

Mendocino Women's Political Coalition 2026 questionnaire

1. Elevator Pitch . . . Why we are the best candidates

Two of us began researching the financial distress of Willits two years ago. We are running together, unopposed, for the two open seats on the Willits City Council, a golden opportunity for plain talk about finances, budgets and sustainable economics. It is time to move away from reliance on continued timber extraction, marijuana, Measure K funding and pricey outside consultants that cost more than the competent city staff they replaced earlier this year. With your support and ideas, we are ready to plan a healthy economy based on human and natural resources already here in our community.

2. Core Principles

I support reproductive choice

I support increased access to care for our children

I support the values of Comparable Worth. That's why I am campaigning. We need women on what is now an all male Council that was balanced 2 years ago.

I support ending discrimination. This has been my life's work.

Yes, It is time to eliminate sexual harassment

3. The pressing issues of our community and how we plan to address them.

Part 1: Issues: Finances, budgets, economic development, jobs, affordable housing, are always a concern. Measure K funds from the state, that account for 1 to 2 million dollars a year, will sunset soon. This will have to be phased out. We can also phase out the funds going to outside consultants. We can raise airport fees and enact a modest raise in water bills that was scheduled for last year.

Part 2: Develop a healthy economy based on sustainable natural and human resources. We have abundant resources including thousands of acres of Redwood Forest with over 100 miles of trails. Cities like Moab base their economics on such wealth. Human resources include a large population of artists and musicians, an excellent live theatre, an award winning hospital, and the School of Adaptive Agriculture. We could be growing more food in this valley that was the last place in California to lose food self-sufficiency.

4, Personal Information

Occupation. I am a retired high school English teacher, with 30 years experience. Well, I haven't fully retired, I continue to substitute 1 or 2 days a week, learning new ways to bring people together in a "reciprocal teaching" environment. Community is important to me.

My education took me through five colleges and universities, studying everything from Literature and Psychology at UC Santa Cruz through Anthropology and Environmental Science at San Jose State to Economic History and Native American Studies at Sonoma State. My studies were always supplemented by experience: 10 years in the 70's with Common Ground co-managing an organic garden supply store in Palo Alto, learning about recycling and passive solar design, teaching food gardening, and co-writing a book with John Jeavons.

Family. We moved to a 20 acre site outside Willits in 1982 with our two young daughters, hosting small farmers and apprentices from around the world at Jeavon's Bio-intensive research farm. By 1989, the kids were now teenagers. I moved with them into town. I started substitute teaching. Went back to school for a credential and landed full time work, as a Court/Community School teacher, with MCOE in 1997.

Community. Living in town was the impetus to participate in local politics, speaking up about Remco, safe drinking water, the Farmers Market and now budgets. I talk to City Staff, attend finance committee meetings, and raise awareness about the Eel River clean-up that the NCRA/GRTA should be held accountable for.

My ten years of work with the Sierra Club, and the many organizations working to protect our Redwood forests and watersheds, restore salmon runs steward this land and use Good Fire as medicine to reduce so-called catastrophic wild fires.

Substitute teaching at Blosser Lane keeps me young. And I often get to do lessons on our local ecology.

For fun I play with the Willits Community Theatre.

I am most proud of the urban food forest surrounding my home of 30 years. Some of the fruit trees are ones I grew myself from seed. One apple tree is over 150 years old. With 15 different fruit trees and vines my neighbors and I eat from the garden every day. Currently figs, grapes and plums are ripe. Soon we will have pears and limes.

SUBMISSION

I confirm that the responses are my own and I authorize MWPC to publish them.

Robin Leler September 13, 2026

