

Your **Business**

710-acre farm parcel near Terrebonne rezoned as 10-acre rural residential plots

BY ANNA KAMINSKI
CO Media Group

The Deschutes County Commission rezoned 710 acres of farmland west of Terrebonne on Nov. 21, allowing the property to be carved up into 71 10-acre residential plots.

After a lengthy public hearings process and more than 300 public comments both for and against the proposal to change the land from agricultural use to residential use, the commission voted 2-1 to follow the recommendation of the hearings officer in June.

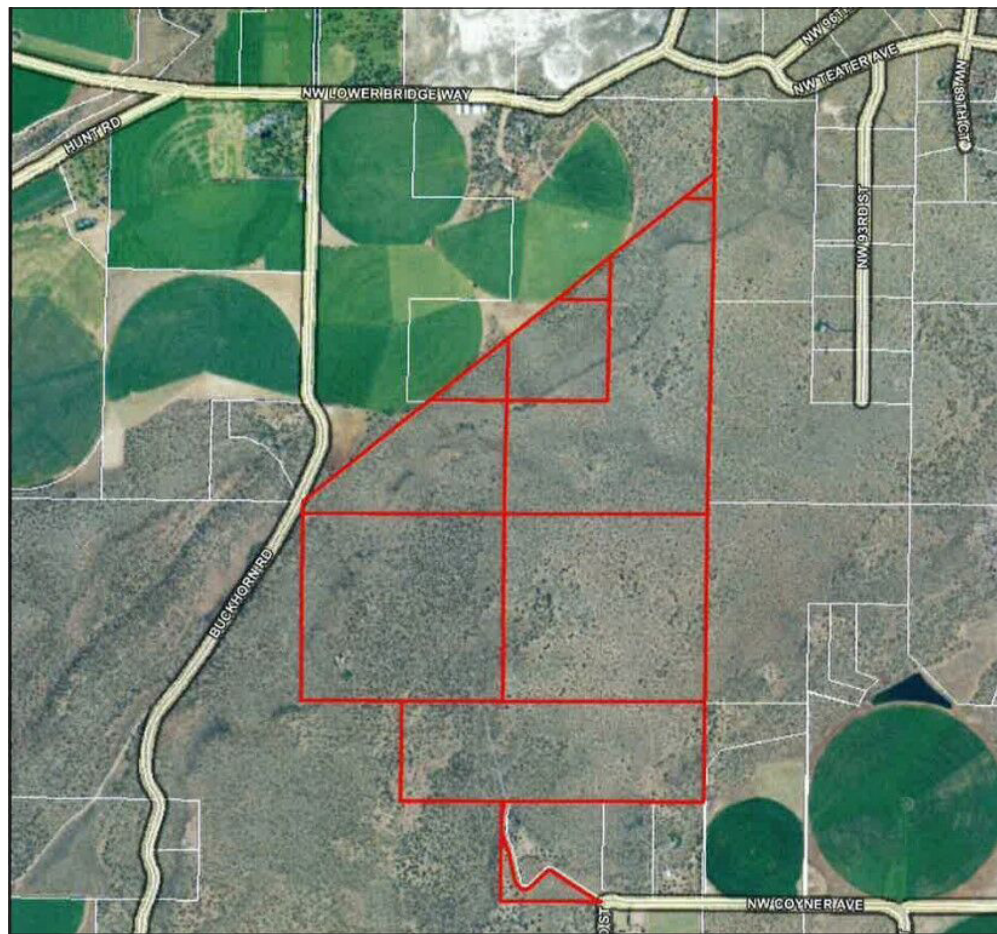
At the heart of the proposal was whether the land, which is located near NW Coyner Avenue, was viable for agricultural use, but that's not the only concern among those in opposition. Some had concerns for traffic impacts to neighboring farms and ranches, groundwater use and wildlife and mule deer migration.

However, the hearings officer decided in April that the soil quality on the land was inadequate for agricultural use.

Commissioners Patti Adair and Tony DeBane were among supporters of the proposed changes. They voted in favor of the changes Monday while Commissioner Phil Chang voted against them.

"Speculative rezones like this are driving up the price of land and are making it more difficult for farmers and ranchers to do their agricultural business," Chang said Monday.

The applicant — 710 Properties, operating on behalf of the landowner Eden Central



Map courtesy Deschutes County

The Deschutes County Commission on Monday rezoned 710 acres of land northwest of Redmond from agricultural to residential use, allowing homes to be built on 10-acre lots.

Properties — seeks the zoning change to allow up to 71 homes across the acreage, or at least 10-acres per individual residential plot.

The company purchased the land in November 2020 and is planning a completely self-sustaining, solar-powered community, according to Mark Stockamp of 710 Properties, which is based in Sisters. There is already

one resident living on the land that uses solar power, Stockamp said.

"We need housing of all types right now," Stockamp said. "We strongly believe every house counts."

The applicants partnered with four nonprofits who will receive some proceeds from the development.

One of those is Furnish Hope,

a Bend-based organization that donates furniture and other home essentials to those in need throughout the tri-county area.

Many have criticized the proposal throughout the hearings and approval process, which began in April.

"We've been proactive from the beginning with understanding the science behind our land and what it's conducive for,"

Stockamp said. "Really, what everything has pointed toward is this land has never been farmed, and so what is it more conducive to?"

Per county rules, zoning change applicants are required to conduct a soil quality evaluation and a traffic impact analysis. Stockamp said they wanted to better understand the land before they began any development. In addition to county requirements, the applicants hired a wildfire consultant, a wildlife biologist and other environmental and farming experts to ensure ethical development, Stockamp said.

One of those recruits was Matt Cyrus, a sixth-generation Central Oregonian and the president of the Deschutes County Farm Bureau.

