

Recreation Resources

The Columbia River Gorge has provided a multitude of outdoor recreation opportunities for residents of the Northwest for many decades. Its magnificent panoramas, waterfalls, and rock formations have awed sightseers in large numbers since the construction of the Historic Columbia River Highway during and after World War I. Excellent opportunities for fishing, hiking and other outdoor activities abound. The recreation identity of the Gorge has expanded to include windsurfing, kite sailing, rafting and mountain biking.

SCENIC AREA ACT PROVISIONS

The importance of recreation to the Gorge is reflected in a number of mandates and provisions of the Scenic Area Act. Included in the first purpose of the Act is a directive to protect and enhance the recreation resources of the Columbia River Gorge [Section 3(1)]. The Gorge Commission is further directed to assess recreation resources and opportunities for enhancement of these resources, as part of the inventory process. Section 6(a)(3) of the Act calls for completion of a "recreation assessment," which specifically directs the Gorge Commission to identify areas suitable for public use facilities and, subject to the treaty and other rights of

Indian tribes, designate areas to provide increased access to the Columbia River and its tributaries for recreation purposes. In addition to the recreation assessment, the Commission is directed to "protect and enhance open spaces" [Section 6(d)(3)], which include "potential and existing recreation resources" and "Federal and State wild, scenic and recreation waterways" [Section 2(l)].

Several other important provisions of the Scenic Area Act highlight the unique role of recreation in the Scenic Area. Section 6(d)(3) specifies that the Gorge Commission and Forest Service may allow the conversion of forest or agricultural land to recreation development. Recreation is the only type of new development for which such conversions are allowed. The Act further encourages new recreation development by authorizing the expenditure of \$10 million for construction of recreation facilities. An additional \$2.8 million is authorized for restoring and reconstructing the Historic Columbia River Highway for public recreational use.

KEY ISSUES

Perhaps more than any other part of the Scenic Area Act, the recreation mandates pose a number of unique and

formidable challenges. Many of these challenges relate to the directive that the Gorge Commission and Forest Service increase recreational access to the Columbia River and its tributaries. Because of construction of federal highway and dam projects and the presence of railroads on both shores of the river, a very limited number of potentially usable areas for recreational river access exist. Many of these remnants of the once-extensive Columbia River floodplain include sensitive natural resources. Providing facilities in these few locations is made more difficult and costly by physical barriers to the river, such as the freeway or railroad tracks. In addition, many of the remaining, potentially usable lowlands contain or are expected to contain cultural resources, which are also to be protected under the Act. Given the long history of human settlement in the Gorge, particularly focused along the river, the presence of remains of past cultures is to be expected.

A related issue involves potential conflicts between Native American fishing activities and river-oriented recreation, particularly windsurfing. The explosive growth of windsurfing, particularly in the central Gorge, has resulted in intensive usage of particular stretches of the river and substantial pressures for new access points and expansion of existing sites. The Act requires that tribal treaty rights not be affected by the provisions of the Act or Management Plan. In this situation, treaty rights protect Native American fishing activities above the Bonneville Dam (in the areas of highest windsurfing usage). Various Native Americans have

objected to windsurfing activity close to fishing nets.

The rise of windsurfing presents several other challenges and issues. A number of sites receiving intensive use have not been planned or designed with adequate facilities, resulting in concerns about public safety, sanitation, and other conditions. Also, some sites may be experiencing damage to sensitive resources because of overuse.

This problem is not unique to windsurfing; there are a number of sites in the western Gorge (such as Multnomah Falls) that receive too much use related to sightseeing, hiking, and related activities. Similar problems occur at key fishing access points during peak fishing periods. Because of recent substantial increases in recreational day-use activities, certain portions of the Gorge are experiencing a severe shortage of overnight camping sites and a resulting proliferation of overnight camping in unauthorized areas. Solutions to these problems include dispersing use by providing similar opportunities in less-used portions of the Gorge, providing better information about other existing facilities that are not overused, improving site management, and providing needed camping areas near popular day-use sites.

In addressing these challenges and meeting mandates to increase river-related recreation, the Gorge Commission and Forest Service must also protect the rural character of Gorge landscapes. It is crucial that the provision of new facilities for resource-based recreation does not degrade the very resources and scenic settings that attract recreationists to the

Scenic Area. Another important concern is maintaining the quality of life for the many residents of the Scenic Area, while meeting the Act's recreation mandates.

OVERVIEW OF RECREATION RESOURCES PROVISIONS

The Management Plan provides the following:

- Overall recreation goals, objectives, and policies (this chapter).
- Recreation intensity classes, with specific guidelines and criteria addressing new public and commercial recreation development (this chapter).
- Public and Commercial Recreation land use designations (Part II, Chapter 6).
- A recreation development plan that provides the policy framework for implementing high-priority proposed public recreation facilities (Part III, Chapter 1).
- The Recreation Development Proposals list, adopted separately from the Management Plan, highlights selected sites and proposed projects at those sites that, when implemented, will best achieve the recreation goals and objectives of the Scenic Area Act.

These various elements reflect the recreation assessment mandates specified in Section 6 of the Act.

The goals, objectives, policies, and guidelines of this chapter provide a framework for guiding the actions of the various public and private recreation providers in the Scenic Area, as well as those agencies whose programs either affect or are affected by recreation uses. Such entities include local, state, and federal planning and park agencies, as well as private and nonprofit groups.

This chapter is divided into the following sections:

GMA Provisions: Overall Goals, Objectives and Policies

- Protection of Resources
- Scenic Appreciation and Scenic Travel Corridors
- Resource-Based Recreation
- River Access and Protection of Treaty Rights
- Interpretation/Education
- Trails and Pathways
- Transportation
- Coordination

GMA Provisions: Recreation Intensity Classes

SMA Provisions: Overall Goal, Policies and Guidelines

SMA Provisions: Recreation Intensity Classes

GMA PROVISIONS: OVERALL GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES

PROTECTION OF RESOURCES

GMA Goals

1. Protect and enhance recreation resources consistent with Indian treaty rights.
2. Protect scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources when providing new recreation opportunities.

