



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

For the meeting of: 6/4/2026

File #: 26-575

To: Planning Commission
From: Planning and Building Department
Agenda Section: Consent

SUBJECT:

Cooks Valley Special Events (2023-2027)
Mateel Community Center, Inc.; Conditional Use Permit and Annual Monitoring Report
Application Number PLN-2023-18108
Cooks Valley area

Assessor's Parcel Number(s): (APN's): (Humboldt County): 033-271-007, 033-271-009, 033-271-008, 033-271-004, 033-271-005, and 033-271-015

(Mendocino County): 053-020-011, 053-020-010, 053-020-012, 053-020-013, 053-020-014, 053-020-016, 053-020-015

Review of the Annual Report for the approved Conditional Use Permit authorizing events held by the Mateel Community Center (MCC) in 2025 at the County Line Ranch (formerly Dimmick) in the Cooks Valley area. The Use Permit was approved by the Planning Commission in 2023 and requires the Mateel Community Center to submit a monitoring report to the Planning Commission for review on an annual basis. During review, the Commission is authorized to amend conditions or operational requirements if needed to better mitigate potential impacts or control public nuisance -the Commission may also adjust attendance levels under the permit based on annual performance. The permit allows two music festivals to be held annually. Both events feature live music, camping and various vendors, including cannabis-related concessions and consumption within discrete areas on the properties. One event is typically the Summer Arts and Music Festival which occurs over two days and is ordinarily held during the third weekend in June. The second event is Reggae on the River, which ordinarily occurs over three days during the first weekend in August. The Summer Arts and Music Festival was not held at the County Line Ranch in 2025 but instead occurred at the Southern Humboldt Community Park on June 21st and 22nd. The 2025 Reggae on the River event was held on August 1, 2 and 3, 2025. No other events were operated by the Mateel from the CLR site in 2025.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Planning Commission:

1. Receive the Annual Post Event Report

DISCUSSION:

Project Location: The permit authorizes events occurring on several parcels spanning the Humboldt/Mendocino county line in the Cooks Valley area, on the properties known as 83950 Road 442E and 240 Cooks Valley Road. Both are located on the east side of State Highway 101 at its intersection with State Highway 271 and Cooks Valley Road. Auxiliary parking and support facilities are found on several parcels adjacent to the event site (located at 325 US Highway 101 and 101 Cook Lane), as well as several parcels to the north located near the southern boundary of Richardson Grove State Park, on properties known as 705 US Highway 101, 750 US Highway 101, and 657 Old Highway 101. The northern auxiliary parcels are host to the One Log House and Dispensary, Richardson Grove RV park, and portions of the French's Camp property located on the west side of the South Fork of the Eel River.

Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Timberland (T) and Industrial, Resource Related (IR). Density: (T) 40 to 160 acres per unit. (IR) none-specified; Slope Stability: Low and Moderate Instability.

Present Zoning: Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) and Agriculture Exclusive (AE) and - min parcel size 40-160 acres.

State Appeal: The project NOT is not located within the Coastal Zone.

Major Issues: Fire Safety

Monitoring Required:

Annual Compliance Monitoring.

Executive Summary: Review of the Annual Report for an approved Use Permit authorizing events held by the Mateel Community Center at the County Line Ranch in the Cooks Valley area. The permit allows two music festivals to be held annually. Both events feature live music, camping and various vendors, including areas for cannabis-related concessions and consumption. The Reggae on the River event took place during the first weekend in August and was the only event operated by the Mateel at Cooks Valley in 2025. The post event report provided by the applicant is included as part of Attachment 2B. The approved operations plan is included as part of Attachment 2A. It is recommended that the Planning Commission accept the report as submitted.

Permitting Background

In recent years the Humboldt County Planning Commission has authorized three (3) Use Permits allowing up to five (5) large events to be held annually in the Cooks Valley area. They are summarized in the table below.

