

Humboldt County Use Permit Renewal & Modification

PLN-2019-15400

Project Description

Northern Nights Music Group proposes a five-year renewal (2023-2027) and modification of Humboldt County Use Permit PLN-2019-15400, which authorizes the temporary use of County Line Ranch (APN 033-271-033) for two events annually:

- Camping and parking during a three-day, 8,410-person event on the third weekend of July, known as Northern Nights Music Festival.
- Entertainment, camping and parking provisions for an additional one-day, 3,000-person event on a weekend in either July or September.

The following modifications are proposed:

- With respect to both events, incorporate designated entertainment areas that allow for amplified music and concessions, as well as provisions for use of portions of neighboring Humboldt parcels (APNs 033-271-005, -009, -015) for off-site parking.
- With respect to the Northern Nights event, the modification request includes an increase in attendance capacity from 8,410 to 10,000 and the option to host the event on any one weekend in July, annually.
- With respect to the additional one-day event, the modification request includes an extension to two-days, an increase in attendance capacity from 3,000 to 5,000 and the option to host the event on any one weekend in either June, July or August, annually.

Both events are proposed in conjunction with adjacent Mendocino County parcels (APNs 053-020-10, -11, -12, -13, -14, -16). The Northern Nights event is currently permitted under Mendocino County (UR2021-0006) and a separate authorization has been requested for use of Mendocino during the additional event. The project proponent and applicant is Northern Nights Music Group, LLC. The owner of record for Cook's Valley Campground is Conrad & Trudy Bowman and owner of record for County Line Ranch is Outraged Orangutan, LLC.

Location and Environmental Setting

The Project Site known as County Line Ranch is approximately 160 acres in size and is located adjacent to and east of Highway 101 approximately 8 miles south of Garberville. The South Fork Eel River runs through the entire site, which extends east of the river. The project extends onto over 100 acres into Mendocino County. The total use area is shown in Exhibit A.

Attendance

Proposed camping, attendance and vehicle counts for each event are shown in Table 1.

| EVENT | COUNTY | SITE | CAMPING | ATTENDANCE | VEHICLES |
|----------------------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Northern Nights (4-Day) | Mendocino | CVC | 5000 | 5500 | 1000 |
| | | CLR | 1000 | 1000 | 1500 |
| | Humboldt | CLR | 3000 | 3500 | 1500 |
| | | OFF-SITE | 0 | 0 | 500 |
| | Total | | | 9,000 | 10,000 |
| TBD (2-Day) | Mendocino | CVC | 2000 | 2500 | 500 |
| | | CLR | 0 | 0 | 1500 |
| | Humboldt | CLR | 2000 | 2500 | 500 |
| | | OFF-SITE | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | | | 4,000 | 5,000 |

Table 1. Venue camping, attendance, and vehicle allocations by event

A population of approximately 5% of the total attendance capacity will be on-site two weeks before and two weeks after the event as build and strike crews. Event vendors and staff will start arriving Wednesday before the event.

It is estimated that a population of approximately 25% of the total event capacity will be on-site by the night before the event commences and a population of another 50% of total event capacity will have arrived by the first night of the event. The remaining 25% of the total event capacity will arrive on the next day, resulting in a peak capacity on the second day of the event. For the three-day event, approximately 25% of the population will leave on the third day of the event.

At no-time will the number of individuals on-site exceed the capacity for which infrastructure can reasonably and safely support. Total attendance of the festival can be verified through wristband counts, box office cross-verification, and aerial photography.

Schedule and Hours of Operation

Two months prior to event - water supply and distribution system preparation *One*

month prior to event – general infrastructure and safety preparation *Wednesday*

prior to event – vendors arrive for setup mid-day

Thursday prior to event - gates open in AM for up to 25% of total event capacity, amplified music from 6 PM to 10 PM

Friday of the event – gates open 8 AM, amplified music from 10 AM to 2 AM

Saturday of the event – gates open 8 AM, amplified music from 10 AM to 2 AM

Sunday of the event – gates open 8 AM, amplified music from 10 AM to 12 AM

Monday following the event – attendees depart, strike and cleanup begins *Two*

weeks after the event – strike and cleanup complete

One month after the event – post event community meeting

Camping and Parking

Campers will be required to maintain a 30 ft. setback from the water's edge and vehicles will be required to maintain a 100 ft. setback. Camping and parking locations are identified in Exhibit B.