GMA Objectives

1. Encourage recreation facility designs that blend the facilities with their natural settings, especially designs that restore and/or enhance natural, cultural, or scenic resource values of a site.
2. Encourage innovative approaches to siting, design, and construction of recreation facilities that minimize their environmental impacts.

GMA Policies

1. Recreation resources shall be protected from adverse effects from new development on adjacent lands by establishing buffers between recreation uses and new buildings on adjacent lands. Guidelines implementing this policy are contained in "Review Uses" (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
2. The goals, objectives, policies, guidelines and all other provisions of this plan shall not affect legally existing uses at recreation sites that existed as of the date the Gorge Commission adopted this plan (October 15, 1991).
3. All proposed recreation uses shall comply with guidelines for protection of scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources.
4. Private concessions and other commercial uses at public recreation sites shall be allowed pursuant to adopted policies of the public park agency owning the site. If a different agency manages the site, that agency's policies shall apply, unless superseded by provisions of the owning agency's policies.
5. For commercial recreation sites and public recreation sites not owned or managed by a public park agency with adopted concession policies, the following policies shall apply:

- A. Retail sales at campgrounds shall be limited to camping supplies for overnight guests in dedicated space within the registration or central office building.
- B. Private concessions in permanent structures shall be limited to one structure per park site. Sales shall be limited to those items necessary for enjoyment and use of recreation opportunities at the site, including food and beverages and recreation equipment rental.
- C. Mobile vendors may be permitted, subject to local government approvals. Local government review shall address solid waste disposal, visual impacts of signage, traffic circulation, and safety. Such uses shall be limited to the term of the recreation season, and sales shall be limited to food and beverages and recreation equipment rental.

SCENIC APPRECIATION AND SCENIC TRAVEL CORRIDORS

GMA Goals

1. Increase scenic appreciation opportunities throughout the Scenic Area.
2. Designate those portions of the following roads in the Scenic Area as scenic travel corridors and promote uses that improve their functions as recreational and scenic travel routes: Historic Columbia River Highway (all segments); Washington State Routes 14, 141, and 142; Oregon Highway 35; and Interstate 84.

GMA Objectives

1. Provide new viewpoints that highlight the outstanding scenic vistas of the Gorge, the river itself, and special scenic features.
2. Encourage recreation facilities that improve the visual quality of previously disturbed sites.
3. Emphasize recreation facility designs that provide and maintain views of the Columbia River and Gorge walls.
4. Establish new viewpoints of the Columbia River and Gorge landscapes at places offering outstanding views along designated scenic travel corridors.
5. Create or restore openings in vegetation along the Historic Columbia River Highway, Washington State Route 14, and Interstate 84 to provide or improve views of the Columbia River and Gorge walls in a manner consistent with guidelines to protect natural, cultural, scenic, and recreation resources. Specific guidelines for such proposals are contained in Guideline 4 of the "Scenic Travel Corridors" section in Part I, Chapter 1: Scenic Resources.

6. Establish walking and bicycling paths along segments of the Historic Columbia River Highway either abandoned or currently closed to regular vehicular traffic. Give high priority to restoring and reconnecting these segments to create a continuous bicycle/pedestrian pathway through the Scenic Area.
7. Provide safe pedestrian and bicycle passage across the three Columbia River bridges in the Scenic Area to connect scenic travel corridors for these user groups.
8. Establish low-elevation bicycle paths or lanes along or near Interstate 84 and Washington State Route 14 through the Scenic Area. Abandoned segments of the Historic Columbia River Highway may fulfill this objective in certain locations. Explore establishing bicycle paths or lanes or otherwise improving bicycle safety for drivable portions of the Historic Columbia River Highway.

GMA Policies

1. Planning and management efforts for recreational uses within scenic travel corridors, such as viewpoints, pedestrian and bicycle paths, shall involve potentially affected landowners, relevant recreation agencies and organizations, fire, law enforcement and emergency service providers, Indian tribal governments, and affected local agencies as an integral component of such efforts.
2. Potential funding sources shall be evaluated as an integral component of all recreation facility planning efforts within scenic travel corridors. Fiscal impacts to local public service providers shall be considered as part of this process.
3. Provision of pedestrian and bicycle paths within scenic travel corridors shall include barrier-free opportunities.

RESOURCE-BASED RECREATION

GMA Goal

Provide a diversity of resource-based recreation opportunities that are accessible to all segments of the public and that emphasize the quality of the recreation experience.

GMA Objectives

1. Increase resource-based recreation opportunities for the physically challenged, less affluent, and other underrepresented segments of the public.
2. Provide additional overnight camping opportunities in natural settings, especially near popular day-use areas.

3. Protect existing popular recreation sites from overuse by providing opportunities and facilities at new locations with similar recreation attributes.
4. Emphasize provision of resource-based recreation opportunities in portions of the Scenic Area relatively lacking in such opportunities, particularly the eastern end and the Washington side.

GMA Policies

1. The Scenic Area recreation program shall emphasize provision of resource-based, outdoor recreation opportunities. Resource-based recreation includes those recreation uses that are essentially dependent upon the natural, scenic, or cultural resources of the Scenic Area and that do not adversely affect those resources upon which they depend. Such uses include, but are not limited to, trail use, fishing, boating, swimming, windsurfing, wildlife viewing, sightseeing, picnicking, camping, and visiting interpretive facilities. Recreation uses that are not resource-based (such as playgrounds and community parks) and not part of a resource-based recreation use are addressed in Part II, Chapter 6: Recreation Designations.
2. Recreation intensity classes (described in more detail later in this chapter) shall be applied to all lands under the Gorge Commission's jurisdiction. These classes identify areas potentially suitable for varying intensities of new resource-based recreation uses.
3. Non-resource-based recreation facilities included in proposed resource-based recreation sites shall be allowed if the site is predominantly dedicated to resource-based recreation.
4. The Recreation Development Proposals List identifies proposed public recreation facilities that are the highest priority for implementation. These proposed facilities focus on providing resource-based recreation opportunities. Public funding for facilities proposed in that list shall be limited to resource-based uses and necessary support facilities.
5. Recreation demand shall be an important consideration in providing new facilities and opportunities, but shall not supersede consideration of the quality of recreation experience provided or protection of other resources.