#	PERMIT	*EVENT	PERMITTEE / OPERATOR	TOTAL # (MAX)			
				DAYS	CAMPING	ATTENDANCE	VEHICLES
1	PLN-2023-18107	Northern Nights	NNMG	4	9000	10,000	4500
2			NNMG	2	4000	5000	2500
3	PLN-2023-18108	Summer Arts & Music Fest.	MCC	2	4500	5000	2500
4		Reggae on the River	MCC	3	4500 ₁ 7000	5000 ₁ 8000	2500 ₁ 4000
5	PLN-2024-19010	501T3 Theater Camp	501T3	4	3000	3000	**1,224

MCC – Mateel Community Center | NNMG – Northern Nights Music Group, LLC | 501T3 – Take 3 Presents
** event name omitted where uncertain ** estimated*
₁ camping, attendance, and parking may be increased where authorized to use Cooks Valley Campground (Bowman) property in Mendocino County

PLN-2024-19010 - Take 3

The Use Permit held by Take 3 (501T3) was approved by the Planning Commission in April of 2025 and allows one event to be held annually from the property. A private campout with theater, immersive art, amplified and non-amplified music and other similar activities. Previously held in Lake County. The event was held at the Lake County site in 2025. This year it is scheduled to occur for the first time at the CLR property, from June 11th through the 15th.

PLN-2023-18107 - Northern Nights Music Group

The Use Permit held by the Northern Nights Music Group (NNMG) allows operation of a 4-day event and a separate two-day event. The four-day event is known as Northern Nights Music Festival, which has been operating from the site since 2013 and typically occurs during the third week in July. The CLR property is primarily used for auxiliary parking and camping during operation of the four-day event. The last time a second NNMG event occurred was in 2016, during the Lumberstruck Music Festival. This year’s Northern Nights event is planned to occur from July 17 through July 19th.

PLN-2023-18108 - Mateel Community Center

The Use Permit held by the Mateel Community Center (MCC) allows two events to be held annually from the property. The Summer Arts & Music Festival was the only Mateel event operated from the site in 2022 and 2023. Reggae on the River (ROTR) was the only Mateel event operated from the site in 2024 and 2025. This year’s ROTR event is planned to occur from August 14th through August 16th.

A Condition of Approval is included in each of the three permits requiring the permittee annually submit a post event report detailing compliance with the terms of the permit and commitments made in each of the Event Operations Plan. For the two most recent permittees (Mateel and Take 3), the Department presents the monitoring report to the Commission each year at a public hearing. As operations grow increasingly smoother over time, it is expected that monitoring can be completed at the staff level.

The Commission is being asked to review and consider the information provided in the MCC Annual Post Event Monitoring Report as well as feedback from planning staff and relevant agencies to

determine whether events are being conducted in compliance with the permit conditions and operational commitments made by the permittee. Under the terms of the permit, the Commission has the authority to adjust the authorized attendance levels for each year's festival(s) during review of the report for the preceding year's event(s). MCC are only planning to hold one event (Reggae on the River) in Cooks Valley in 2026 and are not seeking to increase attendance levels above those permitted in 2024 and 2025. The Reggae on the River event is planned to occur over three days in August (14, 15, 16). On June 20th and 21st the Mateel's annual Summer Arts & Music Festival will be occurring once again from the Southern Humboldt Community Park instead of at County Line Ranch.

Monitoring & Feedback from Agencies and Public

The 2025 Reggae on the River (ROTR) event took place during the first weekend in August (2,3,4) and an inspection was performed by planning department staff during the event. The County Line Ranch event site was also inspected by staff a week earlier during monitoring of the Northern Nights event. Additionally, staff have spoken with numerous state and local agencies after circulation of the post-event report to these agencies in March. Agencies include: Caltrans, CHP, Environmental Health, Public Works, HC Sheriff, and Cal-FIRE, as well as several local fire protection districts and volunteer fire departments. Based on conversations with the event operator and agencies, the festival appears to have largely run smoothly. Traffic controls worked effectively and stage, assembly, camping, and concessions areas all were located and operated consistent with the approved event map and operations plan.



Attendance/Parking/Shuttles

The applicant reports that total daily event attendance ranged from 4,266 to 4,609 persons over the course of the three-day event. Parking exceeded the capacity of the site and required use of auxiliary off-site parking areas. An area for parking on the Arthur property was opened for staff and volunteer use beginning on Thursday. Additionally, an independent parking lot was operated by the owners of the Richardson Grove RV Park, which helped relieve some pressure on on-site parking. These areas are all authorized for auxiliary use under the approved Use Permit. The shuttle program proved successful with ridership ranging from 1200-1500 passengers each day, similar to 2024. Planning staff successfully used the shuttle to return to Richardson Grove from the event during inspection.

Fuels Reduction & Fire Protection

Staff confirmed the presence of the Redway Fire Protection District personnel and equipment during the event and observed that site vegetation was appropriately mowed and maintained to reduce fire risk. Fire Lanes were kept clear and site work was done ahead of the event to accommodate fire

personnel and equipment placement and establishment of control lines for prevention and pre-planning. Cal-FIRE did not elect to inspect the property ahead of the event.

