



March 24, 2026

Attn: Marie Jones
City of Fort Bragg
416 North Franklin
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

RE: Biological Assessment for Live Music Events at Noyo Headlands Coastal Park, Fort Bragg

Dear Marie

The purpose of this letter is to provide a biological evaluation of live music events (Project) on the City of Fort Bragg coastal trail at the Noyo Headlands trailhead. The purpose of this assessment is to provide technical biological resources information to support the environmental review of the project. This report evaluates the potential for the Study Area to support Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA), including special-status species, sensitive vegetation communities, and aquatic features and the potential for impacts to these biological resources as a result of the project. A desktop review and site assessment was used for this analysis.

Events would be located at the southern end of the City coastal trail, immediately adjacent to the parking lot, restrooms, and dog park at the Noyo Headlands trailhead. For the purpose of this assessment, the Study Area was restricted to the proposed location for live music, including the stage, vendors, porta-potties, and food trucks; however, potential for nesting birds and rookeries were also assessed due to potential project impacts. The Study Area includes an annually mowed grassland and adjacent developed areas of concrete. The surrounding landscape is highly visited open space for recreation.

1.0 METHODS

On March 17, 2026, a WRA biologist visited the Study Area to evaluate on-site habitat for the potential to support ESHA. Prior to the site visit, the WRA biologist reviewed literature resources and performed database searches to assess the potential for sensitive biological communities (e.g., wetlands) and special-status species (e.g., endangered plants), including:

- Contemporary aerial photographs (Google Earth 2026)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) (CDFW 2026)
- South Fort Bragg Coastal Trail and Noyo Center Botanical Survey and California Coastal Act Wetland Delineation (WRA 2010)
- Cormorant Nesting Areas Map (City of Fort Bragg)



- Cornell Lab eBird (2026)

Following the remote assessment, a WRA biologist completed a field review to document existing conditions and to determine if such provided suitable habitat for any ESHA, including rookeries or nesting on coastal cliffs.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

2.1 Land Use

The Study Area is located at the highly visited trailhead of the Noyo Headlands portion of the City of Fort Bragg coastal trail and is subject to regular human disturbance. The trailhead parking lot and restrooms are immediately adjacent to the meadow proposed for the location of the stage, tent, and other music-related temporary structures. The meadow is also immediately adjacent to a small dog park that is regularly visited. The Study Area is used for other public activities such as local trail running events. Additionally, the Study Area is in the vicinity of the permitted City Fourth of July fireworks staging area used for the annual fireworks display. The grasslands in the Study Area and nearby are annually mowed by June by the City (Google Earth 2026).

2.2 Land Covers

Based on the 2010 biological assessment, the land cover of the Study Area is introduced perennial grassland, characterized by non-native grasses (WRA 2010). Similar conditions were observed during the March 2026 site assessment. Developed areas are also included in the Study Area.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 ESHA Land Cover

The Study Area is characterized by non-native grassland and developed areas. No ESHA land cover types are present.

3.2 Potential Special-Status Species and other Wildlife ESHA

3.2.1 Special-Status Plants

Results in the 2010 biological assessment found no special-status plants located in the Study Area (WRA 2010). Due to the regular land disturbance activities that occur in the Study Area, establishment and proliferation of special-status plants are unlikely.

3.2.2 Special-Status Wildlife Species

Based on the Fort Bragg Coastal Trail Environmental Impacts Report (SWCA 2009), several special-status wildlife species were identified to have potential to occur along the coastal trail project, which included the Study Area. The Study Area is unlikely to support any special status wildlife due to low-quality habitat, regular land disturbance activities, and proximity to routine high levels of human activities associated with the parking lot and trail.



3.2.3 Other Wildlife ESHA

One cormorant rookery site is present on rocky coastal cliffs approximately 300 feet from the Study Area and is visible from the southwest corner of the Study Area. Additionally, native and migratory birds may nest outside the Study Area but in its vicinity, including in grasslands/shrublands or on coastal cliffs.