RIVER ACCESS AND PROTECTION OF TREATY RIGHTS

GMA Goal

Increase recreational access to the Columbia River and its tributaries, subject to the treaty and other rights of Indian tribes. Increase access in a manner that maximizes preservation of the shoreline area and minimizes impacts to sensitive resources.

GMA Objectives

1. Increase opportunities for river-oriented, day-use recreation (such as boating, fishing, windsurfing, and swimming) along the shoreline of the Columbia River and its tributaries.
2. Encourage recreation facilities that provide for compatible multiple uses at riverfront recreation sites.
3. Encourage recreation facility designs that consolidate access to river-oriented recreation opportunities, and that place non-water-dependent facilities away from the immediate shoreline area as much as possible.

GMA Policies

1. Emphasis shall be given to river-oriented, day-use recreation along the shoreline of the Columbia River and its tributaries (such as boat launches or swim beaches). Recreation uses that are not water-dependent or water-related (such as overnight camping) shall be sited to preserve opportunities for water-dependent and water-related uses near the shore.
2. In providing additional river access, the establishment of new facilities shall be balanced with stretches of river shore emphasizing low-intensity recreation and minimal facilities. The result should be a generally natural-appearing shoreline punctuated by nodes of concentrated recreation activities and facilities.
3. Potentially affected tribal and local governments shall be consulted at the onset of all planning efforts for public-use recreation facilities in the GMA.
4. For proposed new riverfront recreation facilities above Bonneville Dam, the applicant shall assess the potential effects of the recreation proposal on treaty fishing activities, and shall prepare a management plan that addresses any potential effects that are determined to exist. The requirements of such plans are specified in the recreation intensity class guidelines. Project approval shall be contingent upon demonstration that any effects to treaty fishing activities have been removed through redesign and/or application of mitigation measures. Tribal consultation on such plans shall be required.
5. Temporary closures of river-oriented recreation sites during critical treaty fishing periods shall be considered where existing adverse effects on treaty fishing have been demonstrated.
6. Where proposed or designated in-lieu Indian fishing sites are near potential river recreation sites, cooperative planning and cost-sharing agreements to fund access development shall be explored.

7. The Gorge Commission shall work with local and state law enforcement, public safety, and emergency services agencies to develop coordinated and comprehensive strategies addressing public safety and law enforcement needs associated with existing and increased recreational river access. Such strategies shall consider the personnel and fiscal impacts of increased service demands and shall identify needed funding for such impacts and demands.
8. Recreation providers shall consult with applicable local and state law enforcement, public safety, and emergency service providers when developing proposals for new recreational river access. Law enforcement and safety concerns associated with existing recreation river access shall be considered when developing strategies in response to new river access proposals.

INTERPRETATION/EDUCATION

GMA Goal

Increase public understanding and appreciation of the human and natural resources of the Scenic Area, both past and present, through interpretive/educational programs and facilities.

GMA Objectives

1. Increase awareness and appreciation of the great diversity of natural, cultural, scenic, and recreation resources of the Scenic Area.
2. Increase awareness and appreciation of the interrelationships between human activities and the Gorge environment.
3. Provide a full spectrum of barrier-free (physical, linguistic, cultural, sensory) interpretive opportunities.
4. Encourage the establishment of "gateway" facilities located at major entryways to the Scenic Area. Such facilities should:
 - A. Welcome and orient the visitor and provide tourist information.
 - B. Offer exhibits on the features and resources in the vicinity of the facility.
 - C. Encourage visitors to visit the Gorge Discovery Center near The Dalles and provide programs complementary to that facility.
 - D. Encourage visitors to visit the Skamania Lodge Conference Center in Stevenson.

GMA Policies

1. When planning new interpretive programs and/or facilities, relevant recommendations of the *Interpretive Strategy for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area* shall be considered. (This document is available at the Gorge Commission office in White Salmon, Washington, and the Forest Service office in Hood River, Oregon.)
2. Programs and measures to protect sensitive cultural and/or natural resources shall be required as a part of any effort to interpret such resources. Tribal consultation shall be required, and tribal comments shall be considered, for any efforts involving interpretation of Native American prehistory, history, or culture.
3. Information about Scenic Area recreation opportunities shall be disseminated at important recreation/visitor information facilities, including the Gorge Discovery Center, Skamania Lodge Conference Center, information kiosks, and gateway facilities.

TRAILS AND PATHWAYS

GMA Goal

Provide a diversity of new trail opportunities in a variety of settings that highlight the special resources of the Gorge, while adequately maintaining and, where appropriate, upgrading existing trails.

GMA Objectives

1. The following three objectives are the highest priorities for future designated public-use trails in the GMA:
 - A. Provide trails linking Urban Areas and the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area to recreation opportunities in the Scenic Area.
 - B. Establish a trail system (or series of trails) along the Columbia River.
 - C. Increase trail opportunities on the Washington side of the Scenic Area and in the eastern portions of the Scenic Area.
2. Other trail objectives are:
 - A. Promote the Columbia River as a scenic waterway trail and support dispersed boat moorages and other low-intensity boating facilities to implement this objective.
 - B. Establish a loop trail around the Scenic Area.
 - C. Establish trails along the major tributaries of the Columbia River.

