

Why Floodplains and Wetlands Matter at the Wildflower Music Park Site

1. Natural Floodplain Functions

- Absorb excess rainfall, reducing downstream flooding.
- Recharge groundwater by allowing water to seep slowly into aquifers.
- Filter pollutants naturally as water passes through soil and vegetation.

Festival Risks: Reduced storage capacity, soil compaction from crowds and vehicles, and contaminated runoff entering the water system.

2. Wetlands as Sensitive Habitats

- Habitat for protected species such as gopher tortoises, wading birds, and amphibians.
- Breeding and feeding grounds for fish, insects, and migratory birds.
- Vegetation stabilizes soils and prevents erosion.

Festival Risks: Destruction of nesting and burrow areas, pollutants in standing water, and altered hydrology from grading or filling.

3. Long-Term Ecological Impacts

- Wildlife displacement from noise, lights, and human activity.
- Loss of biodiversity; wetlands take decades to recover if disturbed.
- Cumulative damage from repeated events compounds soil and vegetation loss.

4. Legal and Planning Conflicts

- FEMA floodplain regulations and county ordinances restrict development or require costly mitigation.
- Comprehensive Plans designate these areas for conservation, not commercial venues.
- Agrotourism exemptions do not apply when the main activity is a music festival, not farm-based education.

Key Takeaway: Floodplains and wetlands are natural infrastructure. Converting them into a festival park risks flooding residents, destroying habitat, and violating county plans.