Water Use

Approximately 71,600 gallons of water were used during the three days of the event and days immediately prior and following. Approximately 40,200 gallons of water were consumed by the event during the prior year. Tanked water storage now totals approximately 150,000 gallons. The County Line Ranch is currently working to permit a bladder used to store non-potable water for dust control during events. Though event-related water use has yet to exceed the storage capacity of the site, this remains a matter to monitor closely since usage changes from year to year and the site has yet to host the full complement of permitted events in any given year. It is anticipated that the bladder will be permitted in time for storage of water ahead of the next event season.

Primary issues during 2025 event

While agency feedback concerning the 2025 Reggae on the River event has been largely positive, there were some issues with the water system and food service identified by the Environmental Health Consumer Protection Program which are in need of address. They are tied to inadequate water pressure and leaking plumbing at temporary sinks, along with electrical outages affecting hot and cold food holding temperatures, inadequate number of potable water faucets for food vendors, and inadequate refrigerated space for food vendors. The Mateel and property owner are both taking strides to address them.

Water System

To help maintain water pressure additional tanked storage has been installed near the public shower facilities and existing private residence. Additionally, the property owner has begun working on a number of upgrades with Steven Leach, a consultant who specializes in installation and maintenance of Water Systems. The upgrades are being designed with an eye toward transitioning to a "Public Water System" regulated by the State Water Resources Control Board Division of Drinking Water.

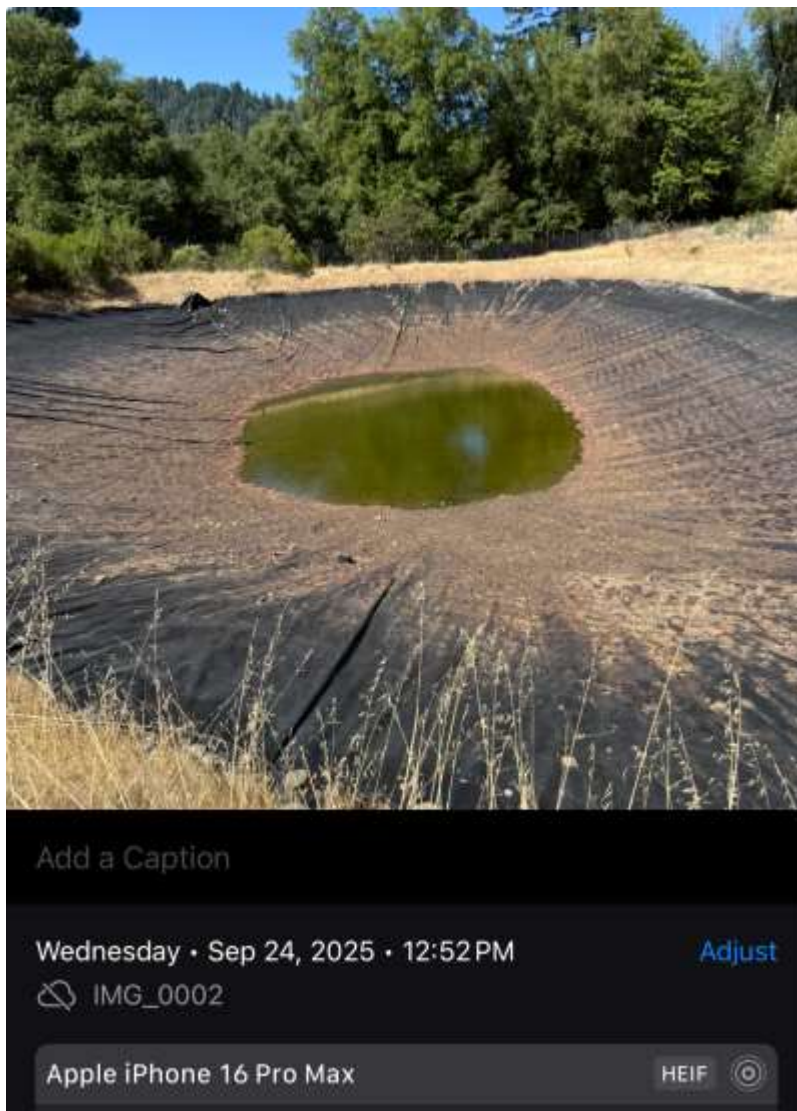
Food Service

The Mateel plans to have additional sinks and a larger refrigeration truck (40 ft. instead of 20 ft.) during this year's event to help address the food vendor issues experienced last year. A number of electrical system upgrades were observed during a recent site visit.

