

# Enhancement Strategies

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The first purpose of the Scenic Area Act is "to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge" [Section 3(1)]. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (C. and G. Merriam Co. 1977) defines "enhance" in the following ways: 1) to raise, and 2) to make greater (as in value, desirability, or attractiveness.)

This chapter includes the Management Plan's specific objectives for enhancement of the resources of the

Columbia River Gorge. The subjects covered include scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources, as well as forest and agricultural lands and emergency services. Some of these objectives are also referenced in the specific chapters on a particular resource or land use designation. For the most part, the enhancement strategies represent non-regulatory approaches to achieve enhancement objectives. These strategies include landowner incentives, technical assistance, educational programs, and voluntary intergovernmental agreements.

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## OVERALL GMA AND SMA ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

### GMA/SMA Objectives

1. Encourage the establishment of a public or private conservancy to acquire or otherwise protect those lands within the GMA for which the Management Plan cannot offer adequate protection without denying a reasonable economic use. Seek funds to enhance the conservancy capability in the Scenic Area. Seek acquisition priority for tracts of private land designated Open Space; for other lands with sensitive scenic, cultural, or natural resources; and for lands whose owners are confronted with unusual hardship resulting from application of policies or guidelines in the Management Plan.

2. In consultation with state and federal agencies, the counties, and the Indian tribes, develop handbooks for landowners to inform them of opportunities to protect and enhance natural and scenic resources on their lands, including assistance programs offered by state and federal agencies.
3. Establish a Vegetation Advisory Committee to advise the Gorge Commission, the Forest Service, the Washington and Oregon Departments of Transportation, and county road departments on improvement of vegetation management techniques to protect scenic, cultural, and natural resources.

## **SCENIC RESOURCES ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **GMA/SMA Objectives**

1. Screen or improve the appearance of discordant features in the landscape.
  - A. In conjunction with local governments, develop an inventory of discordant features in the Gorge landscape.
  - B. Establish a program of incentives to bring existing structures into compliance with guidelines for scenic resources, prioritizing discordant features in the foreground of scenic travel corridors.
    - (1) Rehabilitate roadcuts and other disturbed areas in the landscape.
    - (2) Encourage removal of abandoned structures.
    - (3) Encourage removal or replacement of signs that do not conform to the sign guidelines for the GMA (Part I, Chapter 1: Scenic Resources) and the SMA (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
    - (4) Work with local governments to offer technical assistance and design suggestions to private developers.
  - C. Establish coordinated, cooperative programs with the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation, the Bonneville Power Administration, utilities, and the railroads to reduce the visual effect of existing facilities. The programs should:
    - (1) Encourage the railroads and utilities to place signal wires and powerlines underground where they are visually dominant and detract from the visual quality of the landscape.
    - (2) Encourage the use of visually subordinate colors on existing equipment.

- (3) Encourage improvement of existing rights-of-way by restoring vegetation to its natural appearance.
- (4) Encourage the use of integrated practices in managing vegetation in the foreground of scenic travel corridors.

D. Undertake the following activities in the SMA:

- (1) Revegetate clearcuts and disturbed areas with native vegetation wherever appropriate.
- (2) In the Gorge Walls, Canyons, and Wildlands setting, obliterate and revegetate unused and closed roads and remove non-historic structures or other developed features.
- (3) Acquire scenic easements, where necessary, to reduce development pressures and maintain uses that exemplify the landscape setting.

2. Improve the visual and recreational quality of the scenic travel corridors by implementing the recommendations in the Corridors Visual Inventory (April 1990) and the highway corridor strategies for Washington State Route 14, Interstate 84, the Historic Columbia River Highway.

A. Develop a memorandum of understanding with the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation to carry out the recommendations in the Corridors Visual Inventory.

B. Encourage the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation to take the following measures to improve the visual quality of scenic travel corridors:

- (1) Place reflectors on guardrails rather than on free-standing posts.
- (2) Remove unnecessary highway signs; consolidate necessary signs where possible.
- (3) Replace sections of white guardrail where white contrasts noticeably with gray or galvanized sections.
- (4) Eliminate unnecessary construction berms.
- (5) Close unused road accesses from scenic travel corridors.
- (6) Eliminate maintenance stockpile sites that are visible from scenic travel corridors.

- (7) Create or restore openings in vegetation along Washington State Route 14, Interstate 84, and the Historic Columbia River Highway to provide or improve views of the Columbia River and the walls of the Gorge in a manner that does not adversely affect scenic, cultural, natural, or recreation resources of the Scenic Area.
  - C. Encourage communities along scenic travel corridors to enhance the entries to their communities.
  - D. Provide Forest Service cost-share funding, including recreation funds, in order to encourage the placement of Scenic Area entry signs consistent with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Graphic Signing System.
3. Encourage federal and state agencies to monitor air quality and visibility in the Scenic Area, and utilize the results of such monitoring in developing and updating the regional air quality protection and enhancement strategy described in SMA Natural Resources Wildlife and Plants Policy 15 (Part I, Chapter 3: Natural Resources).
  4. Encourage timber operators in the GMA to protect scenic values in scenic travel corridors, using the following measures:
    - A. Ask project applicants to seek technical assistance to protect scenic values.
    - B. Encourage the Forest Service or other appropriate resources to provide technical assistance to project applicants and/or local government.
    - C. Encourage project applicants to design appropriate clearcut size, location, and pattern.
    - D. Encourage use of conservation easements to mitigate project impacts and recognize property values.

## **CULTURAL RESOURCES ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES**

### **GMA/SMA Objectives**

1. Increase understanding of and appreciation for cultural resources.
  - A. Promote educational and interpretive programs that increase public awareness of cultural resources.
  - B. Develop cooperative programs with Native Americans to enhance public understanding of their cultural history.