

Appendix P

Community Assessment

DATE: March 11, 2026
TO: Deschutes County
FROM: Sabrina Robinson
SUBJECT: Horse Ridge Site Community Assessment

This site-specific community assessment memorandum describes community considerations and comments received as part of the public process for the Horse Ridge site evaluation.

Background

The Deschutes County Department of Solid Waste is working with a Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) to evaluate siting options for the new solid waste management facility. The SWAC has been meeting regularly since April 2022 to review and discuss information during the multi-step siting evaluation. During summer 2025, the SWAC recommended further study of the Horse Ridge site.

Study Area

The Horse Ridge site is an unincorporated parcel of land in Deschutes County that is comprised of four separate taxlots: 1914000000500, 1914000000600, 1914000000700, and 1914000000300. The properties are currently used for active open pit mining operations and undeveloped land.

Community Characteristics

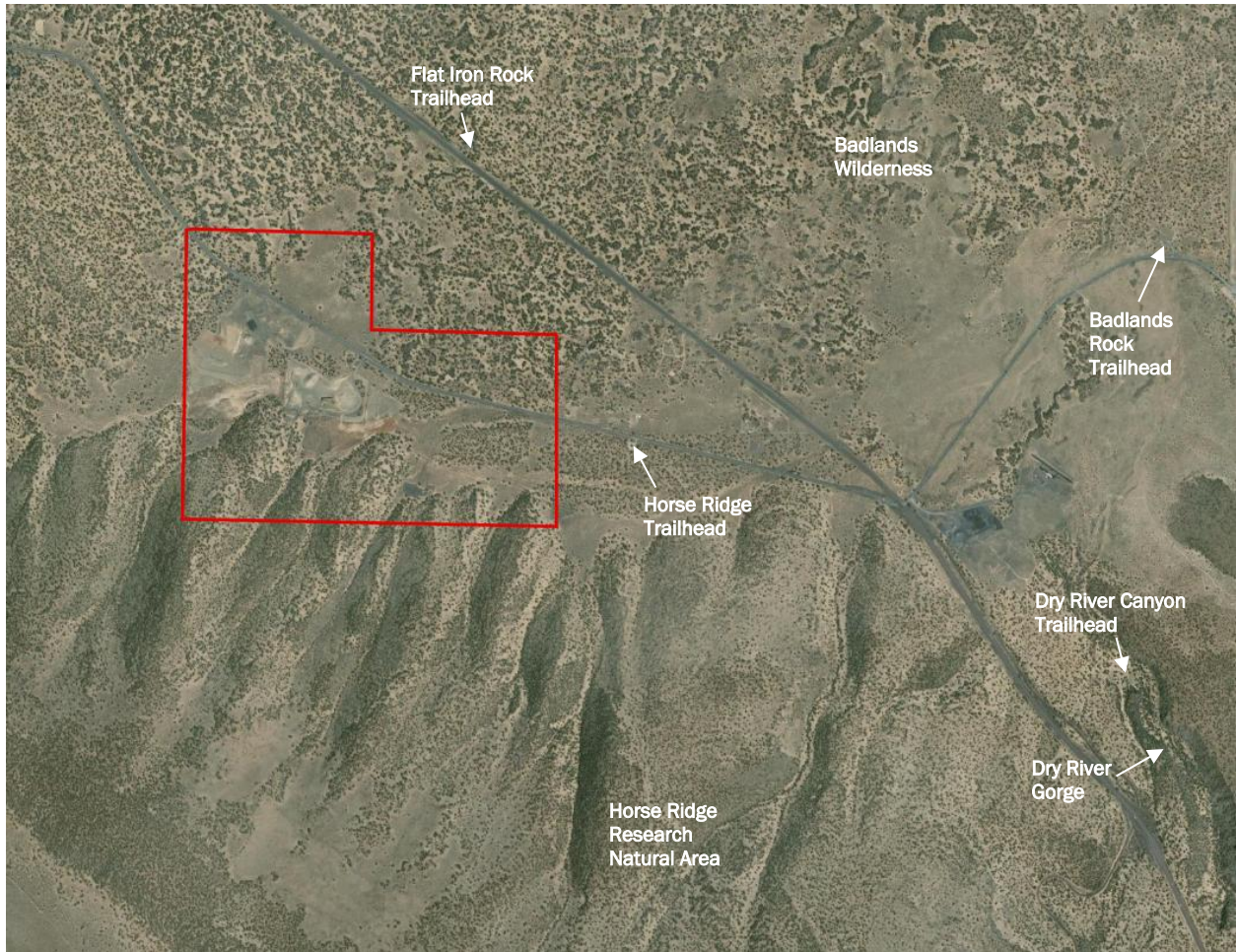
The Horse Ridge site is located in the same census tract in Deschutes County (Census Tract 1; 41017000100) as the Roth East Site. As of 2020, the census tract has a population of 2,119 people and not identified as disadvantaged. The area is rural and there are two residences located nearby. The first is located approximately 0.34 miles northwest of the project site and the second closest residence is located approximately 0.60 miles northwest of the project site. The next closest residence is located nearly 3 miles to the east.

