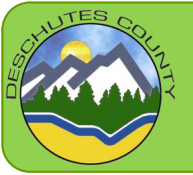


Overview of Deschutes County Agricultural Lands Program



Deschutes County Community Development Department
Planning Division

What's Happening

The **Deschutes County Community Development Department** is conducting community outreach to gather the public's opinion on agricultural lands (Exclusive Farm Use). Deschutes County is interested in understanding public, stakeholder, and landowner opinions about the opportunities and challenges with EFU zoning and to determine if changes are needed.

Why Revisit Agricultural Lands? Deschutes County has been implementing an agricultural lands program for over forty years. As a matter of public policy, it is important to periodically revisit topics like this one to determine whether circumstances have changed significantly. The County's Comprehensive Plan recaps the history of agricultural land designations in Deschutes County and recognizes they remain controversial. Differences of opinion exist today over which lands should be designated farm lands and what uses should be allowed. The Comprehensive Plan captures these issues by recognizing:

- Agriculture is part of the local economy
- Secondary benefits of agricultural lands contribute to scenic open spaces, rural character, and tourism economy
- Difficulty of predicting future agricultural opportunities
- Preserving farm land benefits the wider public at expense of landowners
- Farm land is marginal without irrigation
- Agricultural zoning was applied to land with no history of farming
- Potential adverse impacts to farming community from agricultural land conversion

By participating at any one of six public meetings, residents and community members can review existing conditions, understand emerging issues, and provide feedback that will help determine if changes are needed.



Public Forum - Alfalfa

May 6, 6:00 -8:00 p.m.

Alfalfa Community Hall
26155 Willard Road, Bend

Public Forum - Bend

May 7, 6:00 -8:00 p.m.

Deschutes Services Building
1300 NW Wall Street, Bend

Public Forum - Brothers

May 13, 6:00 -8:00 p.m.

Brothers School
34400 Hwy 20 E, Brothers

Public Forum - Sisters

May 15, 6-8:00 p.m.

Sisters High School
1700 McKinney Butte Rd Sisters

Public Forum - Terrebonne

May 19, 6-8:00 p.m.

Terrebonne Community School
1199 B Avenue, Terrebonne

Public Forum - La Pine

May 21, 6-8:00 p.m.

La Pine Senior Center
16450 Victory Way, La Pine

Oregon's Farmland Protection Program



Deschutes County Community Development Department
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How does Oregon's Statewide Planning Program protect agricultural land? The program calls for counties to:

1. Inventory agricultural land
2. Designate agriculture in the comprehensive plan
3. Adopt policies to preserve agriculture
4. Zone it Exclusive Farm Use (EFU)



Oregon's land use program places major emphasis on maintaining commercial agriculture. EFU zoning limits development that could conflict with farming practices. It keeps farmland from being divided into parcels too small for commercial agriculture. Lands in these zones are automatically eligible for lower property taxes based on the land being farmed. All 36 counties in Oregon have applied EFU zoning to their agricultural land.

What is agricultural land? In broad terms, it is rural land that is being used or can be used for agriculture. Statewide Planning Goal 3 defines agricultural land largely in terms of soil productivity, as measured under the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service's Soil Capability Classification System. Agricultural land includes Class I-IV soils in western Oregon, Class I-VI soils in eastern Oregon and other lands suitable for farm use. Goal 3 provides a more detailed definition that should also be consulted.

What are the primary components of EFU zoning? EFU zoning is applied by counties to lands that they have designated for agricultural use. EFU zoning consists of:

1. Listings of permitted "farm-related" uses and conditional "nonfarm-related" uses, including standards for their evaluation,
2. Minimum lot sizes and division standards for both farm and non-farm uses,
3. Other dimensional standards for development, and,
4. Zoning maps depicting EFU-zoned lands.

There is a statewide minimum lot size of 80 acres for farmland and 160 acres for rangeland, unless counties can demonstrate the need for smaller standards. Deschutes county in 1992 documented the reasons for having smaller standards for irrigated parcels and the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission approved them.

References:

<http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/docs/goals/goal3.pdf>

https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/lawsstatutes/2013ors215.html

<https://www.deschutes.org/Community-Development/Planning/Title-23---Comprehensive-Plan.aspx>

<https://www.deschutes.org/Community-Development/Regional-Projects-and-Resources/Agricultural-Lands.aspx>

Comprehensive Plan Policies



Deschutes County Community Development Department
Planning Division

Deschutes County Comprehensive Plan Update

Effective November 2011



Comprehensive Plan Policies

In 2011 Deschutes County updated its **Comprehensive Plan (Comp Plan)**, a policy document that provides a framework for addressing rural growth and development over a twenty-year period (2010-2030). The update was done to ensure a consistent policy framework for land use planning and development that reflects current conditions and trends, recent population projections, state law, and community values. There are a several **Comp Plan policies** addressing agricultural lands. The following list summarizes land use goals and policies applicable to farm designations and land use:

Section 2.2 Agricultural Lands Policies

Goal 1 Preserve and maintain agricultural lands and the agricultural industry.