4.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on our site visit and review of the proposed project, the project does not have the potential to result in significant impacts to biological resources. The sections below contain a summary and recommendations (if appropriate) for best management practices to employ as part of the project to comply with existing laws and regulations relevant to biological resources for the project.

4.1 ESHA Land Cover

No ESHA communities are present in the Study Area. Additionally, the proposed project would prevent impacts to surrounding vegetation by using temporary fencing to contain attendees. The existing trail also reduces the potential for impacts to ESHA communities, acting as a natural pathway for pedestrians.

4.2 Special-Status Species

4.2.1 Plants

Based on existing conditions, species distributions, and land disturbance activities, no special-status plants have high or moderate potential to occur within the Study Area.

4.2.2 Wildlife

Due to the high use of the Study Area and vicinity by human and pet activities and the annual mowing management, the potential for special-status wildlife to use the Study Area or grasslands/shrublands in the vicinity as nesting or breeding locations is unlikely.

4.2.3 Native and Migratory Nesting Birds

Native and migratory birds may nest in the un-mowed portions outside of the Study Area. While direct impacts (i.e., destruction) to active nests are not anticipated from the proposed project, increased human activity and sounds from live music have the potential to cause nest abandonment. California Fish and Game Code prohibits disturbance to active nest sites for native nesting birds.

Recommendation 1: To comply with these existing standards, a breeding bird survey would be required, conducted by a qualified biologist. The survey would need to occur no more than 7 days prior to the start of music event-related activities and should include areas within 300 feet of the Study Area. If occupied nests are observed during the survey, the biologist would establish a “no disturbance buffer” surrounding the active nest, and project-related activities in the buffer zone would be prohibited until any young present have fledged. The buffer distance would be established by the biologist based on factors such as the species observed, type of adjacent disturbance, and sensitivity of the nesting bird to disturbance. To ensure compliance with



existing standards and Fish and Game Code, we recommend that the survey protocols described above be incorporated into the project description or be included as a Condition of Approval for the project

An active cormorant rookery is visible from the Study Area. The rookery site is located approximately 300 feet southwest of the Study Area (Figure 1); however, visual or auditory activities from the proposed project may cause a disturbance to cormorant nesting.

Recommendation 2: To avoid impacts to nesting cormorants the following components should be included in any live music event conducted in the Study Area:

- Structures associated with the events should be placed at least 300 feet from the cormorant nest to avoid visual and auditory disturbance.
- The stage and speakers should be located within a walled tent to reduce visual and auditory disturbance.
- Sound producing equipment should be pointed to the east/southeast which is away from the rookery site.
- Sound reduction/buffering structures should be placed along the south and west perimeter of the tent, or where appropriate, to reduce sound in the direction of the rookery.
- The stage and associated event structures should be placed as far as feasible from the coastal cliffs.

Sincerely,

Rhiannon Korhummel
Associate Biologist

FIGURES AND ATTACHMENTS

Figure 1. Rookery Buffer



5.0 REFERENCES

- CDFW 2026** California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2026. California Natural Diversity Database. Biogeographic Data Branch. Available online at: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Maps-and-Data>; most recently accessed: March 2026.
- eBird 2026** eBird. 2026. eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance. Ithaca, NY. Available online at: <http://www.ebird.org>. Accessed: March 2026.
- Google Earth 2026** Google Earth. 2026. Aerial Imagery 1985–2025. Most recently accessed: March 2026.
- WRA 2010** WRA. 2010. South Fort Bragg Coastal Trail and Noyo Center Botanical Survey and California Coastal Act Wetland Delineation.





Sources: DigitalGlobe 2016 Aerial, WRA | Prepared By: Arthur, 3/19/2026

Figure 1. 300-foot Cormorant Rookery Buffer

Fort Bragg
Mendocino, CA

0 150 300
Feet