The Horse Ridge recreation area, which provides hiking and mountain biking trails, surrounds much of the project site along the western, southern, and eastern boundaries. Two trails are adjacent to the eastern and western site boundaries.

To the southeast lies the Horse Ridge Research Natural Area approximately 0.75 miles away. The Oregon Badlands Wilderness is located across Highway 20, approximately 0.30 miles to the north/northeast, and the Dry River Gorge is located approximately 1.75 miles to the southeast, along with their associated recreational areas and trails.

The Horse Ridge Trailhead is approximately 1,016 feet from the site. Flatiron Rock Trailhead is approximately 1,917 feet to the northeast. Badlands Rock Trailhead is approximately 1.65 miles to the east and the Dry River Canyon Trailhead is approximately 1.5 miles to the southeast.





Shrub steppe habitat



Juniper woodland



Juniper woodland and gully



Active Mine Pit

Land Use

As described in the Site Development and Permitting Report, the Horse Ridge site is zoned Surface Mining (SM) and Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) - Horse Ridge Subzone with a Wildlife Area Combining Zone (WA) overlay and Surface Mining Impact Area (SMIA) overlay. Adjacent zoning includes Exclusive Farm Use (EFU) - Horse Ridge Subzone, Landscape Management Combining Zone (LM) overlay, and Wildlife Area Combining Zone (WA) overlay. Nearby zoning includes Open Space and Conservation (OS&C), Flood Plain (FP) zone, Surface Mining Impact Area (SMIA) overlay, Sage Grouse Habitat Area (Low-Density), Landscape Management Combining Zone (LM) overlay, and Wildlife Area Combining Zone (WA) overlay. There is an area of floodplain located northeast of the site.

Utilities and Services

The site is located in the eastern portion of Deschutes County, southwest of Highway 20. According to the Deschutes County Property Information website, DIAL, the site is serviced by the following providers: Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, Bend – La Pine School District, Buckingham Elementary School, Pilot Butte Middle School, Mountain View High School, High Desert Education Service District, Central Oregon Community College, and the Deschutes Public Library. A fire service provider is not identified.

Community Considerations

The County's goal is to select a location for the new facility that is acceptable to the SWAC, the general community, and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Throughout the siting evaluation process, the County has invited community input using a range of outreach methods. This section summarizes comments related to Horse Ridge that were collected during this public process.

Outreach Overview

The County's public outreach goals for the Solid Waste Management Facility siting evaluation include:

- Be transparent
- Share information county-wide
- Engage underrepresented communities

- Listen and provide feedback throughout the siting process
- Use multiple engagement tools and methods

The County has been using a range of outreach methods including updates to the BOCC, direct outreach and mailings to property owners and site neighbors, direct outreach to Tribes, briefings to community groups and public agencies, news media interviews and press releases, e-news updates, group mailings to interested parties, a community open house, and more. The County has also created a project webpage and a StoryMap dedicated to the siting evaluation process with information about the project timeline, maps, frequently asked questions, and various resource links.

