

**From:** Suzanne Linford  
**To:** [SENRR Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** Wildlife imperiled by unchecked human disturbance  
**Date:** Saturday, May 06, 2017 11:45:18 AM

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The impacts of human disturbance on wildlife are well known by wildlife biologists and naturalists, but are largely unknown or ignored when plans are made to fragment more habitat by allowing public access to every desirable recreation area. This has caused an erosion of useable habitat for wildlife, and as their habitats and connectivity to habitat patches has increasingly been developed, they are forced to flee, often stranded in yards where they cannot survive, or colliding with vehicles on transportation routes, where over 1,000 fatal collisions occur each year around Bend and Sunriver. The cost to motorists is \$6500 per collision or over \$6,500,000 per year.

The consequences of developing more public access through protected areas on the Deschutes demonstrates the continued assumption that unchecked recreational access does not come at a price, and the tipping point is near for wildlife. Mule deer are at less than 50% of their sustainability. They are the most common species run over, as they attempt to find useable habitat where they find the food they can digest. Their knowledge of migratory routes is lost however, in one generation. Does teach fawns the routes, and when they cannot, deer will be stranded in our neighborhoods where their plight is compounded by stress caused by humans (and dogs).

Humans stress wildlife at a distance of 200 meters. The direct consequences are that they will flee not only the immediate habitat, but a larger "footprint" of habitat. They particularly need habitat and connecting corridors along rivers and streams. Indirectly, they will be displaced to areas where they cannot find food that they can digest, nor cover where they can hide. Their reproductive rates will lower, and the effects of stress will compromise their resistance to disease, and their ability to escape from predators. Their survival will be at risk.

In arguments supporting the loosening of protections for the Deschutes, there is no mention of wildlife. The assumption is that continued, unchecked human use of the environment is a right that dominates all other considerations. But now, so much has been lost that every bit of undeveloped habitat is necessary for its survival.

On a recent trip to Sunriver, my grandchildren were looking forward to seeing the once abundant deer and elk they have seen in the past. However, on this trip, they saw one animal. It was a mule deer on Highway 97 waving it's broken leg in the air, waiting for a bullet to the head to end its suffering. Again, over 1,000 of these collisions occur every year - not counting the animals who are injured and move into the brush to die.

Please vote to continue what the majority of residents have voted for - support HB 2027. It's a vote for wildlife and for the environment. It's also a vote for the majority of us who want to preserve what's left of the environment.

Thank you.

Suzanne Linford