

## Hamre Jaime

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**From:** Suzanne Linford <linfordsuzanne@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2018 10:04 AM  
**To:** HAGNR Exhibits  
**Subject:** Support HB 4029, Wild and Scenic status of Deschutes River

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear House Committee,

My husband and I live in Bend, but do not live in the area of dispute, the Wild and Scenic portion of the Deschutes River. I mention this because those opposed to changing this protective designation are called those who want this stretch of the river to remain protected "NIMBYists" This is not true, not only of us, but of many residents in Bend, who fear the growing encroachment by recreation on vital wildlife habitat.

Wildlife has largely been left out of discussions on this issue, yet wildlife is the major stakeholder. The part of the river that is protected by Wild and Scenic status, is a small habitat patch that allows them access to the river, the watershed that it is connected to, and ultimately to their struggle for survival.

Mule deer are at less than 50% sustainability according to Fish and Wildlife and the Forest Service for the Deschutes National Forest.. Humans - even hikers - stress them at 200 meters. They will then flush and often abandon habitat that is in a much larger footprint than the 200 meter buffer zone. Hundreds, even thousands of bikers and hikers a year going through any area, will displace them from vital habitat. Now, over 42% of core habitat in the Upper Deschutes is gone. That is habitat that can no longer sustain terrestrial land mammals and other species.

Wildlife has fewer and fewer connections to habitat. They aren't seen in the numbers they were only a few years ago. Those deer who are in neighborhoods and yards are stranded, and they will not thrive, because they cannot digest the forage they find there. And they will attract predators, like cougars. Many have lost their knowledge of migration that is also vital to their survival. Over 1000 deer and elk a year are killed in animal vehicle collisions in Deschutes county on state, county and city roads and streets. Many more are killed by unfriendly fencing. This figure is conservative and does not account for those animals who crawl into the brush to die, nor those who are not counted by carcass retrieval because they aren't picked up.

This is why, every bit of habitat and connections to other habitat patches is critical for their continued survival. Yet, why aren't they even mentioned in arguments that focus only on human entitlements? Tim Knopp, Senator of District 27, made a very good suggestion last year when he suggested an environmental impact study. This could be done with the help of local biologists who specialized in the ecology of this area - perhaps OSU. Then the argument would include the most vulnerable stakeholders in all of this, and raise the level of the arguments to facts instead of personal attacks.

Thank you for your consideration,

Suzanne and Richard Linford