- D. Provide trail linkages between Scenic Area trail opportunities and trails in the National Forests and other public lands north and south of the Scenic Area.
- E. Provide safe bikeways for recreational use on appropriate county roads when consistent with county plans and programs.

GMA Policies

1. Trail planning and management efforts shall include affected landowners, relevant agencies, Indian tribal governments, and trail organizations from the beginning of such efforts.
2. The Gorge Commission shall not acquire property or easements for trails without property owner consent. The Gorge Commission shall encourage other public bodies to acquire property or easements for trails through purchase or donation.
3. As an integral component of trail planning, development, and management efforts, strategies shall be developed to address trespass, noxious weeds, and public safety issues (such as fire hazard, emergency rescue, and classification systems for degree of trail difficulty). Such efforts shall include consultation with fire, law enforcement, and emergency service providers.
4. Temporary trail closures during critical fire hazard periods should be considered.
5. Shared use of trails by compatible multiple-user groups should be encouraged as much as possible where appropriate conditions exist, to maximize efficient use of trails and reduce needs for new trail construction.
6. User conflicts on trails shall be minimized through proper siting, design, and maintenance and an aggressive user education program. Multiple-use trails shall be built to standards sufficient to accommodate such different groups. Standards shall address safety concerns and considerations such as signage, trail width, visibility, and percent grade.
7. Use of motorized vehicles on designated public use trails shall be prohibited, except for use by response agencies and their agents in an emergency.
8. Priority shall be given to the completion and improvement of existing trails, incomplete trail loops, and trail segments, considering relationships with trails in Urban Areas, the SMA, and outside the Scenic Area.
9. Use levels on existing trails and projected demand for different trail uses shall be considered when planning additional trails.
10. Trail systems and new trails shall, where feasible, incorporate existing segments of older/historic trails and abandoned road and railroad rights-of-way.

11. The use of utility corridor rights-of-way for trail use shall be explored where such use would not interfere with the corridors' primary functions.
12. Barrier-free access shall be provided for new trails and improvements to existing trails to the maximum extent practicable.
13. Public needs for convenience, access, and security shall be considered when designing and siting trailheads.
14. Where appropriate and practicable, facilities shall be provided at trailheads to promote alternatives to the private automobile for accessing trail opportunities.
15. Potential funding sources shall be evaluated as an integral component of all trail planning efforts. Fiscal impacts to local public service providers shall be considered as part of this process, including adequacy of funding to provide for proper maintenance, emergency response, and law enforcement functions.
16. Trails proposed along the Columbia River and its tributaries shall be designed in a manner that minimizes effects to the shoreline and associated habitat values. Seasonal closures during critical wildlife periods shall be considered, as well as other appropriate mitigative measures.

TRANSPORTATION

GMA Goals

1. Provide transportation facilities that meet the needs of the traveling public and implement this plan's recreation goals and objectives while protecting scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources.
2. Promote alternative modes of transportation to improve safety and enjoyment of the traveling public and to help alleviate future traffic demand.

GMA Objectives

1. Encourage the provision of alternate modes of transportation to recreation destinations to reduce resource impacts and facilitate visitation by all segments of the public. Such alternate modes include, but are not limited to, shuttles, railroad, bicycles, and boat access.
2. Encourage tour boat and tour train access to important recreation facilities (such as the Gorge Discovery Center) as mass transportation alternatives that offer both access to such sites and recreational experiences in themselves.
3. Improve linkages between different modes of transportation at major recreation sites in the Scenic Area.

4. Improve access to recreation opportunities in the Scenic Area for the physically-challenged, less affluent and other underrepresented user groups.

GMA Policies

1. Accommodation of facilities for mass transportation (bus turnarounds, etc.) shall be required for all new high-intensity (Recreation Intensity Class 4) day-use recreation sites, except for sites predominantly devoted to boat access. These facilities are also encouraged for all new moderate-intensity (Recreation Intensity Class 3) day-use recreation sites where practicable.
2. All transportation facilities or improvements associated with public recreation shall be designed to minimize impacts to scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources to the maximum extent practicable.

COORDINATION

GMA Goal

Develop an outdoor recreation program that coordinates plans and actions of all relevant recreation providers and planning agencies to meet the recreation needs of Scenic Area residents and visitors. Such coordination shall seek to avoid land use conflicts and duplication of services.

GMA Objectives

1. Encourage new recreation facilities that complement other existing or planned recreation facilities in an area and/or provide linkages between such facilities.
2. Encourage coordinated, comprehensive recreation planning on a non-jurisdictional basis for distinct subareas of the Gorge possessing similar characteristics.
3. Encourage comprehensive recreation planning that fosters a unified, regional approach and deemphasizes divisions by state, county, or other jurisdictional boundaries, while recognizing the particular needs of such jurisdictions.

GMA Policies

1. Coordinated, regional approaches to solving ongoing operational and management problems (such as emergency response, law enforcement, and coordinated fee/permit systems) shall be pursued in planning new recreation uses and for comprehensive plan updates and revisions, to the maximum extent practicable. Such efforts shall include exploring additional revenue sources to defray the costs of law enforcement and public safety services provided by local government service providers.

2. Existing or proposed recreation facilities or areas outside the Scenic Area and inside Urban Areas that may affect recreation use and/or demand in the Scenic Area shall be considered when evaluating recreation proposals.
3. Proposed recreation developments shall be evaluated for consistency with existing county, city, port, or other relevant plans.

GMA PROVISIONS: RECREATION INTENSITY CLASSES

Recreation intensity classes have been applied to all GMA lands on which the Gorge Commission has planning jurisdiction. They are an overlay to the underlying land use designations (see Part II) and reflect potential suitability of GMA lands for varying degrees of resource-based recreation facilities open for public use. Recreation intensity classes do not supersede any provisions of underlying land use designations, nor do they affect recreation uses existing as of the date the Gorge Commission adopted the Management Plan (October 15, 1991).

