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To: Gorge Commissioners
From: Brian Litt, Planning Manager
Subject: Addendum to May Staff Report on Agency Performance Measures
Date: May 28, 2009

Action Requested

Staff requests the Commission approve as final the agency performance measures (APMs) recommended by the Executive Committee and presented by staff in May.

Summary of Executive Committee Recommendation

At its May 7, 2009 meeting, the Executive Committee recommended Commission approval of twelve agency performance measures. The recommended APMs include three new measures for forest lands, monitoring and enforcement. The Committee also recommended revising the time frame for one measure approved as a proxy measure by the Commission in March (APM 6.3(a)). The Committee's recommended measures are listed on the last page of this report.

Summary of Comments Received and Response

To date, staff has received the following four written comments: Commissioner Sara Grigsby (1/27/09); Bob Leipper (2/1/09); Friends of the Columbia Gorge Conservation Director Michael Lang (4/13/09); and Wasco County Planning Director Todd Cornett (5/21/09). Copies of these comments are enclosed with this report ('Attachment A'), are posted on the Commission's website and will be available at the June 9, 2009 Commission meeting. Any additional comments received before the June 9, 2009 Commission meeting will be distributed at the meeting.

Three comment letters suggested several new performance measures, while two also suggested new or revised strategies. Two commenters also raised concerns about limitations or lack of clarity for several proposed APMs. One commenter expressed support for the twelve measures recommended by the Executive Committee and presented at the May 12, 2009 Commission meeting.

These comment letters include many good and measurable suggestions. Some would measure outputs rather than outcomes (e.g. the total number of agricultural uses approved and built). While they may generate data that could be useful in the future, they don't in and of themselves necessarily reflect Commission performance. Some other suggested measures are more outcome-based but would require more extensive field investigations by professional experts not on the Commission staff.

The scope of the APMs is focused on how well the Gorge Commission carried out its key strategies and how well the strategies are working. In designing this set of new performance measures, staff, Consultant Jeff Tryens and the Executive Committee sought to: 1) create a manageable list of APMs the Commission could report on regularly; and 2) identify priority strategies and measures that capture a cross-section of important Commission responsibilities for key topic areas. This requires being selective, and allows for a few measures per topic.

The proposed final APMs were influenced by comments received in several ways. For example, staff and the Committee agreed with a recommendation to delete a measure of new jobs created as a result of economic development grants and loans. APMs 6.1 (implementation and compliance monitoring) and 6.3 (enforcement) were revised to improve both their clarity and usefulness, in response to comments received. Also, several suggestions were made in two comment letters to expand reporting on Gorge wide enforcement activity. As is described in more detail below under 'Recommendations', staff is working towards a goal of including additional information on Gorge wide enforcement in future annual enforcement reports prepared by the Commission.

Cumulative Effects and Performance Measures

At the May 12 meeting, some Commissioners asked staff to address comments about how cumulative effects relate to APMs in general and, specifically, to APM 1.1 (scenic resources). First, on a broad level, as noted in the May 8, 2009 memo to the Commission, many APMs align with Vital Signs Indicators (VSIs). This will help the Commission evaluate the cumulative effects of plan implementation on the condition of Gorge resources. To do this requires having information on implementation results (through the APMs), information about the condition of the resources (VSIs), and then making linkages between the two. APMs can provide 'building blocks' to help assess cumulative effects but do not in and of themselves provide such an assessment.

One comment suggested revising APM 1.1 to measure whether developments are individually and cumulatively visually subordinate as seen from key viewing areas. Management Plan guidelines to ensure new development is visually subordinate from key viewing areas (KVAs) require consideration of cumulative effects. The conditions applied to new development visible from KVAs take cumulative effects into account when designing the development to meet the visual quality objective of visual subordination. Knowing which developments are not visually subordinate to their setting (and thus inconsistent with Management Plan policy) is crucial to understanding how plan implementation may be contributing to cumulative effects. Cumulative effects analysis will require looking at scenic conditions on the viewshed level, building upon this basic information.

In summary, assessing cumulative effects is important, and information from APMs will contribute valuable information to such assessments. Understanding cumulative effects will require further analysis beyond the scope of agency performance measures. The measures recommended by the Executive Committee provide a practical way to help the Commission evaluate its performance, and contribute to understanding the cumulative effects of plan implementation as well.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Gorge Commission approve the twelve agency performance measures recommended by the Executive Committee at their May 7, 2009 meeting. They reflect a strategic cross-section of measures that evaluate priority strategies and take into account agency resources. These measures significantly improve and expand upon the measures we are committing to report on regarding agency performance. They include several key topics not addressed in the current set of Key Performance Measures (e.g. enforcement, snrcr's implementation). As noted during the May meeting, some APMs may not have reportable data in the next fiscal year.

The proposed APMs include four new measures evaluating the Commission's role in monitoring land use decisions and enforcement. As reported last month, staff has begun collecting data Gorge-wide on enforcement activity in Scenic Area counties. As part of this effort, staff anticipates expanding the scope of our annual enforcement reports in the future, as time and resources allow, to include summary information about new and resolved enforcement cases Gorge-wide for the year being reported. This broadened scope of reporting would provide a better picture than we have now of how the Act and Management Plan are being implemented and enforced throughout the Scenic Area.

LIST OF AGENCY PERFORMANCE MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

APM 1.1: Percent and number of approved and built developments under the Management Plan that are visually subordinate, where required, from key viewing areas.

APM 2.1: Percent and number of applications submitted in the vicinity of sensitive natural resources where plans were modified to avoid sensitive areas.

APM 3.2(a): Percent and number of farm dwellings approved since the Management Plan that are on farms with current agriculture use at a level that meets the agriculture income test in the Management Plan.

APM 3.2(b): Percent and number of decisions for new dwellings approved on Small Woodlands that properly applied requirements for enrollment in tax deferral programs.

APM 4.1: Percent and number of applications submitted on sites with identified cultural resources where plans were modified to avoid significant cultural resources.

APM 6.1(a): 1) Percent and number of county decisions where Gorge Commission comments were addressed in the decision: a) fully; b) partially.

APM 6.1(b): Percent and number of approved, built developments for Gorge Commission-issued decisions that comply with conditions of approval.

APM 6.3(a): Percent and number of reported alleged violations with investigation initiated within 30 days.

APM 6.3(b): Percent of resolved violations in Klickitat County that were resolved cooperatively in the last year.

APM 7.1: Percent of Gorge Commission customers who rate Commission services and actions as 'good' or 'very good' for: a. timeliness, b. accuracy, c. helpfulness, d. expertise, e. information, f. availability, and g. overall quality. (Per Oregon state government guidance.)

APM 7.2: Percent of development reviews that are issued within the required timeframe.

APM 7.3: Percent of Commission decisions and regulations appealed to court since 1994 that are affirmed.

Enclosure