

Agenda Item Summary

BACKGROUND

The department has initiated a review and update of its 12 wildlife area long range management plans, which were originally developed in 1993. The final drafts of three wildlife area (Bridge Creek, Lower Deschutes and Riverside) management plans have been completed. The 2009 Bridge Creek, Lower Deschutes and Riverside Wildlife Area plans are newly developed plans, describing management goals and objectives for these three wildlife areas.

The 2009 Fern Ridge plan has been delayed until the May 15 Commission hearing. The USFWS Willamette Valley Refuge Complex staff recently informed the department that they would be sending official extensive comments regarding the draft plan. In order to have time to address these last minute comments and allow Wildlife Administration and the Director's Office time to review subsequent revisions, the department decided to delay the final draft plan presentation.

The purpose of the wildlife area management plans is to offer a comprehensive vision and action plan for the next 10 years. These plans describe management issues unique to each wildlife area and the actions or strategies used to address these issues. These actions will be implemented during the life of the plan, but are subject to funding and personnel availability. Each management plan will be reviewed in 2014 to gauge implementation progress and will be revised in their entirety beginning in 2019.

Four wildlife area draft plans were presented to the Commission on January 9, 2009. Since that time, a public review process has been underway and the draft plans have been revised.

Revisions to these two draft plans include:

- Housekeeping and error corrections
- Addressing Commission and public comments specific to each draft plan

A summary of the key draft plan revisions is attached (Attachment 4).

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

During January 2009, staff at the three wildlife areas held several public review meetings, at local venues, in order to solicit comments on the draft management plans. In addition, hard copies of the draft plans were made available at local ODFW offices and local meetings were held with interest groups such as Oregon Hunter Association chapters, conservation groups, USFS, BLM, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Jefferson County, Harney and Malheur County courts, grazing permittees and others. The draft plans were also sent to neighboring landowners, U.S. Army Corps, USFWS Willamette Valley Complex, Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation, Oregon Department of Forestry and others as well as posted on the department website.

A summary of verbal and written comments received during the public review process, through March 13, 2009, is attached (Attachment 10). Copies of all written public correspondence received to this date are also attached (Attachment 11).

The final draft plans (Attachment 5, 6 and 7) incorporate or address the public comments received by March 13, 2009. Comments received after this date will be presented to the Commission during the April 17, 2009 hearing. An opportunity for public testimony will also be provided at this hearing.

ISSUE

Adopt the Goals and Objectives of the 2009 Bridge Creek, Lower Deschutes and Riverside Wildlife Area Management Plans. The staff proposal would add a new management plan for three wildlife areas.

ANALYSIS

Staff proposes that the Commission adopt the Goals and Objectives as described in the April 2009 Final Draft Bridge Creek, Lower Deschutes and Riverside Wildlife Area Management Plans. The remainder of these management plans contains historical and biological informational material.

OPTIONS

1. Approve staff recommendation.
2. Modify staff recommendation.

STAFF

RECOMMENDATION

Option 1.

DRAFT MOTION

I move to adopt the Goals and Objectives of the 2009 Bridge Creek, Lower Deschutes and Riverside Wildlife Area Management Plans and amend OAR Chapter 635, Division 008, as proposed by staff.

EFFECTIVE DATE

Upon Filing