The County is also working with the SWAC to evaluate siting options. SWAC members are appointed and represent incorporated cities, franchise haulers, the Environmental Center, and the community at-large. The SWAC is charged with recommending a location for the new facility to the BOCC. The BOCC will select the final location for the new long-term facility to manage waste generated within Deschutes County for at least the next 100 years.

The SWAC has been meeting regularly since April 2022 to review and discuss information during the multi-step siting evaluation. The meetings allow for in-person and online attendance and include public comment periods. As part of the siting evaluation process, County staff have received and responded to hundreds of public comments. These comments are part of the public record for the siting evaluation work and have been made available to the project team, SWAC, and BOCC.

In July 2024, the BOCC selected Moon Pit as the preferred location for the new facility; however, after purchase negotiations ceased in March 2025, the BOCC directed the SWAC to review and consider alternate sites. In August 2025, the SWAC decided to proceed with a final site evaluation to further study the Horse Ridge site.

Known Interest Areas

This section summarizes known site-specific interest areas based on a review of public comments submitted during the County's final site evaluation process. In addition to individual community members, organizations that submitted site-specific comments included the Central Oregon Trail Alliance.

Concerns expressed by local community members are generally that a new Solid Waste Management Facility would result in health risks, environmental issues, or local impacts. For the Horse Ridge site, this includes consideration of the site's proximity and potential for impacts to the Horse Ridge recreation area and associated bike trails, the Badlands Wilderness, and habitat and wildlife protection. Note that ongoing engagement could help identify strategies to mitigate potential impacts during site development and operations.

Representative comments noting ideas, issues, and concerns are highlighted below, followed by a table summary of comments relevant to the Horse Ridge site (collected between July 2025 and March 2026):

- *"As an avid mountain biker this area offers some of the best riding in the local area. The riding here is significantly different and in my opinion better than much of the area."*
- *"This place is gorgeous, the home to plenty of wildlife, and one of the highest quality hiking and mountain biking trail systems Central Oregon has to offer."*

- *“Having loud equipment, gasses, smells and potential air quality issues, along with all the traffic it would create would significantly change the "recreation" aspect of our trail system. Including changing the way nature uses this area.”*
- *“You wouldn’t put this next to a golf course, don’t put it next to Horse Ridge.”*
- *“The BLM has proposed to expand both the trail network and quadruple the parking, signaling the expected increase in user visits. As the Bend population continues to grow, mostly to the east, Horse Ridge will become even more of an indispensable recreational asset for the community in the decades to come. While a landfill would not inhibit recreation on Horse Ridge, it would fundamentally change the experience.”*

Table 1. Horse Ridge Public Comments

Date Received	Concern
2/3/2026	Recreation/bike trails at Horse Ridge
2/2/2026	Wildlife/recreation/bike trails
2/2/2026	Recreation
1/29/2026	Recreation/bike trails at Horse Ridge
1/21/2026	Recreation/bike trails at Horse Ridge
1/27/2026	Recreation/wildlife/bird habitat
1/26/2026	Wildlife/recreation/bike trails
1/26/2026	Recreation/bike trails at Horse Ridge
7/31/2025	Supports Horse Ridge as future landfill because it’s already a disturbed site

Refer to Appendix A for full comments.

Permitting Outreach

As the siting evaluation moves forward, it is likely that site neighbors, the environmental community, area recreation users, the solid waste/recycling sector, and cities within Deschutes County will remain highly interested. Additional interested parties may include neighbors of former candidate sites, members of the development community, planning and transportation agencies, and others.