Traffic Flow and Parking

The festival traffic flow, parking, and encroachment plans can be found in Exhibit C. The plan includes measures for required signage, CMS Boards, cones, light towers, in-and-out regulations, and cancellation procedures. The plan is reviewed annually by CHP & Caltrans in coordination with a licensed traffic control provider. The annual schedule will generally adhere to the following:

Two days prior to the event

The only traffic allowed on-site two days prior to the event will be vendors and staff, resulting in approximately 10% of the total vehicle capacity on-site. Staff vehicles will begin to be parked in off-site parking lots.

One day prior to the event

The only traffic allowed on-site the day before the event includes early entry ticket buyers and staff resulting in approximately 25% of the total vehicle capacity on-site. Additional staff vehicles will be moved to off site parking lots.

During the event

Most of the traffic to the event will be paying ticket holders. The gates will open at 8:00 AM on Friday. If there is a need to open the gates early for safety concerns, the Applicants will have staff in place to handle this, following any commands of on-site Garberville Highway Patrol. Northbound traffic will use the right turn lane at the intersection of Highway 101 and State Route 271. Southbound traffic will use the left turn lane at the intersection of Highway 101 and State Route 271. The Applicants utilize a thorough traffic plan implemented by an experienced traffic crew that has proven very successful during past events at the same location. All vehicles will be directed to traffic lanes away from Highway 101 for processing.

There will be two main access points – one into Humboldt for staff, volunteers and performers, and one into Mendocino for ticket holders. Upon arrival to Mendocino, the entry will be divided into four to six lanes for wristband retrieval and impact checks.

Day after the event

The campground will close no later than noon on the day following the event and it is estimated that 5% of the total vehicle capacity will remain on-site for clean up over the following two weeks.

Re-entry

During the event, patrons will be allowed to leave the event only as necessary and only by vehicle. Patrons will be prohibited from leaving the premises as pedestrians, and this will be enforced by security staff and/or CHP. Re-entry shall be permitted only with appropriate credentials.

Shuttle Services

A licensed transportation company shall manage shuttles to and from off-site parking as well as the Garberville area, to provide safe means of transportation for the local community as well as to encourage out-of-town attendees to utilize local hospitality options. Designated transportation hubs for drop-off and pick-ups will be shown on public event maps and messaged to all attendees prior to and during the event.

Public Safety

Contact with local law enforcement, fire agencies, and emergency response personnel will be made more than two (2) months prior to the event. Any warranted walkthroughs will be made during the week of the event. A briefing sheet will be supplied during the walkthrough with contact and schedule information for all on-site emergency personnel.

The detailed emergency plan will be reviewed, updated and implemented annually in coordination with Humboldt and Mendocino County Sherriff's Offices, CalFire, CHP, CalTrans, Piercy, Garberville, Leggett and Redway Fire Departments, Jerold Phelps Community Hospital and City Ambulance.

Communications will be conducted through the use of radios, cell phones, and a land line in the event that cell phone reception is poor.

Emergency Medical Plan

An experienced medical service team will be contracted as the on-site medical care provider for the duration of the event. The ALS-staffed medical team will be available around the clock at an established medical tent accessible to anyone on-site. The team will consist of licensed E.M.T.'s, paramedics, M.D.'s, and nurses. Highly visible signage will identify the medical tent.

All medical and security staff will communicate via radio with the command center. The Applicants will provide the identity and on-site contact information for medical team members at least 14 days prior to the event. Communication and transportation equivalent to Cal Fire dispatch will be on-site and available for any life-threatening emergencies. A helicopter landing area is available for emergency evacuation. Jerold Phelps Community Hospital in Garberville and City Ambulance will be notified of the event dates.

