

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Vital Signs Indicators Project
Technical Advisory Team Meeting Notes
January 28, 2008 – 1:00pm
Hood River, Oregon

Technical Advisory Team Members Present: Susan Wolff, chair, Rich Davis, Greg Webb, Bill Weiler, and Brian Bainson, Carolyn Sanco, Greg Griffith, Jimmy Kagan and Sally Duncan by telephone.

Staff: Jill Arens, Brian Litt, Angie Kenney, Jessica Metta, Tom Ascher, Michele Dailey, Diana Ross and Jeff Tryens, indicators consultant.

Other Attendees: Mike Benedict (scenic sub-group), North Cheatham (CAT), Bob Liepper (CAT), Carol York (CAT), Ron Carrol (CAT), Mary Repar (CAT), and Peter Cornelison.

Chair Wolff began the meeting by asking Bill Weiler to update the team on the progress made by the natural resources sub-group. Bill discussed that the group was struggling with how to address air quality. Jimmy Kagan commented that it is important to evaluate the air quality while addressing the health of the Gorge, but that is a particularly difficult one for the Commission to tackle. Bill said that aside from air quality, there are two objectives. The first one is meant to protect the biodiversity of the Gorge, while the second is meant to protect the aquatic resources of the Gorge (see attached outline).

It was suggested that objective 2.2.a and 2.2.b could be combined into one indicator. Jimmy explained that the natural sub-group had decided that there had previously been too much emphasis on species and that measuring habitat was a much more useful indicator. Jimmy added that he supported both methods but that the group still needed to do some more work on it.

Brian Bainson provided an update for the scenic resources sub-group (see attached outline). He explained that there were a couple the group struggled with – and weren't sure where to draw the line. For example, objective 1.1.g addresses graffiti and litter in public areas. The group added it to their list based on feedback received from the community team and members of the public that had attended their sub-group meetings, but weren't quite sure if it should be included. Jeff Tryens, indicators consultant, suggested leaning towards selecting indicators that can measure Gorge health – regardless of the Commission's current relationship with the topic. If it is something that matters to the health of the resource, it should be kept in, but if it doesn't – then it should be removed from the list. He also added that the final list will only have those indicators that can measure the most important issues.

Combining objective 1.1.c and 1.1.e was discussed by the team, but no decisions were made. Overlapping of natural and scenic indicators was then discussed. Objective 1.2.a looks at vegetation patterns, which is very similar to Objective 2.1.a for the natural section.

Brian B. discussed the sub-groups difficulty in striking a balance between the built environment and the natural environment (because the visual character of Gorge landscapes would include things such as a vineyard – which although is not a building, it is not natural either).

North Cheatham, chair of the Community Advisory Team, asked whether or not there was a better alternative to using key viewing areas. He explained that using *public vantage point* was to open ended while using *key viewing area* would be too limiting. Brian B. explained that public vantage points would include key viewing areas, but would not be limited by the management plan. He also noted that opening the vantage points to include both public and private proved to be too large, so the group decided to only assess views from public vantage points. Brian Litt explained that the essence of Objective 1.1 is to measure the view sheds as seen from public viewing areas while Objective 1.2 was meant to measure the scenic health of the Gorge, regardless of its visibility.

Carolyn Sanco provided a summary of the work conducted by the economic resources sub-group (see attached outline). She explained that objective 3.2 was intended to show the change in agricultural and forestry practices.

Greg Griffith updated the team about the work done by the cultural resource sub-group. He explained that the group has been working primarily with three kinds of cultural resources: archeological and historic resources and traditional cultural properties. He added that the resources vary in condition and that objectives (a) through (e) were meant to capture this for each kind of resource (which is why each objective has similar indicators). He explained that they would like to capture the level of awareness of the communities – which is something they don't know right now. He said that different cultures and different perspectives result in very different definitions and perceptions of cultural resources.

Rich Davis provided an update for the recreation group (see attached outline). He remarked that he was very glad to see (hear) that the natural and economic sub-groups had been addressing their overlap with recreation resources so that they do not need to duplicate the work. Rich said that the recreation group may be recommending several developmental indicators in which surveys and studies will need to be conducted. He also said that the group had struggled with defining recreation quality and recreation diversity (geographic dispersal and type of recreation). Jessica Metta added that the recreation group had specifically chosen not to define quality or diversity for this meeting and that they would be looking to the Assessment Committee to decide what that might be.

Victor Schmidt suggested differentiating between public and private recreation and the economic development they bring to the area. He would like to see a parallel set of inventories that could show the correlation between these two resources. Carol York suggested adding a measurement for group recreation. Jessica explained that group recreation might fall under recreation diversity.