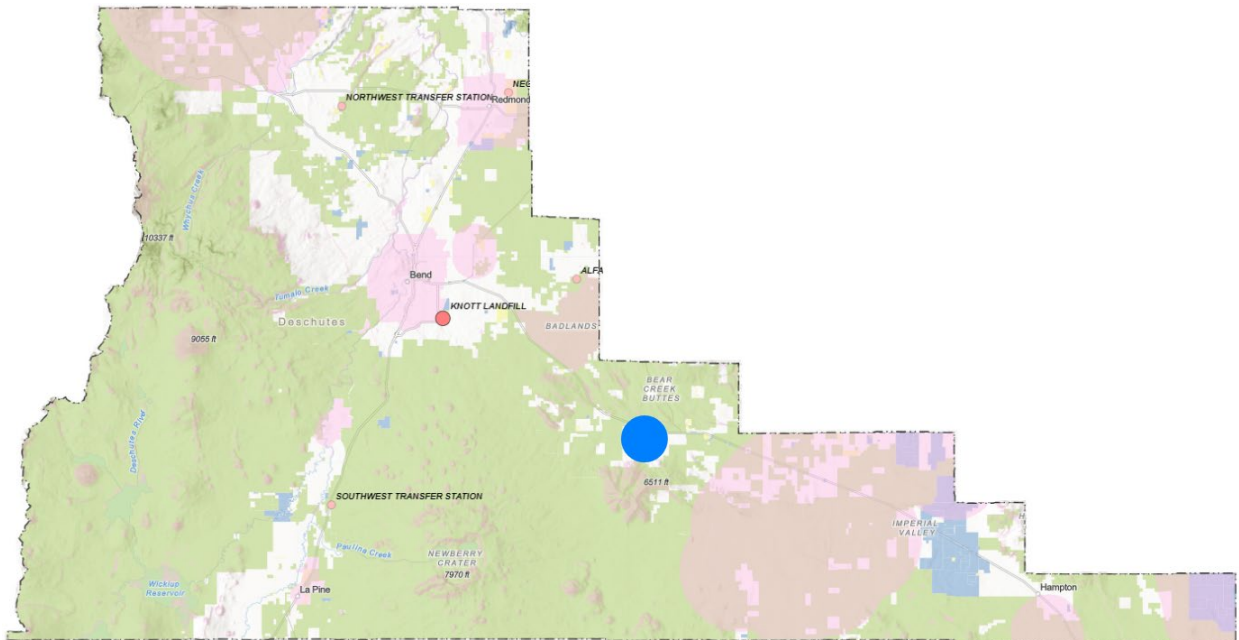
Recommended Approach

It is anticipated that the site permitting process would include additional outreach and public processes such as notifications and opportunities for comment. Along with informative outreach to the broader community, it is recommended that the County provide ongoing opportunities for two-way communication with adjacent property owners, Tribal governments, public agencies, local community groups, and interested parties to invite feedback and share information. This early consultation and information sharing can help to identify key concerns and potential solutions during permitting, design, and ongoing operations.

Suggested outreach methods include continued direct outreach, briefings, and small group discussions with stakeholder organizations and interested parties. In addition, engagement with neighbors could include onsite meetings to discuss property-specific considerations, small information session gatherings, tours of comparable facilities, and joint development of a Good Neighbor Plan. Continuing to hold periodic meetings with the SWAC is another suggested means of sharing information, inviting input, and creating opportunities for public comment.

Roth East Site-Specific Community Assessment

April 2024



Prepared for:
Deschutes County Department of Solid Waste

Prepared by:
Consor North America Inc.

Introduction

This site-specific community assessment memorandum was prepared to support Deschutes County Department of Solid Waste's Solid Waste Management Facility siting evaluation process. Deschutes County's only landfill, Knott Landfill, is expected to be at capacity by 2029. As a result, the County is working to identify a location for a new facility to meet the needs of its communities for the next 100 years. The new facility is part of the County's overall strategy to provide sustainable waste solutions, including ongoing recycling, composting, and other waste diversion programs.