The recreation intensity class map divides the Scenic Area into four classes, indicating suitable levels of recreation use and facility development, ranging from very low-intensity to high-intensity.

GMA Goal

Identify suitable levels of resource-based, public-use facilities to meet the Management Plan recreation goals and objectives while protecting scenic, natural, and cultural resources.

GMA Policies

1. Proposed resource-based recreation facilities or uses shall be consistent with applicable recreation intensity class guidelines and the "Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses" contained in this chapter. Resource-based recreation includes those recreation uses that are essentially dependent upon the natural, scenic, or cultural resources of the Scenic Area and that do not adversely affect those resources upon which they depend. Such uses include but are not limited to trail use, fishing, boating, swimming, windsurfing, wildlife viewing, sightseeing, picnicking, camping, and visiting interpretive facilities.
2. Recreation uses that are not resource-based in nature are not subject to the guidelines and criteria of the recreation intensity classes. Such recreation uses may be permitted pursuant to provisions of the land use designations, and include community parks and playgrounds, tennis courts, swimming pools, and playing fields for organized team sports. New golf courses shall not be permitted. Existing golf courses may be expanded, subject to conditions.

3. In addition to the guidelines and criteria contained in this section, proposed resource-based recreation uses shall comply with all applicable guidelines to protect natural, cultural, and scenic resources.
4. Land slope, road access, the presence of geologic or other hazards, and the presence of significant or sensitive resources shall be primary considerations in determining the suitability of lands for recreation. Other considerations shall include the presence of site amenities providing recreation opportunities and proximity to complementary recreation facilities.
5. High-intensity recreation uses shall be limited to the most suitable lands for recreational access to the Columbia River and its major tributaries and suitable lands for recreation use near designated Urban Areas or Rural Centers.
6. Recreation shall be limited to very low-intensity uses in inventoried wetlands, special habitat areas, significant natural areas, steeply sloping lands, and geologic hazard areas.
7. Recreation shall be limited to very low-intensity uses in areas of existing orchards, vineyards, row crops or other high-value agricultural uses on lands designated Large-Scale or Small-Scale Agriculture.
8. Recreation shall be limited to low-intensity recreation uses in areas with the most suitable soils for cultivation on lands designated Large-Scale or Small-Scale Agriculture.
9. Notwithstanding Policies 7 and 8 of this section, moderate- or high-intensity recreation uses may be allowed on lands adjacent to the Columbia River or its major tributaries offering significant opportunities for recreational river access.
10. Low- and moderate-intensity recreation uses shall be emphasized on lands designated Commercial Forest Land or Large or Small Woodland most suitable for such uses.
11. Recreation shall be limited to low-intensity uses on lands designated Residential.
12. Proposed changes to the recreation intensity class of an area shall require a plan amendment subject to Gorge Commission approval.
13. Proposed developments in an area classified Recreation Intensity Class 4 (high intensity) that exceed the guidelines for that class shall require county approval, upon satisfaction of Guideline 2 in "Variances and Plan Amendments" in the recreation intensity class guidelines.

14. The recreation intensity class guidelines shall be applied to individual recreation facilities. (Individual recreation facilities are defined in "Facility Design Guidelines for All Recreation Projects," below.)
15. The Gorge Commission shall evaluate the results of the recreation intensity classes in 5 years, as part of the Management Plan update and review process. This evaluation shall include an assessment of the cumulative effects of new recreation development on scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources of the Scenic Area and in the vicinity of the development. The Commission may at any time reevaluate the recreation intensity classes in the vicinity of a new Recreation Intensity Class 3 or 4 development for possible cumulative effects.

GMA Guidelines

Allowable Uses

The following uses are allowable, subject to compliance with the "Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses" and "Facility Design Guidelines For All Recreation Projects" in this section.

1. Recreation Intensity Class 1 (Very Low Intensity)
 - A. Parking areas for a maximum of 10 cars for any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 1.
 - B. Trails for hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking use.
 - C. Pathways for pedestrian and bicycling use.
 - D. Trailheads (with provisions for hitching rails and equestrian trailers at trailheads accommodating equestrian use).
 - E. Scenic viewpoints and overlooks.
 - F. Wildlife/botanical viewing and nature study areas.
 - G. River access areas.
 - H. Simple interpretive signs and/or displays, not to exceed a total of 50 square feet.
 - I. Entry name signs, not to exceed 10 square feet per sign.
 - J. Boat docks, piers, or wharfs.
 - K. Picnic areas.

- L. Restrooms/comfort facilities.
2. Recreation Intensity Class 2 (Low Intensity)
- A. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Class 1.
 - B. Parking areas for a maximum of 25 cars, to serve any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 2. Parking spaces for campground units are to be included in this number.
 - C. Simple interpretive signs and displays, not to exceed a total of 100 square feet.
 - D. Entry name signs, not to exceed 20 square feet per sign.
 - E. Boat ramps, not to exceed two lanes.
 - F. Campgrounds for 20 units or less, tent sites only.
3. Recreation Intensity Class 3 (Moderate Intensity)
- A. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Classes 1 and 2.
 - B. Parking areas for a maximum of 75 cars, to serve any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 3. Parking spaces for campground units are to be included in this number.
 - C. Interpretive signs, displays and/or facilities.
 - D. Visitor information and environmental education signs, displays, or facilities.
 - E. Entry name signs, not to exceed 32 square feet per sign.
 - F. Boat ramps, not to exceed three lanes.
 - G. Concessions stands, pursuant to applicable policies in this chapter.
 - H. Campgrounds for 50 individual units or less, for tents and/or recreational vehicles, with a total density of no more than 10 units per acre (density to be measured based on total size of recreation facility and may include required buffer and setback areas). Class 3 campgrounds may also include one group campsite area, in addition to the allowed individual campground units or parking area maximums.
4. Recreation Intensity Class 4 (High Intensity)
- A. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Classes 1, 2, and 3.