Policy 2.2.3 Allow comprehensive plan and zoning map amendments for individual EFU parcels as allowed by State Statute, Oregon Administrative Rules and this Comprehensive Plan.

Policy 2.2.4 Develop comprehensive policy criteria and code to provide clarity on when and how EFU parcels can be converted to other designations.

Goal 2 Promote a diverse, sustainable, revenue-generating agricultural sector.

Policy 2.2.12 Review County Code and revise as needed to permit alternative and supplemental farm activities that are compatible with farming, such as agri-tourism or commercial renewable energy projects. When a preferred alternative or supplemental use identified through a public process is not permitted by State regulations work with the State to review and revise their regulations.

Goal 3 Ensure Exclusive Farm Use policies, classifications and codes are consistent with local and emerging agricultural conditions and markets.

Policy 2.2.13 Identify and retain accurately designated agricultural lands.

Policy 2.2.14 Explore new methods of identifying and classifying agricultural lands.

- a. Apply for grants to review and, if needed, update farmland designations.
- b. Study County agricultural designations considering elements such as water availability, farm viability and economics, climatic conditions, land use patterns, accepted farm practices, and impacts on public services.
- c. Lobby for changes to State statute regarding agricultural definitions specific to Deschutes County that would allow some reclassification of agricultural lands.

Commercial Farm Study and EFU Subzones



Deschutes County Community Development Department
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For more than four **decades**, Oregon has maintained a strong policy to protect farmland. The policy was adopted by the State legislature in 1973. It calls for the “preservation of a maximum amount of the limited supply of agricultural land.” The main tool for carrying out that policy is the **Statewide Planning Program**. Oregon’s Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) sets standards for such planning. Under this system, all counties in Oregon are required to adopt planning and zoning measures to protect agricultural land.

In 1992 a **commercial farm study** was completed, concluding that irrigation is the controlling variable for defining farm lands in Deschutes County. Soil classifications improve when water is available. Seven new agricultural subzones were identified based on the factual data provided in the 1992 study and minimum acreages were defined based on the typical number of irrigated acres used by commercial farms in that particular subzone (with the exception of the Horse Ridge subzone). The 1992 farm study noted the challenges of local commercial farming. The high elevation (2700-3500 feet), short growing season (88-100 days), low rainfall, and distance to major markets hamper profitability. The 1992 study resulted in minimum lot sizes that are smaller than the State requirement of 80 acres for farm land and 160 acres for range land. These minimum lot sizes are unique in Oregon and were acknowledged as in compliance with Statewide Goal 3 (Agricultural Lands) by LCDC. The County maintains a **unique set of farm sub-zones** based on the average number of irrigated acres for each type of farm land as determined in the 1992 farm study. Irrigated land divisions in each sub-zone must result in parcels that retain the acreages shown in Table 1.



Table 1 - Exclusive Farm Use Subzones

<i>Subzone Name</i>	<i>Minimum Irrigated Acres</i>	<i>Profile</i>
Lower Bridge	130	Irrigated field crops, hay and pasture
Sisters/Cloverdale	63	Irrigated alfalfa, hay and pasture, wooded grazing and some field crops
Terrebonne	35	Irrigated hay and pasture
Tumalo/Redmond/Bend	23	Irrigated pasture and some hay
Alfalfa	36	Irrigated hay and pasture
La Pine	37	Riparian meadows, grazing and meadow hay
Horse Ridge East	320	Rangeland grazing

Source: Deschutes County 1992 Farm Study

Wildlife Resources



*Deschutes County Community Development Department
Planning Division*

Wildlife Resources

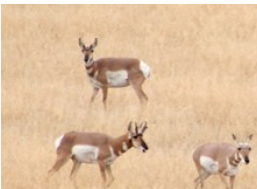
Wildlife habitat extends into lands zoned EFU. The following wildlife inventories are recognized in Deschutes County's Comprehensive Plan and Wildlife Area Combining Zone. The purpose of the Wildlife Area Combining Zone is to conserve important wildlife areas in Deschutes County; to protect an important environmental, social and economic element of the area; and to permit development compatible with the protection of the wildlife resource.



The **Bend/La Pine Deer Migration Corridor** is approximately 56 miles long and 3 to 4 miles wide. It parallels the Deschutes and Little Deschutes rivers, which corresponds to EFU zoning (La Pine Subzone) . Deer use this corridor to move between their summer range on the forest along the east slopes of the Cascades and their winter range in the North Paulina area.