Arthur Pond

The Conditions of Approval and Mitigation Measures require annual draining of the pond on the Arthur property by September 1st of each year. The Mateel is responsible for draining the pond because it was installed for their use during the period where the ROTR event was operated from the French's Camp site. The point of draining before September 1 is to keep it dry for an extended period to increase the chance for eradication of juvenile bullfrogs and tadpoles. This year the Mateel drained the pond over a 3-day period in late July, during event site prep though no photos of the pond were

taken after draining. At the request of staff pictures were taken on 9/24 and show a small amount of water following two recent rain events.



Although no pictures were taken immediately after draining, the timing was excellent as it allowed for the pond remain dry for over a month, increasing the chance of bullfrog and tadpole mortality through dessication and predation.

Emergency Access

During the public hearing last year, the Commission received comments from neighboring property owners alleging that their permission was needed for the Mateel to use an easement for emergency ingress and egress to the event. The “easement” referenced by the property owners involves state highway right of way owned by Caltrans, which was acquired many years ago in anticipation of routing the highway around Richardson Grove.



Planning staff have met with Heidi Quintrell from Caltrans, who confirmed that this is an access controlled right-of-way where ingress and egress would not be permitted. This was discussed with all permittees and emergency service personnel and it was agreed that use of this parallel road was neither needed nor planned as a nearby parallel ranch road on the CLR property provides equivalent functionality and is identified for this type of use under the emergency response plan. During inspections for Northern Nights and Reggae on the River, this was reconfirmed with Redway Fire Chief Pete Genolio, who was onsite overseeing fire personnel during both events.



Environmental Review: An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was certified for the original project in 1992 (SCH 92-033305). Two Supplemental EIRs were certified for revisions to the project in 2005 and 2008 (SCH 92-033035). A third Supplemental EIR was certified for the project on January 3, 2013 (SCH #2012082108). Numerous Addendums have been prepared in concert with prior modifications to the

permit. In 2023 an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) was adopted during renewal and modification of the two Use Permits ([SCH #2023040570](#) <https://ceqanet.opr.ca.gov/2023040570/Attachment/82Jybh>). The document includes a raft of mitigation measures designed to address potential impacts related to the following checklist categories: Biological Resources, Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Hydrology/Water Quality, Noise, Transportation, and Wildfire. The Planning Commission's review of the Annual Report serves to implement the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program established under the most recently adopted MND.

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT:

In April 2026 the Planning & Building Department circulated the 2025 post-event report to various agencies and solicited feedback. A list of the agencies contacted and feedback received is summarized under Attachment 3.

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The Planning Commission could reduce or increase attendance levels for the 2026 events either lower or higher than default levels approved under the permit. This alternative should be implemented if the Commission has information showing the existing attendance levels are inappropriate or insufficient and that a change is justified. Staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative because there is no evidence the proposed attendance levels are problematic.
2. The Planning Commission could continue the item further into the future to provide the applicant time to respond to questions or comments. This alternative should be implemented if the Commission is unable to make one or more of the required findings. Planning Division staff is confident that the required findings can be made. Consequently, staff does not recommend further consideration of this alternative.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Project Area Map
2. Applicant's Evidence in Support of the Required Findings
 - A. Operations Plan (2023-27)
 - B. Post Event Wrap-up Report
 - C. 2025 Event Water Usage exhibit
3. Referral Agency Comments and Recommendations
4. Notes from Piercy Community Meeting

Owner(s)

PLN-2023-18108 Mateel Community Center, Inc.			
Applicant Mateel Community Center President: Pleasure Strange P.O. Box 1910 Redway, CA 95560 (707)923-3368 pleasure@mateel.org	Owner (Cooks Valley Campground) Conrad & Trudy Bowman 83990 Road 442-E Piercy, CA 95587	Owner (County Line Ranch) Duncan Ley Outraged Orangutan LLC 895 Post Street San Francisco, CA 94109	Agent Alisha Goodrich P.O. Box 1910 Redway, CA 95560 (805)393-3334 rastapontop@gmail.com

Please contact Steven Lazar, Senior Planner, at slazar@co.humboldt.ca.us or at (707)268-3741 if you have any questions about this public hearing item.