The County is committed to an open and transparent process and is working with a Solid Waste Advisory Committee (SWAC) to evaluate siting options. This memorandum summarizes community considerations and comments received as part of this public process for Roth East, one of two finalist sites being evaluated. Moon Pit is the other site under consideration.

Background

In 2018, anticipating the need for a new disposal facility, the County began proactively exploring options to manage its future solid waste and worked through a public process with the SWAC to develop a roadmap. The resulting Solid Waste Management Plan was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in 2019 and provides direction for the new landfill to be sited within Deschutes County. As part of the public involvement process, community members supported continuing to manage solid waste locally, which will be more affordable for ratepayers and have fewer carbon emission impacts when compared to hauling waste out-of-county.

In 2022, the County began a multi-step screening and evaluation process to identify potential locations for a new facility. An early step was to develop siting criteria in collaboration with the SWAC. The criteria were adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in July 2022 and include environmental considerations, distance from population centers, soil characteristics, and property size. These criteria have been applied through multiple screening steps to narrow to two potential finalist sites. Throughout, the County has been working to share information with the community and collect public input in writing and during public meetings held with the SWAC.

Study Area

Roth East (Site 201500-301) is an unincorporated parcel of land in Deschutes County that is currently undeveloped and used for grazing. It is the County's intent to identify a location for the new solid waste management facility and enter into negotiations with a willing seller. As such, the County is engaged in direct outreach with the Roth East property owners.

Community Characteristics

The Roth East and Moon Pit sites are within the same census tract in unincorporated Deschutes County (41017000100). The census tract population is approximately 1,962 people and is not identified as

disadvantaged. There are two known residences within one mile of the Roth East site and eight within two miles of the site location.

There are a variety of active recreational uses in the vicinity of the site, including an off-road vehicle trail system, a Pine Mountain launch area for paragliders and hang gliders, a shooting range, and general outdoor use by mountain bikers, hikers, birdwatchers, and others.



Image of undeveloped site (left) and nearby off-road vehicle trail (right).

Land Use

As described in the Development and Permitting Report, Roth East is zoned Exclusive Farm Use-Horse Ridge Subzone with the overlays of Forest Use 1, Landscape Management-Combining Zone, Sage Grouse Habitat Area-Low Density, Surface Mining Impact Area, and Wildlife Area Combining Zone. The Surface Mining Impact Area overlay only covers a small area in the northernmost portion of the lot. The existing use is rural undeveloped land that is used for grazing. Surrounding zoning includes Exclusive Farm Use-Horse Ridge Subzone, Surface Mining, and Forest Use 1.

Utilities and Services

The site is in the eastern portion of the County south of Highway 20. As listed on the County's Dial site, service providers include Deschutes County Sheriff's Office, Crook County Schools, High Desert Education Service District, Central Oregon Community College, and Deschutes Public Library. A fire service provider is not identified.

Community Considerations

The County's goal is to select a location for the new facility that is acceptable to the SWAC, the general community, and the Board of County Commissioners. Throughout the siting evaluation, the County has invited community input using a range of outreach methods. This section summarizes comments related to Roth East that were collected during this public process.

Outreach Overview

The County's public outreach goals for the Solid Waste Management Facility siting evaluation include:

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The County has been using a range of outreach methods including updates to the Board of County Commissioners, direct outreach and mailings to property owners and site neighbors, direct outreach to Tribes, briefings to community groups and public agencies, news media interviews and press releases, e-news updates, group mailings to interested parties, a community open house, and more. The County has also created a project webpage and a StoryMap dedicated to the siting evaluation process with information about the project timeline, maps, frequently asked questions, and various resource links.

The County is also working with the SWAC to evaluate siting options. SWAC members are appointed and represent incorporated cities, franchise haulers, the Environmental Center, and the community at-large. The SWAC is charged with recommending a location for the new facility to the Board of County Commissioners. The Board will select the final location for the new long-term 100-year facility to manage waste generated within Deschutes County.

