



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Board of Commissioners
FROM: Tanya Saltzman, AICP, Senior Planner
DATE: October 28, 2021
SUBJECT: Wildlife Inventory Update – Continued Discussion of Options

On September 29, staff provided the Board of County Commissioners (Board) with a “roadmap” of potential options pertaining to a wildlife inventory update.¹ This included a discussion of choosing how many inventories to update and when to do so, as well as a discussion of conflicting uses for consideration. Staff is now returning to the Board for further discussion of the update options, and is offering revised timelines for the inventory update process.

I. Wildlife Inventory Roadmap - Options

As stated previously, the process for updating a Goal 5 wildlife inventory is prescribed by Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs). In addition, Oregon counties rarely, if ever, undergo the process to update existing wildlife inventories because, unlike cities, they are not required to comply with periodic review.² By choosing to undertake a Goal 5 wildlife inventory update, Deschutes County will be moving forward with a rarely-utilized and complex process that, while a significant effort, can hopefully provide an example of best practices for other jurisdictions as well as the County for future efforts.

Below, staff briefly restates each option:

Option 1

Select one of the three inventories to update the Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Code as a pilot project now, as a model for future inventory updates following the completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update. As noted previously, if this option is selected, staff suggests updating the mule deer inventory due to the species’ visibility in the county, the noted decline in population, and the most robust new data.

¹ <https://www.deschutes.org/bcc/page/board-county-commissioners-meeting-16>

² Periodic Review is a term used in Oregon law to describe the periodic evaluation and revision of a local comprehensive plan. Prior to 2003, state law (ORS 197.628 – 636) called for counties to review their comprehensive plans according to a periodic schedule established by the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC). The Oregon Legislature eliminated periodic review requirements for counties in 2003 (SB 920).

Option 2

Select two of the three inventories to update as a pilot project. As noted previously, if this option is selected, staff recommends updating the mule deer and elk winter range inventories owing to the similarity of the data types and therefore the methodology for the legal findings and justification.

Option 3

Initiate the wildlife inventory updates following the completion of the Comprehensive Plan Update which is expected in FY 2023-2024.

II. Revised Timelines

Based on additional coordination with partner agencies as well as internal research, staff recommends extending the original timeline presented for inventory updates.

As noted previously, each inventory update will include a series of virtual open houses hosted by the Planning Commission (2-3 for a single inventory; 4-6 for two inventories). In addition, due to the significant nature of the undertaking, updating each inventory will require extensive justification in robust, structured findings that will be resource- and time-intensive for both Planning and Legal staff. Therefore, staff now anticipates that initiating a legislative amendment and updating one inventory (Option 1) would require conservatively, 9 to 12 months, and updating two inventories (Option 2) would require 12 to 15 months.

III. Next Steps

Staff seeks Board direction concerning its preferred option concerning a wildlife inventory update, or can return at a later date for additional discussion.