

HOOD RIVER NEWS

Two groups stake out resort hearing
Opposing camps will scrutinize revised map

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By RaeLynn Gill

Two opposing camps will gather at the Hood River County Planning Commission's hearing on Wednesday to review the draft map of destination resort sites.

Representatives from both the Cooper Spur Wild and Free Coalition, made up of environmental and recreation groups, and the Friends of Cooper Spur Mountain Resort, advocates for economic and recreational development, will face off at 7:30 p.m. in the Gorge Room at the Hood River Inn.

Representatives from the Coalition will speak out against the inclusion of private property owned by Mt. Hood Meadows, Ltd., on the map. The group formed in July and boasts 70,000 statewide members who have banded together to protect cultural, natural, scenic and historical resources on the mountain from further commercial development.

Their arguments will be countered by the newly formed Friends of Cooper Spur Mountain Resort, claiming 95,000 supporters from across Oregon, which supports an environmentally-friendly Meadows project that would boost the county's economy and provide more tourism opportunities.

Although no development application has yet been brought to the table, Dave Riley, Meadows general manager, said the final architectural design for the project will be prepared once the county has adopted the inventory of potential sites.

The draft map includes 70 acres of Meadows private holdings in the southern sector of the county as well as three other locations that appear to meet the Goal 8 requirement of state land-use planning rules. The map was prepared by the independent consulting team of Cogan, Owens, Cogan of Portland.

In July, Meadows triggered the mapping process by making a formal request for the study and paying the \$8,300 fee for that work, but the company was not allowed to participate in the process to protect its objectivity.

During the legislative hearing, officials will also pinpoint the definition of a commercial farm since state law prohibits resorts to be constructed within three miles of a concentration of high value crops.

A decision will also be made on whether possible sites within the Mt. Hood National Forest should also be listed.