Deer Winter Range - EFU zoning (Sisters/Cloverdale, Lower Bridge, Terrebonne, Tumalo/Redmond/Bend, Horse Ridge and Alfalfa sub-zones) overlaps the Metolius (18,498 acres), Tumalo, (4,189 acres), North Paulina (66,335 acres), and Grizzly Deer (2,008 acres) winter ranges. The winter ranges support approximately 15,000 deer.



Antelope Range - EFU zoning (Alfalfa and Horse Ridge sub-zones) overlaps the North Paulina Antelope Range along the eastern part of Deschutes County near Alfalfa, Millican, Brothers, and Hampton. The habitat area covers approximately 406,087 acres.

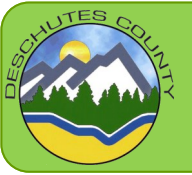


Sage Grouse Range - EFU zoning (Horse Ridge Sub-zone) overlaps sage grouse habitat along the eastern part of Deschutes County near Millican, Brothers, and Hampton. The habitat area covers approximately 392,265 acres.



Sensitive Bird and Mammal Habitat - EFU zoning overlaps identified nesting sites and habitat of northern bald eagle, osprey, golden eagle, prairie falcon, great grey owl, great blue heron, and big-eared bats throughout Deschutes County.

Agricultural Land Statistics



*Deschutes County Community Development Department
Planning Division*

Exclusive Farm Use Subzones	Alfalfa	Horse Ridge	La Pine	Sisters / Cloverdale
Total Number of Parcels	948	1,141	137	2,767
Total Acreage of Parcels	79,666	472,115	5,347	60,047
Average Size of Parcels (acres)	84	414	39	22
Median Size of Parcels (acres)	2.3	20	10.3	0.35 (Eagle Crest)
Total Number of Dwellings	398	33	57	1,712
Dwellings Built Last 10 Years	88	2	3	735
Number of Parcels in Wildlife Area Combining Zone (WA)	14	1,104	137	207
Number of Acres in WA	24,871	460,427	5,347	16,346
Number of Parcels in a Fire District *	628	0	130	2,573
Total Number of Acres of Parcels in a Fire District	16,339	0	4,897	21,727
Number of Parcels in an Irrigation District **	340	1	0	755
Total Number of Acres of Parcels in an Irrigation District	12,281	42	0	19,320
Number of Commercial Farms	88	9	10	51
Total Acreage of Commercial Farms	3,427	13,714	574	3,885
Total Number of Parcels Receiving Farm Tax Deferral	207	149	66	219
Total Number of Acreage Receiving Farm Tax Deferral	8,256	73,825	4,123	12,430

* Rural Fire districts provide fire prevention, protection, and suppression services to residents living outside municipalities and other areas in Deschutes County. The following fire districts support rural residents in Deschutes County: Bend Fire Department, Black Butte Ranch Rural Fire Protection District, Cloverdale Rural Fire Protection District, Crooked River Ranch Rural Fire Protection District, Deschutes County Rural Fire Protection District #1 and #2, La Pine Rural Fire Protection District, Redmond Fire District, Sisters-Camp Sherman Rural Fire Protection District, and Sunriver Service District.

** As shown in the 1992 farm study, irrigation and irrigation districts are instrumental factors for Deschutes County agriculture. The following irrigation districts deliver water to EFU parcels in Deschutes County: Arnold, Central Oregon, Swalley, Three Sisters, and Tumalo. The study concluded that irrigation is the controlling variable for defining farm lands in Deschutes County. Soil classifications improve when water is available.

Agricultural Land Statistics (continued)



Deschutes County Community Development Department
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Exclusive Farm Use Subzones	Terrebonne	Tumalo / Redmond / Bend	Lower Bridge
Total Number of Parcels	605	2,665	108
Total Acreage of Parcels	25,204	49,408	10,023
Average Size of Parcels (acres)	42	19	93
Median Size of Parcels (acres)	14.7	10.3	40.3
Total Number of Dwellings	431	2,084	60
Dwellings Built Last 10 Years	50	199	5
Number of Parcels in Wildlife Area Combining Zone (WA)	8	118	38
Number of Acres in WA	1,883	4,056	3,064
Number of Parcels in a Fire District	559	2,616	7
Total Number of Acres of Parcels in a Fire District *	20,316	48,125	245
Number of Parcels in an Irrigation District **	459	2,405	74
Total Number of Acres of Parcels in an Irrigation District	9,641	42,951	7,281
Number of Commercial Farms	107	383	20
Total Acreage of Commercial Farms	5,033	12,899	2,852
Total Number of Parcels Receiving Farm Tax Deferral	301	1,213	65
Total Number of Acreage Receiving Farm Tax Deferral	10,450	29,934	8,013