The SWAC has been meeting regularly since April 2022 to review and discuss information during the multi-step siting evaluation. The meetings allow for in-person and online attendance and include public comment periods. As part of the siting evaluation process, County staff have received and responded to hundreds of public comments. These comments are part of the public record for the siting evaluation work and have been made available to the project team, SWAC, and Board of County Commissioners.

In June 2023, the SWAC recommended further study of the Roth East and Moon Pit finalist sites. The comments referenced below were collected between December 2022 and October 2023.

Known Interest Areas

This section summarizes known site-specific interest areas based on a review of public comments submitted during the County’s siting evaluation public process. In addition to individual community members, organizations that submitted site-specific comment included University of Oregon Department of Physics/Pine Mountain Observatory, United States Hang Gliding and Paragliding Association, East Cascades Audubon Chapter, and Oregon Natural Desert Association. The Central Oregon Shooting Sports Association was also referenced in comments.

Concerns expressed by local community members are generally that a new Solid Waste Management Facility would result in health risks, environmental issues, or local impacts. For the Roth East site, this includes consideration of potential local impacts to Millican Valley residents (groundwater, litter, odor, traffic), light pollution and related impacts to the Pine Mountain Observatory, habitat and wildlife protection, and potential disruption of area recreation uses such as paragliding. Note that ongoing engagement could help identify strategies to mitigate potential impacts during site development and operations.

Representative comments noting ideas, issues, and concerns are highlighted below, followed by a table summary of comments relevant to the Roth East site.

- *“The proposed landfills will have an adverse affect upon the landowners in the Millican Valley.”*
- *“...there is a particularly high density of recreational property owners and ranchers in the Millican valley that value this area for its natural resources, ,dark skies , hiking, exploring, mountain biking, paragliding, hang gliding, and birdwatching, maintaining this environment free of wind blown*

debris (area of high winds) , mal odours, polluted aquifers, and free of interrupted Sage grouse and game corridors is paramount.”

- *“Pine Mountain Observatory is a huge asset for the county and would be negatively affected by light pollution from the facility.”*
- *“...the biggest concern we have with respect to the proposed landfill sites is the light pollution that will be caused by the facility. There is simply no way to preserve the dark skies near PMO [Pine Mountain Observatory] if there is development of the areas near the base of the mountain... Other issues related to locating the landfill near PMO would be the detrimental effect of much more traffic near the mountain which would inevitably inject more dust and small particles into the atmosphere and the potential burning off and outgassing from the facility which would add to local turbulence in the atmosphere.”*
- *“...the methane fires that are present at landfills will create very dangerous and violent thermal activity. Hang Glider and Paraglider pilots can’t simply just remain clear of these violent destructive thermals because they can’t be seen, and because they snake upward in very unpredictable ways.”*
- *“Please consider the wind in the millican valley area. A land full site put in the area the wind blows most of the time. We will have garbage clear to Burns.”*
- *“This area is very sparsely treed. It is not uncommon to see wind speeds sustained 30-50 mph. There is a real potential for dust and debris to be spread over a large area.”*
- *“Endangered Bald and Golden Eagles live and hunt in the Millican Valley year-round and would be threatened by collisions with structures that obstruct flight paths, disturbance at nest sites, habitat loss, and environmental contamination.”*
- *“The region extending from the borders of the Badlands to the Millican Valley is within the Wildlife Combining Zone that includes the Antelope Migration Zone and is adjacent to the North Paulina Deer Winter Range.”*
- *“Danger to the aquifer under the Millican Valley – there are currently wells depending on this water source. Sandy soils and lack of proper silts and clays do not provide a non-permeable layer and allow for leachate contamination.”*
- *“Once again I want to point out the importance of the Aquifer under the Millican Valley. None of us can deny the importance of water to Deschutes county. To contaminate that water would be devastating to the future, and to all the future generations that come after us.”*
- *“Distance and drive time from transfer stations and the big hill over Horse Ridge will increase the carbon footprint of the project. Additionally, weather conditions can pose increased risk during winter travel.”*

The table below provides a summary of the public comment record maintained by the County and shared with the SWAC as part of the siting evaluation public process. Note that initial consideration of the Roth site was refined to look at a Roth West and a Roth East site based on discussion with the SWAC. In addition, some comments identified in this summary reference the area (e.g., Millican Valley, Pine Mountain Observatory) but not the specific site. The full record is available through the County’s project webpage at deschutescounty.gov/managethefuture.