An evacuation plan satisfying emergency service agencies will be available prior to the event and the contracted medical team documentation will be submitted to the Planning Commission at least one month before the event.

Emergency Fire Plan

A Cal Fire Safety Regulations Package will be submitted to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire). On-site fire safety support at the event will be supervised by Piercy & Garberville Volunteer Fire Departments who will be available for the duration of the event around the clock with a minimum of two (2) personnel and supported with a minimum of one (1) Type 3 fire engine and one (1) water tender for standby emergency water and dust abatement, and radio communication equivalent to Cal Fire dispatch. An all-weather surfaced 20-ft fire lane existing around the perimeter of the campground will be designated for fire and emergency use. Visible signage will indicate designated locations for fire, medical, and security personnel. Fire extinguishers will be mounted accessibly around the event site.

The applicants employ a team to specifically target prohibited burning and open flames, including fireworks, in addition to posting signage and informing patrons and staff of fire danger and the strict no burn and no fireworks policies. The Applicants will advertise this information on the event website, email, social media, and local radio.

Emergency Response Plan

Prior to each event, members of the medical, security and fire teams will meet and plan responses to emergency scenarios as well as identify and correct potential safety risks. A Communications Leader will be designated. Contact information will be organized and shared to facilitate emergency communication during the event.

If there is an emergency situation during the event, the Communications Leader will coordinate response efforts involving the event producers, security, medical, and fire team leads, and on-site law enforcement. In the case of a medical evacuation, the Communications Leader will also communicate with CalFire, City Ambulance, the destination care center and as well as law enforcement and traffic crew to ensure a clear path for emergency vehicles. A helicopter landing area will be made available for emergency evacuation.

The various emergency response teams will communicate using handheld radios and cell phones. The Communications Leader will be able to contact Cal Fire dispatch, as will fire, medical and security personnel.

As necessary, event producers will communicate information to event attendees using main stage amplification and provide instructions to ensure emergency service providers can safely and quickly access necessary locations.

If a fire occurs, the Communications Leader will coordinate with the lead fire department, Cal Fire dispatch, on-site law enforcement, event security, medical, and traffic teams to ensure a clear path for emergency vehicles and to implement the Emergency Fire Plan as follows:

- 1) Notify off-site responders
- 2) Secure and clear the affected area
- 3) Shelter in place along the river bar; in the case of approaching wild land fire dismantle tents and campsites.
- 4) Responding agencies will determine extent of evacuation area.
- 5) Clear the evacuation area on foot to the predetermined evacuation zones

6) Use on-site communications resources such as the stage PA, on-site FM radio broadcasting, and event staff to inform and direct the public.

Security

Professional on-site security services shall be secured for the event and will work with event management to schedule and implement festival wide security policies. The contracted team will be given distinctive colored clothing as approved by the Sheriff's Office.

Temporary fencing around the perimeter of the site will be installed to mitigate trespassing onto adjacent properties. Twenty-four hour per day security will be provided on-site for the protection and service to attendees and neighboring property owners. Every attempt will be made to limit encroachment/trespassing onto neighboring properties. The perimeter of the site shall be clearly identified and fenced and shall be posted to limit access beyond the approved event, camping, and parking area sites.

Security will be on site beginning Wednesday prior to the event until Tuesday following the event and operating 24 hours a day reaching closet to 75 staff members at peak times.

There will be (2) security positions assigned to the River Stage swimming area during the operating hours of 12 PM – 8 PM, in addition to the (3) medical staff composed of (2) lifeguards and (1) staff. During all other times at the River Stage swimming area, signs will be posted advising “NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY”.

There will be (2) security roamers throughout the festival, with emphasis on the campgrounds, specifically assigned to monitoring those attendees under 21.

Northern Nights Music Group will remain in consistent contact with the Sheriff's Office, CHP, and contracted security as the event approaches.

Entertainment

Temporary stages will be installed and oriented away from Highway 101 and developed residences in the Piercy area, keeping them shielded from the main source of light and sound.

