

County to unveil resort sites map

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Will private land owned by Mt. Hood Meadows, Ltd., meet state land-use plans for a destination resort?

That question will be addressed when the draft map of possible sites is unveiled at 7:45 p.m. on Nov. 20 before the Hood River County Planning Commission.

Mike Benedict, county planning director, said a private consultant is currently finalizing the graph that will be opened for public review on Nov. 13 at his office on the lower level of the courthouse. He said if, for any unforeseen reason, there is a delay in the completion of the map, the legislative hearing will be delayed to allow an advanced viewing by interested community members.

The map and an accompanying ordinance will be considered for incorporation into the county's land-use plan. The documents will show properties that are believed to meet the state's Goal 8 (Recreation) land-use planning regulations for a destination resort. The study was triggered in July when Meadows paid the \$8,300 fee to determine if its private land in the vicinity of Cooper Spur meets the applicable statute. The county hired the Portland firm of Cogan, Owens, Cogan to make the initial determination of property that, by law, must exclude the following areas:

- * Land within 24 air miles of the Portland metro, Salem and Eugene-Springfield urban growth boundaries.
- * Sites with 50 or more of contiguous acres of unique or prime farm land.
- * Land within three miles of a concentration of high value crop area.
- * Parcels within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.
- * Sites identified by the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife as especially sensitive big game habitat.

Benedict wanted to keep the mapping process objective and forbid the consultants to have any contact with Meadows during their work or face immediate dismissal. If the land Meadows owns does not meet the siting criteria for a Goal 8 destination resort, Benedict said the company can still apply to have the development under the more difficult Goal 2 exception process.

Following the Nov. 20 hearing, the planning commission will provide a recommendation regarding the draft map and ordinance to the County Commission. Another public hearing will then take place before a determination is made over whether the documents should be adopted, rejected or amended.