afford the dump fees. There is a current proposal from Redwood Waste Solutions to provide, on a once a month weekend schedule, a large dumpster at a location other than the local transfer station for household garbage if there is demonstrated local interest in monitoring the use. We may be able to do this.

We are making progress but there is still a lot of illegal dumping, particularly in the creeks. The County Water District sponsored a cleanup in Mill Creek at Crawford Road last week and it was instructive to see that large equipment, like a backhoe and a dump truck, would be required to make much of a dent in the amount of garbage here. We cleaned up this exact same place a year ago.

One of the proposals over the last year to attempt to control the illegal dumping in the creeks was for the County Water District to purchase and place cameras in the locations historically the worst offenders. This has been done, and on occasion a vehicle dumping garbage has been caught on camera.

Local law enforcement was notified and so far there has not been any effective follow up action. Some shaming on Facebook, that's all.

We are not the only place with problems like this, and there is a concerted and consistent effort in the state to develop more effective deterrents to illegal dumping. We have done a few steps already by encouraging the transfer station to take large appliances, metal, and making a provision for no cost disposal of household garbage.

The next step is EFFECTIVE ENFORCEMENT OF ORDINANCES. The desirable template for an enforceable ordinance is progressively higher fines, criminal prosecution, vehicle impoundment and jail time. Basically first offense is $2,500 dollars, then up to $10,000 for repeat offenders, you get your truck impounded and do thirty days in jail. Ordinances which allow for these levels of penalties, if enforced, have been shown to be effective in making illegal dumping a lot less desirable.

Without this level of ordinances, penalties and consequences municipalities, districts, counties just keep having to clean up the same places, trashed by the same people, over and over.

We could begin to limit the amount of illegal dumping here with the interest and participation of the County of Mendocino and the Round Valley Tribes.