- B. Parking areas for a maximum of 250 cars, to serve any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 4. Parking spaces for campground units are to be included in this number.
- C. Horseback riding stables and associated facilities.
- D. Entry name signs, not to exceed 40 square feet per sign.
- E. Boat ramps.
- F. Campgrounds for 175 individual units or less, for tents and/or recreational vehicles, with a total density of no more than 10 units per acre (density to be measured based on total size of recreation facility and may include required buffer and setback areas). Class 4 campgrounds may also include up to three group campsite areas, in addition to allowed individual campsite units or parking area maximums.

Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses

- 1. For all proposed recreation projects outside of Public or Commercial Recreation designations, project applicants shall demonstrate compliance with the following criteria (if applicable) as a condition of project approval:
 - A. Compliance with all applicable guidelines in this Management Plan for the protection of scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources. Cumulative effects of proposed recreation projects on landscape settings shall be based on the "Compatible Recreation Use Guideline" for the landscape setting in which the proposed project is located (see Part I, Chapter 1: Scenic Resources).
 - B. For proposed recreation projects in or adjacent to lands designated Large-Scale or Small-Scale Agriculture, Commercial Forest Land, or Large or Small Woodland, compliance with the following:
 - (1) The use would not seriously interfere with accepted forest or agricultural practices on surrounding lands devoted to forest or farm uses. Provision of onsite buffers may be used to partially or fully comply with this criterion, depending upon project design and/or site conditions.
 - (2) A declaration has been signed by the project applicant or owner and recorded with county deeds and records specifying that the applicant or owner is aware that operators are entitled to carry on accepted forest or farm practices on lands designated Large-Scale or Small-Scale Agriculture, Commercial Forest Land, or Large or Small Woodland.
 - C. For proposed projects including facilities for outdoor fires for cooking or other purposes, or for proposed campgrounds, compliance with the following:

- (1) The project applicant shall demonstrate that a sufficient quantity of water necessary for fire suppression (as determined pursuant to applicable fire codes or the county fire marshal) is readily available to the proposed facility, either through connection to a community water system or onsite wells, storage tanks, sumps, ponds or similar storage devices. If connection to a community water system is proposed, the project applicant shall demonstrate that the water system has adequate capacity to meet the facility's emergency fire suppression needs without adversely affecting the remainder of the water system with respect to fire suppression capabilities.
 - (2) To provide access for firefighting equipment, access drives shall be constructed to a minimum of 12 feet in width and a maximum grade of 12 percent. Access drives shall be maintained to a level that is passable to firefighting equipment.
- D. For proposed trail or trailhead projects, compliance with applicable trails policies in the Management Plan.
 - E. For proposed projects providing boating or windsurfing access to the Columbia River or its tributaries, compliance with applicable "River Access and Protection of Treaty Rights" objectives in this chapter.
 - F. For proposed projects on public lands or proposed projects providing access to the Columbia River or its tributaries, compliance with guidelines for protection of tribal treaty rights in Part IV, Chapter 3: Indian Treaty Rights and Consultation.
 - G. For proposed projects that include interpretation of natural or cultural resources, demonstration that the interpretive facilities will not adversely affect natural or cultural resources and that appropriate and necessary resource protection measures shall be employed.
 - H. For proposed Recreation Intensity Class 4 projects (except for projects predominantly devoted to boat access), demonstration that the project accommodates provision of mass transportation access to the site. The number and size of the mass transportation facilities shall reflect the physical capacity of the site. This requirement may be waived upon a demonstration that providing such facilities would result in overuse of the site, either degrading the quality of the recreation experience or adversely affecting other resources at the site.

Facility Design Guidelines for All Recreation Projects

1. Recreation facilities that are not resource-based in nature may be included at sites providing resource-based recreation uses consistent with the guidelines and criteria in this chapter, as long as such facilities comprise no more than one-third of the

total land area dedicated to recreation uses and/or facilities. Required landscaped buffers may be included in calculations of total land area dedicated to recreation uses and/or facilities.

2. The facility design guidelines are intended to apply to individual recreation facilities. For the purposes of these guidelines, a cluster or grouping of recreational developments or improvements located relatively close to one another is considered an individual recreation facility.

Developments or improvements within the same recreation intensity class are considered as separate facilities if they are separated by at least 1/4 mile of undeveloped land (excluding trails, pathways, or access roads).

3. Parking areas, access roads, and campsites shall be sited and designed to fit into the existing natural contours as much as possible, both to minimize ground-disturbing grading activities and to use topography to screen parking areas and associated structures. Parking areas, access roads, and campsites shall be sited and set back sufficiently from bluffs so they are visually subordinate as seen from key viewing areas.
4. Existing vegetation, particularly mature trees, shall be maintained to the maximum extent practicable, and used to screen parking areas and campsites from key viewing areas and satisfy requirements for perimeter and interior landscaped buffers.
5. Parking areas providing over 50 spaces shall be divided into discrete "islands" separated by unpaved, landscaped buffer areas.
6. Lineal frontage of parking areas and campsite loops on scenic travel corridors shall be minimized.
7. Ingress/egress points shall be consolidated to the maximum extent practicable, providing for adequate emergency access pursuant to applicable fire and safety codes.
8. Signage shall be limited to that necessary to provide relevant recreation or facility information, interpretive information, vehicular and pedestrian direction, and for safety purposes.
9. Exterior lighting shall be shielded, designed, and sited in a manner that prevents such lighting from projecting offsite or being highly visible from key viewing areas.
10. Innovative designs and materials that reduce visual impacts (such as "turf blocks" instead of conventional asphalt paving) shall be encouraged through incentives such as additional allowable parking spaces and reduced required minimum interior or perimeter landscaped buffers. If the county determines that potential visual

impacts have been substantially reduced by use of such designs and materials, it may allow either a) reductions of up to 50 percent of required minimum interior or perimeter landscape buffers, or b) up to 10 percent additional parking spaces.