		12.15.22- 1.9.23	1.10.23- 2.13.23	2.14.23- 3.13.23	3.14.23- 4.10.23	4.11.23- 5.8.23	5.9.23- 6.12.23	6.13.23- 8.8.23	8.9.23- 10.9.23	
Total Comments		47	234	7	8	3	1	0	0	300
General		2	12	6	3					23
Zoning	Wildlife Zoning	34	208		1					243
	Landfill Overlay	2								2
	Zoning General	2	8							10
Property	Residence Impacts	34	3	2	3	1	1			44
	Property Value	2	1							3
	Health	1	1	1						3
Transportation	Truck Access Route									0
	Self Haul Distance	1	10							11
	Traffic	34	12		3					49
	Haul Distance	36	6		1					43
Wildlife	Wildlife General	3	220		3	1				227
	Raven Impact	3	23							26
	Sage Grouse	37	233	2	1	1				274
	Eagles and Raptors	35	231	3	1	1				271

	Antelope		5	2	1					8
	Bats		20							20
	Deer	34	210		1					245
	Elk		205	2	1					208
	Cougar		205							205
	Rodent Impact	1	3							4
Recreation	Recreation General	3	215	4	2	1				225
	Paragliders	37	85	4	3	1	1			131
	OHV	34	12		2		1			49
	Shooting	32	3		2					37
	Hiking	2	8	1	2	1				14
	Horses	34	11							45
	Biking	34	3	1	2	1	1			42
Environmental	Litter	1	10	1	2	3				17
	Air	36	16							52
	Groundwater	37	25		4	1	1			68
	Noise	35	230	1	1					267
	Light	37	14	2	2	1				56
	Odor	33	11	1	3	1				49
	Visual	35	11	3	3		1			53

	Snow/Ice	34	3		1					38
	Dust	1	2	1	1					5
	Wind	1			1	2				4
Engineering	Floodplain	1	8							9
	Topography	32	11							43
	Soils	32	15		1	1				49
Other	Badlands Impact	1	21							22
	Pine Mountain Observatory	36	16	3	5		1			61
	Cultural Resources	35	5	1	1	1				43
	Growth	1								1
	Vectors (Birds, Rats)		1							1
	Airports	2	2	1						5
	Wildfire		1							1
	Selection Process									0
	Communications	1								1
	School									0

Permitting Outreach

As the siting evaluation moves forward, it is likely that site neighbors, the environmental community, area recreation users, the solid waste/recycling sector, and cities within Deschutes County will remain highly interested. Additional interested parties may include neighbors of former candidate sites, members of the development community, planning and transportation agencies, and others.

Recommended Approach

It is anticipated that the site permitting process would include additional outreach and public process such as notifications and opportunities for comment. Along with informative outreach for the broader community, it is recommended to provide ongoing opportunities for two-way communication with adjacent property owners, Tribal governments, public agencies, local community groups, and interested parties to invite feedback and share information. This early consultation and information sharing can help to identify key concerns and potential solutions during permitting, design, and ongoing operations.

Suggested outreach methods include continued direct outreach, briefings, and small group discussions with stakeholder organizations and interested parties. In addition, engagement with neighbors could include backyard visits to discuss property-specific considerations, small information session gatherings, tours of comparable facilities, and joint development of a Good Neighbor Plan. Continuing to hold periodic meetings with the SWAC is another suggested means of sharing information, inviting input, and creating opportunities for public comment.