"There's nothing about that property that is agricultural, quite frankly," Cyrus said. He raises hay, cattle and industrial hemp in Sisters.

He said the land broken up into 10-acre parcels would be able to produce more agricultural product than a large parcel like 710 acres. Smaller parcels open up the possibility for hobby farms, greenhouses or a few animals, Cyrus said.

Ultimately, it's poor quality land for cattle grazing, he said.

"Even a cow for grazing is going to have to chase the grass to go find it," Cyrus said.

Ian Isaacson, co-chair of the Oregon chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, is concerned with the well-being of mule deer populations that migrate through Central Oregon

as seasons change.

"Any little disruption in their patterns can have devastating effects," Isaacson said.

Any time migration corridors are disrupted, wild animal populations are detrimentally impacted, and fawns, or young deer, are at particular risk, Isaacson said.

While Isaacson said he does not want to see any type of development on this land, this particular flavor of scattered development is worse than higher density residences where open spaces can still be left for wildlife.

Three state agencies — the Department of Land Conservation and Development, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Fish and Wildlife — opposed the changes in a letter saying the soil evaluations don't paint the full picture.

Lands like these promote open space, recreation, wild animal habitats and a buffer to protect working farms and forests, the agencies said in the joint letter.

"Remoteness, an absence of basic services and a susceptibility to natural hazards like wildland fire are all reasons why rural areas are not well suited to residential settlement even if they have little value for forestry or agricultural production," the letter read.

Chang has opposed the proposal since April. He didn't agree with the way the hearings officer interpreted the situation, he said.

■ 541-633-2160

akaminski@bendbulletin.com

Country Natural Beef collects data for regenerative ranching

Redmond-based co-op leads \$10M study

BY GEORGE PLAVEN
CO Media Group

PHILOMATH — A small herd of cattle grazed lazily on a bright and sunny November afternoon in the tall grass at Dan Barnhart's ranch along the Luckiamute River, surrounded by densely forested mountain sides.

It is a scene evoking the environmental ethos of Country Natural Beef, a Redmond-based, rancher-owned cooperative that prides itself on sustainable practices and animal welfare.

The co-op is now working to reinforce that ideology with science. Earlier this year, members began collecting baseline data about their operations for a new program, called Grazewell, that will measure the overall health of the land and suggest methods for improvement.

Grazewell is supported by a five-year, \$10 million USDA grant in partnership with Sustainable Northwest, an Oregon nonprofit focused on natural resource stewardship.

Advocates say the program will be the largest climate-smart ranching initiative in the U.S., sequestering up to 26 million metric tons of carbon dioxide over 6.5 million acres managed by Country Natural Beef in 11 states across the West.

That's equivalent to removing 1.3 billion cars from the road for one year.

"We know ranchers can be part of the climate solution while also supporting clean water and wildlife habitat," said Dan Probert, marketing director for Country Natural Beef. "We've seen it, and we've done it. Now we're going to measure it, track it and prove it."

The first step, Probert said, is to gather baseline data from each individual ranch, with help from Sustainable Northwest.

Dallas Hall Defrees, regenerative ranching program director for the nonprofit, said that work involves assessing bare ground, composition of grasses, soil organic matter and water infiltration, among other metrics for healthy ecosystems.

Once the initial data is in hand, Defrees said they can then prescribe specific management practices for ranches to improve — things like rotating cows to avoid overgrazing pastures, and adding cover crops to avoid erosion and water runoff.

After five years, Defrees said they will revisit each ranch to quantify the benefits.

"I think a lot of times, ranchers are focused on the task at hand," she said. "So, I think it's really beneficial to look at the science over a five-year period to see, was this thing I was doing working? Was it working as well as I was hoping?"

About 40 ranches will be enrolled in Grazewell each year, starting with members of Country Natural Beef and several tribe-owned ranches. The USDA grant also covers educational programs, training and



George Plaven/Capital Press

From left: Dallas Hall Defrees, regenerative ranching program director for Sustainable Northwest; Dan Probert, marketing director for Country Natural Beef; and Dan Barnhart gather at Barnhart's ranch along the Luckiamute River in Western Oregon.

peer-to-peer working groups for producers.

For Barnhart, he said his ranch will likely be enrolled in 2023. He raises about 60 yearling cows each year for Country Natural Beef.

Barnhart already practices rotational grazing, dividing his pasture into smaller paddocks where cows graze for a few days before they are moved. This allows forage in grazed paddocks time to regrow, increasing the land's productivity.

"The soil here is the basis of what my farm will produce," Barnhart said. "The better care I can take of the soils, the better production I have."

From a consumer perspective, Probert said Grazewell will allow the co-op to show how ranchers are taking care of their land.

"All of us as ranchers are going to have to be able to tell the story of the good things we're doing on the ground," Probert said. "Grazewell will be just one more attribute that will set us apart from everyone else, and that gives us leverage in the meat case."



George Plaven/Capital Press

Cows graze in pasture at Dan Barnhart's small ranch near Philomath, Ore. Members of Country Natural Beef have begun collecting baseline data for a new regenerative ranching program, called Grazewell.

FOOD FOR FEBRUARY

DECEMBER 1-31

December 1st marks the start of our annual fundraiser, Food for February. Come in anytime in December and let your cashier know how much you'd like to donate. We'll match your donation dollar-for-dollar up to \$5,000. All donations will benefit Bethlehem Inn of Redmond.

- You Donate
- We Match
- Food is Purchased at Wholesale
- We Feed Our Neighbors

OLIVER LEMON'S
LOCALLY FOUNDED • EMPLOYEE OWNED
not your usual market

541.548.2603 • 8431 11TH STREET, TERREBONNE • OLIVERLEMONS.COM