11. A majority of trees, shrubs, and other plants in landscaped areas shall be species native or naturalized to the landscape setting in which they occur. The landscape setting design guidelines in Part I, Chapter 1 specify appropriate species.
12. All structures shall be designed so that height, exterior colors, reflectivity, mass, and siting enable them to blend with and not noticeably contrast with their setting.
13. Landscape buffers around the perimeter of parking areas accommodating more than 10 vehicles shall be provided. Minimum required widths are 5 feet for 20 vehicles or fewer, 20 feet for 50 vehicles or fewer, 30 feet for 100 vehicles or fewer, and 40 feet for 250 vehicles or fewer.
14. Interior landscaped buffers breaking up continuous areas of parking shall be provided for any parking areas with over 50 spaces. The minimum width of interior landscaped buffers separating each subarea of 50 spaces or less shall be 20 feet.
15. Within required perimeter and interior landscaped buffer areas, a minimum of one tree of at least 6 feet in height shall be planted for every 10 lineal feet as averaged for the entire perimeter width. A minimum of 25 percent of planted species in perimeter buffers shall be coniferous to provide screening during the winter. Project applicants are encouraged to place such trees in random groupings approximating natural conditions. In addition to the required trees, landscaping shall include appropriate shrubs, groundcover, and other plant materials.
16. Minimum required perimeter landscaped buffer widths for parking areas or campgrounds may be reduced by as much as 50 percent, at the discretion of the county, if existing vegetation stands and/or existing topography are used such that the development is not visible from any key viewing area.
17. Grading or soil compaction within the "drip line" of existing mature trees shall be avoided to the maximum extent practicable, to reduce risk of root damage and associated tree mortality.
18. All parking areas and campsites shall be set back from scenic travel corridors and the Columbia River and its major tributaries by at least 100 feet. Required perimeter landscaped buffers may be included when calculating such setbacks. Setbacks from rivers shall be measured from the ordinary high water mark. Setbacks from scenic travel corridors shall be measured from the edge of road pavements.
19. Project applicants shall use measures and equipment necessary for the proper maintenance and survival of all vegetation used to meet landscape standards, and shall be responsible for such maintenance and survival.

20. All parking areas shall be set back from property boundaries by at least 50 feet. All campsites and associated facilities shall be set back from property boundaries by at least 100 feet.
21. All proposed projects that are larger than those allowed in Recreation Intensity Classes 1-3, and are on lands classified Recreation Intensity Class 4 (except for proposals predominantly devoted to boat access) shall comply with Guideline H in "Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses" in this chapter regarding provision of mass transportation access.

Variations and Plan Amendments

1. A local government may grant a variance to the setback and buffer requirements contained in this chapter upon a finding that all of the following conditions exist:
 - A. The proposed project is a public-use, resource-based recreation facility providing or supporting either recreational access to the Columbia River and its tributaries, or recreational opportunities associated with a scenic travel corridor.
 - B. All reasonable measures to redesign the proposed project to comply with required setbacks and buffers have been explored, and application of those setbacks and buffers would prohibit a viable recreation use of the site as proposed.
 - C. Resource impacts have been mitigated to less than adverse levels through design provisions and mitigation measures.
 - D. The variance is the minimum necessary to accommodate the use.
2. A local government may grant a variance of up to 10 percent to the guidelines of Recreation Intensity Class 4 for parking and campground units upon demonstration that all of the following conditions exist:
 - A. Demand and use levels for the proposed activity(s), particularly in the area where the site is proposed, are high and expected to remain so and/or increase. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) data and data from Scenic Area recreation demand studies shall be relied upon to meet this criterion in the absence of current applicable studies.
 - B. The proposed use is dependent on resources present at the site.
 - C. Reasonable alternative sites offering similar opportunities, including those in nearby Urban Areas, have been evaluated, and it has been demonstrated that the proposed use cannot be adequately accommodated elsewhere.
 - D. The proposed use is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies in this chapter.

- E. Through site design and/or mitigation measures, the proposed use can be implemented without adversely affecting scenic, natural, or cultural resources and adjacent land uses.
 - F. Through site design and/or mitigation measures, the proposed use can be implemented without affecting treaty rights.
3. Proposals to change the recreation intensity class of an area shall require a Management Plan amendment, pursuant to policies 1 through 4 in "Amendment of the Management Plan" (Part IV, Chapter 1: Gorge Commission Role).

SMA PROVISIONS: OVERALL GOALS, POLICIES, AND GUIDELINES

SMA Goal

Protect and enhance recreation resources.

SMA Policies

1. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum settings (see glossary) shall be protected and enhanced.
2. All new developments and land uses shall protect recreation resources.
3. Recreation resources shall be protected by limiting development and uses, as designated in the recreation intensity class guidelines.
4. Recreation opportunities shall encourage and facilitate use by all sectors of the public, including ethnic groups, persons with disabilities, the elderly, and the young.
5. Only natural resource-based recreation shall be allowed.
6. Comprehensive recreation resource planning shall be encouraged to foster a unified, regional approach and de-emphasize jurisdictional divisions.
7. Proposed changes to the recreation intensity class of an area shall require a Management Plan amendment, subject to Gorge Commission approval and concurrence by the Forest Service.
8. Proposals in an area of Recreation Intensity Class 4 that exceed the guidelines for that class shall require county approval upon satisfaction of the exceptions criteria specified in the recreation intensity class guidelines.
9. When planning new interpretive or education programs and/or facilities, recommendations of the *Interpretive Strategy for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area* shall be followed. (This document is available at the Gorge Commission office in White Salmon and the Forest Service office in Hood River.)
10. Alternate modes of transportation to destination recreation facilities are encouraged, including use of shuttles, waterway facilities, and rail travel, to facilitate visitation and reduce impacts to scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources.