The stages will be separated from the highway by a number of mature trees and is at least 40 feet lower in elevation than the highway, further mitigating any paths of direct light to properties across the highway. Any lighting other than performance displays (such as light towers) will be downcast and shielded from adjacent properties. Stages will be placed in entertainment areas, locations which are shown in Exhibit B.

Food Service

Permitted food vendors will be provided with hot and cold water by existing County Line Ranch water systems and located in the entertainment areas shown in Exhibit B. Solid waste will be disposed of in waste receptacles, collected and then hauled by a licensed service provider. Liquid waste will be disposed into the on-site water treatment system or stored, collected and hauled by a licensed service provider.

Food vendors operating in Humboldt County will be subject to Humboldt County Division of Public Health operating standards and criteria.

Alcohol Service

Alcohol will be served and managed by a licensed concessionaire, within designated premises located within the entertainment areas. All attendees who wish to purchase or consume alcohol will be required to show identification to demonstrate 21 years of age or older. All ABC rules and regulations will apply and be enforced.

Cannabis Service

Cannabis will be served and managed by a licensed cannabis event organizer, within designated premises located within the entertainment areas. All attendees who wish to purchase or consume cannabis will be required to show identification to demonstrate 21 years of age or older. All DCC rules and regulations will apply and be enforced.

Water Supply and Distribution

County Line Ranch sources water from a well located on the eastern side of the property. The well water is pumped and stored in one 30,000-gallon and eight 5,000-gallon storage tanks on the northwest side and then distributed across the property.

Potable water stations are positioned throughout the venue at high traffic locations. Potable water is treated in four steps: (1) at the point of service via a sediment filter, (2) a 5-micron carbon block filter, (3) a UV filter and (4) a 1-micron carbon filter, and as directed by respective county officials.

Water use is measured before, during and after the event via flow meters and reported in accordance with the regional requirements. Specifically, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (EPIMS-HUM-MEN-236970R1) is in place with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, requiring that records are maintained 8 weeks prior and 8 weeks following the event. The Agreement can be found in Exhibit C.

Water quality samples are collected and tested before, during and after the event at point of service, at the source, and in the areas along the Eel River both upstream and downstream.

Sanitary Facilities

Portable toilets (including ADA) will be placed and serviced throughout the venue by a licensed service provider, maintaining a ratio of 25-40 persons per facility. Hand wash stations are provided wherever toilets are located with a minimum of one wash station for every 10 toilets. Sewage will be disposed off-site at a licensed disposal facility by a commercial hauler.

Solid Waste

A commercial provider will prepare, service and maintain waste receptacles throughout the venue two weeks before, during and two weeks after the event. Forty-yard dumpsters will be filled and transferred to a permitted waste disposal facility by a commercial hauler. Waste stations and recycling containers will be placed in strategic locations to discourage littering. The site will be cleared of all waste within two weeks following the event.

Wastewater

The property is serviced by an on-site wastewater treatment system as well as a local service provider who collects and stores wastewater on-site before it is hauled off-site to an approved waste-water facility.

Monitoring

The proposed project incorporates mitigation measures in the project design to minimize environmental impacts. Aspects of the environmental Monitoring program will continue to include:

- Vehicles will be subjected to an “Impact Check” when arriving to look for leaking fluids, fireworks, and other prohibited items.
- Water quality (potable and river) will be monitored before, during and after the event.
- Noise levels will be monitored throughout the event.
- Dust will be controlled through the use of a water truck as necessary.
- No significant vegetation removal is required or proposed, other than for fire safety.
- No camping will be permitted within 30 ft of the river and no parking permitted within 100 ft of the river.

Event Cancellation Protocol

This is in case of a cancellation of event for any reasons such as fire, earthquake, or any other occurrence that may harm the public. In case of event cancellation, there will be several

methods used for notifying the public that the event is cancelled and not to arrive at County Line Ranch.

Notification techniques include:

- Posting on event website and social media outlets notifying public of cancellation.
- Computerized message boards on Highway 101 notifying regional travelers of cancellation
- Targeted emails to all ticketholders with notification of cancelled event.
- Local newspaper and radio advertisements.