

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Recreation Resort Plan Amendment

- “Will the amendment allow a private, gated residential community or become a residential enclave?”

No, the new use under consideration is a “recreation resort”. This is defined as a master planned-development oriented toward short-term accommodation. Proposed policy for recreation resort requires that all accommodation units shall be designed for, and uses limited to short-term occupancy. The resort also has design and use requirements for units that direct the use to this end. Any resort approved must be consistent with the definition and policies for the recreation resort.

- “How will the public have access to recreation in a private resort?”

The resort must provide on-site recreation development that are and enhancement to recreation resources. This recreation development must be consistent with the recreation development guidelines in the Management Plan. These guidelines specify that recreation facilities must be open to the public. The Commission has always interpreted recreation enhancement to mean recreation facilities open to the public.

See page 34-36 of the Director’s Report for more information.

- “Will this open up the rest of the Gorge to resort development?”

No, these provisions are intended to apply only to the redevelopment of existing industrial site in the Commercial Recreation designation. The Broughton Mill is the only large industrial site outside of urban areas in the Scenic Area. It is the only site this use can apply to. Other land owners will not be convincing in their arguments to the Commission that their property is similar or poses the same level of impact to the Scenic Area or is appropriate for resort development.

See page 44 of the Director’s Report for more information.

- “How is it fair to other gorge landowners for the Commission to allow a resort just at the Broughton site?”

The Broughton site is unique due to its large-scale industrial history. A resort development will have to meet all scenic area protection standards that other scenic area landowners must comply with. In addition, a resort development will have to enhance scenic area resources, something other land owners are not required to do.

- “Why can’t the site become a State Park?”

The site is privately-owned, so funds to purchase the property would be needed. Discussions with federal and state contacts have not identified a source of funds for purchasing the site. Washington State Parks has recently sent a letter to the Commission indicating that this site is not a priority for acquisition.

See pages 52-53 of the Director’s Report for more information.

- “Why is the Broughton site a “brownfield”?”
 “Brownfields” are defined by the EPA as “real property, the expansion, redevelopment or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.” Other similarly operated mill sites in the PNW that could be identified by staff and that have been converted to new uses all had some level of environmental contamination to clean up. It is highly likely that there are hazardous substances at the Broughton site that will need to be cleaned up.
See pages 25-28 of the Director’s Report for more information.
- “Would this plan amendment approve the “Broughton Landing” proposal?”
 The Commission is considering amending the Management Plan to include new policies and guidelines that define the requirements for applying for and evaluating the impacts of a “recreation resort”. If the Commission adopts this amendment, Skamania County could include these in their then Broughton could apply for approval of their resort proposal. That is the stage where details about specific aspects of the resort would be defined. Any approved resort would have to meet the standards included in the plan amendment under consideration at this time.
- “Didn’t the Commission already determine that a resort at this site is not consistent with the Scenic Act?” “Isn’t that prior decision legally binding on the Gorge Commission?”
 In 1991, the Gorge Commission made a decision on a plan to develop a resort on portions of the Broughton property that are not occupied by the main mill site. The proposal was evaluated under the Final Interim Guidelines, a set of rules used to evaluate development proposed prior to the adoption of the Management Plan. While the Commission has found decisions under the earlier guidelines helpful, they have not found them to be a binding precedent. For more information on how the current decision is different than the prior decision please refer to pages 11-12 of the Director’s Report.
- “I thought commercial development wasn’t allowed outside of urban areas in the Scenic Area?”
 No, some areas outside of urban areas are designated for commercial development in the Management Plan, including areas such as the Broughton Mill site which is designated “Commercial Recreation”. Commercial development outside of urban areas must protect scenic area resources. The plan amendment requires that a recreation resort not just protect resources (based on detailed impact assessments) but also include actions to enhance resources.
See pages 8-9 and 38 of the Director’s Report for more information.
- “Won’t new commercial development at a resort hurt urban area businesses?”
 A recreation resort is restricted in the type and scope of commercial development allowed so that it just serves resort guests and recreation site users. Due to these limitation, resort guests will need to travel to nearby urban areas for many of the goods and services they need.
- “Will this create a new urban area?”
 No. The proposed recreation resort use is much smaller in area and much more restricted in uses than any urban area in the NSA. The use is oriented toward short-term occupancy rather than residential use and the broad spectrum of commercial uses found in urban areas.
See pages 38-41 of the Director’s Report for more information.