SMA Guidelines

1. New developments and land uses shall not displace existing recreational use.
2. Recreation resources shall be protected from adverse effects by evaluating new developments and land uses as proposed in the site plan. An analysis of both onsite and offsite cumulative effects shall be required.
3. New pedestrian or equestrian trails shall not have motorized uses, except for emergency services.
4. Mitigation measures shall be provided to preclude adverse effects on the recreation resource.
5. The facility guidelines are intended to apply to individual recreation facilities. For the purposes of these guidelines, a cluster or grouping of recreational developments or improvements located relatively close to one another is considered an individual recreation facility. Developments or improvements within the same recreation intensity class are considered as separate facilities if they are separated by at least 1/4 mile of undeveloped land (excluding trails, pathways, or access roads).
6. New development and reconstruction of scenic routes (see Part III, Chapter 1: Recreation Development Plan) shall include provisions for bicycle lanes.
7. A local government may grant a variance of up to 10 percent to the guidelines of Recreation Intensity Class 4 for parking and campground units upon demonstration that all of the following conditions exist:
 - A. Demand and use levels for the proposed activity(s), particularly in the area where the site is proposed, are high and expected to remain so and/or increase. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) data and data from National Scenic Area recreation demand studies shall be relied upon to meet the criterion in the absence of current applicable studies.
 - B. The proposed use is dependent on resources present at the site.
 - C. Reasonable alternative sites offering similar opportunities, including those in Urban Areas, have been evaluated, and it has been demonstrated that the proposed use cannot be adequately accommodated elsewhere.
 - D. The proposed use is consistent with the goals, objectives, and policies in this chapter.

- E. Through site design and/or mitigation measures, the proposed use can be implemented without adversely affecting scenic, natural, or cultural resources and adjacent land uses.
 - F. Through site design and/or mitigation measures, the proposed use can be implemented without affecting treaty rights.
 - G. Mass transportation shall be considered and implemented, if feasible, for all proposed variances to Recreation Intensity Class 4.
8. Proposals to change the recreation intensity class of an area shall require a Management Plan amendment pursuant to policies 1 through 4 in "Amendment of the Management Plan" (Part IV, Chapter 1: Gorge Commission Role).
9. The recreation intensity classes are designed to protect recreation resources by limiting land development and land uses.

SMA PROVISIONS: RECREATION INTENSITY CLASSES

SMA Guidelines

1. Recreation Intensity Class 1 (Very Low Intensity)

The emphasis is to provide opportunities for semi-primitive recreation.

- A. Permitted uses are those in which people participate in outdoor activities to realize experiences such as solitude, tension reduction, and nature appreciation.
- B. The maximum site design capacity shall not exceed 35 people at one time on the site. The maximum design capacity for parking areas shall be 10 vehicles.
- C. The following uses may be permitted:
 - (1) Trails and trailheads.
 - (2) Parking areas.
 - (3) Dispersed campsites accessible only by a trail.
 - (4) Viewpoints and overlooks.
 - (5) Picnic areas.

- (6) Signs.
- (7) Interpretive exhibits and displays.
- (8) Restrooms.

2. Recreation Intensity Class 2 (Low Intensity)

The emphasis is to provide opportunities for semi-primitive recreation.

- A. Permitted uses are those that provide settings where people can participate in activities such as physical fitness, outdoor learning, relaxation, and escape from noise and crowds.
- B. The maximum site design capacity shall not exceed 70 people at one time on the site. The maximum design capacity for parking areas shall be 25 vehicles.
- C. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Class 1 are permitted in Recreation Intensity Class 2. The following uses may also be permitted:
 - (1) Campgrounds with vehicle access.
 - (2) Boat anchorages designed for no more than 10 boats at one time.
 - (3) Swimming areas.

3. Recreation Intensity Class 3 (Moderate Intensity)

The emphasis is on facilities with design themes emphasizing the natural qualities of the area. Developments are complementary to the natural landscape, yet can accommodate moderate numbers of people.

- A. Permitted uses are those in which people can participate in activities to realize experiences such as group socialization, nature appreciation, relaxation, cultural learning, and physical activity.
- B. The maximum site design capacity shall not exceed 250 people at one time on the site. The maximum design capacity for parking areas shall be 50 vehicles. The GMA vehicle capacity level of 75 vehicles shall be allowed if enhancement or mitigation measures for scenic, cultural, or natural resources are approved for at least 10 percent of the site.
- C. Accommodation of facilities for mass transportation (bus parking, etc.) shall be required for all new Recreation Intensity Class 3 day-use recreation sites, except for sites predominantly devoted to boat access.

- D. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Classes 1 and 2 are permitted in Recreation Intensity Class 3. The following uses may also be permitted:
- (1) Campgrounds with improvements that may include water, power, sewer, and sewage dump stations.
 - (2) Boat anchorages designed for not more than 15 boats.
 - (3) Public visitor, interpretive, historic, and environmental education facilities.
 - (4) Full-service restrooms that may include showers.
 - (5) Boat ramps.
 - (6) Riding stables.

4. Recreation Intensity Class 4 (High Intensity)

The emphasis is on providing roaded natural, rural, and suburban recreation opportunities with a high level of social interaction.

- A. Permitted uses are those in which people can participate in activities to realize experiences such as socialization, cultural and natural history appreciation, and physical activity.
- B. The maximum design capacity shall not exceed 1,000 people at one time on the site. The maximum design capacity for parking areas shall be 200 vehicles. The GMA vehicle capacity level of 250 vehicles shall be allowed if enhancement or mitigation measures for scenic, cultural, or natural resources are approved for at least 20 percent of the site.
- C. Accommodation of facilities for mass transportation (bus parking, etc.) shall be required for all new Recreation Intensity Class 4 day-use recreation sites, except for sites predominantly devoted to boat access.
- D. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Classes 1, 2, and 3 are permitted in Recreation Intensity Class 4.