



Wildlife Memorandum

for Coffin Butte Landfill Expansion Project

For: Benton County Planning Commission

By: Turnstone Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Date: June 2, 2025

INTRODUCTION

This memorandum is to address various Planning Commissioner questions and public comment raised in response to the evidence submitted by Applicant related to wildlife.

Concerns Regarding Roosevelt Elk

- Trail camera surveillance showed that elk use the expansion area as peripheral habitat, which is considered important but not essential habitat. Their primary habitat is to the west in open fields and coastal forest areas.
- Trail cameras found a large herd using the forested area in the expansion site for limited periods (2 to 11 days) and on only three occasions during a 12-month period.

Concerns Regarding Great Blue Herons and Bald Eagles

- Turnstone biologists observed the aftermath of the nest failure event with four juvenile bald eagles visiting each Great Blue Heron nest in the eastern rookery and cannot determine the cause of the nest failure, which would be speculation.
- Eagles and herons co-exist in areas next to open water, such as in the Columbia River Gorge, where there is a known eagle nest occurring within 200 yards of an active Great Blue Heron rookery.
- Two adult eagles and typically one or two young will occupy a nest; whereas, the landfill can attract a high density of eagles. While Bald Eagles and Great Blue Herons can nest in close proximity, the high density of eagles and large flocks of other predatory birds, may pose a different threat to the rookery. It may be possible that a large congregation of Bald Eagles could ascend on a Great Blue Heron rookery and cause a collapse.
- The new location of the eastern Great Blue Heron nest site is farther away from the Coffin Butte Landfill. The Applicant will manage the expansion, if approved, in accordance with the Oregon Forest Practices Act (FPA) and all other applicable regulations.

- The FPA requires landowners to avoid disturbance within 300 feet of an active nest or rookery during the nesting season from February 15 to July 31. Forest operations are restricted within 0.25-mile of active nest trees during the critical nesting period. The new nesting site is greater than 0.25 mile from the proposed tree removal areas.
- Turnstone's opinion remains that the expansion is not posing a serious interference to wildlife in the area.

Sincerely,

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