

To:
Micheal M. Reeder
T (541) 484-0188
800 Willamette Street,
Suite 800, Eugene, OR
97401

From:
Brian Meiering
Wetlands and Wildlife
LLC

Re:
Addressing the potential
of habitat and wildlife
effects related to a
proposed country music
festival

Dear Mr. Reeder,

Thank you for contacting Wetlands and Wildlife LLC regarding a proposed Bi-Mart Willamette Country Music Festival within Marion County, OR. The Marion County Planning Division has reviewed a Conditional Use Application (17-043/Gross) and provided findings based on facts provided in the application. You have asked me to assess the degree to which using approximately 718 acres of farmland in Marion County would affect wildlife species and habitat; specifically, an assessment of whether the four-day (August) venue with a cap of 30,000 people/day should be reasonably expected to negatively affect habitats or wildlife within the abutting Ankeny Wildlife Refuge administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

General Overview

The project area (Figure 1) is located at 13054 Jorgenson Road S and in the 3700 block of Wintel Road S, Jefferson (T9S; R3W; Section 19; tax lot 400; Section 21; tax lot 700; Section 28; tax lots 100, 300, 400, 500, 600 and 700; Section 28D; tax lot 800, 1000 and 1100). The proposed venue is located on farmed land which has been producing grass for several decades. Abutting land uses include Ankeny Wildlife Refuge to the north/northwest, a block of land measuring approximately 2,800 acres. Other land uses surround the venue but are outside the scope of this memorandum.

The proposed concert venue would accommodate no more than 30,000 concert viewers/day and their vehicles; approximately 10,000 overnight campers will be accommodated based on the application estimates. Most of the proposed venue activities would occur directly abutting the Ankeny Wildlife Refuge, with parking and the main stage being proposed up to the property line of the refuge. Camping is proposed setback from the refuge to the south and west.

The main stage is proposed to be abutting a forested portion of the refuge, with the stage and lighting directed south and east (opposite the refuge). A timeline has been set for the venue, establishing enforced quiet hours between 24:00 and 07:00.

Traffic flow has been proposed from two separate directions, one of which bisects the northwest portion of the Ankeny Wildlife Refuge.



Ankeny Wildlife Refuge

The USFWS designated Ankeny Wildlife Refuge with a primary goal to provide winter habitat and migratory rest stops for dusky Canada geese (*Branta canadensis occidentalis*) and other migratory waterfowl. This goal is consistent with today's goals for the Ankeny Wildlife Refuge. Land management in the AWR is consistent with the overarching purpose of refuge designation: "for use as an inviolate sanctuary, or for any other management purpose, for migratory birds..." (Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929, 16 U.S.C. 715 et. seq.). The overwintering and migratory use of the refuge is most notable in October-March for waterfowl, well outside the window of the planned venue.

Ankeny Wildlife Refuge is also home to habitats and species which serve the public interest. Impacting these species and habitats was also considered. When evaluating the effects of the proposed venue given the ability of the refuge to function is based on interrelated/interdependent components of the ecosystem. In terms of avian nesting within the refuge, most if not all, species will have fledged young before August.

The USFWS has been consulted about this proposed venue and has provided an official comment regarding the project which summarizes the concerns and potential benefits (USFWS-Damien Miller-December 5, 2017).

Conclusion*

Based on the schedule of the venue and the layout of facilities, it is my professional opinion that the proposed activities will not negatively affect wildlife habitat, wildlife reproduction or survival within the abutting AWR. Use of the refuge by avian species will be largely limited to post-breeding individuals or fledged young. Although the noise and light produced by the venue may temporarily change the behavior of some individuals during the event, it is difficult to relate this to a decrease in fitness or survival given the event has a compressed timeframe. Overall, a net benefit may be



attainable for the refuge if the proposed venue can help provide positive exposure to the Ankeny and other lands managed under the National Wildlife Refuge System.

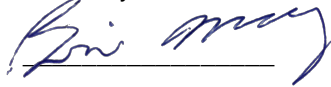
*This conclusion is based on the ability of the organizers to enforce prohibitions on illegal entry into the refuge and continue to coordinate with the USFWS to help address their concerns.

Disclaimer

This memorandum documents the investigation, best professional judgment and conclusions of the investigator. It is correct and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Please feel free to contact me if there are any questions related to the site plans.

Sincerely,



Brian Meiring PWS

Environmental Specialist

Attachments: Figure 1