Jeff interjected the conversation to note that we currently have 73 indicators and that we would like to see that list with a much smaller number. He added that instead of adding

new indicators to the list, the team should start to think about prioritizing what they've got so far and identify any gaps along the way. He said that the list currently contains some key performance measures and inventories as opposed to indicators. He suggested that the sub-groups start asking themselves "what is good". He explained that inventories are what you pull your indicators from – they are not indicators themselves. Susan Crowley commented that it will be a big task to make the current list smaller. She suggested that the team begin to look for indicators that can be combined.

Carolyn asked for clarification between Gorge health measures and agency key performance measures. Jeff explained that Gorge health measures will be able to assess the state of Gorge resources regardless of the Commission's role in protecting them while performance measures will assess how well the Commission has implemented the Scenic Area Act.

Chair Wolff asked whether or not the sub-groups would be able to create a prioritized list by the meeting on the 25th. She then asked whether or not we should take a practical approach to the prioritization process or try to be more pragmatic. Jeff suggested that we look to the topics themselves as being the most important and that the data availability itself is really a secondary concern. Bob Liepper as who would be doing the prioritizing. Jill responded by explaining that there would be some of the work done by Commission staff, but that they would be working with the technical team and that the Assessment Committee and ultimately the Gorge Commission that would be making the final decisions, not staff.

Chair Wolff wrapped up the meeting by asking the team for prioritized lists of indicators by the February 25th meeting. She thanked everyone for their hard work and moved on to the joint meeting scheduled at 2:00pm. She also asked staff to allot at least two hours for the next meeting to allow for more than just an update.

Meeting adjourned.

Attachments:

- Technical Advisory Team Meeting Agenda for January 28, 2007 Meeting
- Draft outline (clean copy)
- Draft outline (annotated copy)
- Draft natural resources objectives and indicators (supplements the outline)
- Diagram of draft objectives as created by the advisory teams

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Columbia River Gorge Commission
Vital Signs Indicators Project
Technical Advisory Team Meeting
January 28th, 2008 – 1:00pm to 2:00pm
Hood River County Building, Hood River, Oregon

1:00 – 1:05
(5 minutes)

Welcome from Chair, Susan Wolff, followed by introductions

1:05 – 1:30
(25 minutes)

Update from sub-group chairs regarding the draft objectives and indicators

- Handout: revised outline containing draft objectives and indicators created by the sub-groups.

1:30 1:40
(10 minutes)

Review objectives with the intention of adoption.

1:40 – 1:50
(10 minutes)

Discuss next steps for reaching consensus on draft indicators (including the joint advisory team meeting at 2:00pm)

1:50 – 1:55
(5 minutes)

Updated timeline and upcoming deadlines

- Handout: detailed timeline

1:55 – 2:00
(5 minutes)

Confirm the next Technical Advisory Team meeting date (currently set for February 25, 2008 at 2:00 pm)

1.23.2008

Columbia River Gorge Commission Goals, Draft Objectives and Draft Indicators

SCENIC RESOURCES

(Draft derived from January 22 TAT sub-group)

Goal 1: Protect and enhance the scenic¹ resources of the Columbia River Gorge region

Objective 1.1: Protect and enhance the scenic quality of the Columbia River Gorge visible from public vantage points².

- 1.1.a) Average number of discordant or visually dominant³ features visible from public vantage points OR number/percent of public vantage points with increased number of discordant or visually dominant features.
- 1.1.b) Percent of existing development that highly contrasts with its surrounding landscape as seen from public vantage points.
- 1.1.c) Percent of new development that highly contrasts with its surrounding landscape as seen from public vantage points.
- 1.1.d) Number/percent of public vantage points with significantly increased amount of visible infrastructure⁴
- 1.1.e) Percent of new development⁵ visible from public vantage points:
(i) within ½ mile; (ii) between ½ mile and 1 mile; and (iii) beyond 1 mile AND/OR Average number of development sites visible from public vantage points.
- 1.1.f) Number/percent of public vantage points with significantly impaired panoramic views due to the growing in of vegetation.
- 1.1.g) Percent of highway miles with significant graffiti or litter
- 1.1.h) Number of landscape mitigation, enhancement and restoration projects completed.⁶

Objective 1.2: Protect the visual character of the diverse landscapes of the Columbia River Gorge

- 1.2.a) Percent of change in vegetation patterns, structure and species composition⁷ by landscape setting⁸. *(Tryens comment: Not yet a useable measure. Needs work.)*

1 Scenic means of or relating to landscape scenery; constituting or affording pleasant views of natural landscape attributes or positive cultural elements [agriculture] (USFS, 1995, *Landscape Aesthetics*).

2 Public vantage points are public roads, parks, trails or locations within the Scenic Area from which the public views the Scenic Area landscapes.

3 Visually dominant is when human alterations contrast highly with the surrounding landscape and are very noticeable.

4 Examples include the enlargement of roadways, additions of off ramps on freeways, upgrades to railroads, etc.

5 Development (and developed) means any structure, including but not limited to new construction of buildings and structures, and mining dredging, filling, grading, paving and excavation (2004 Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area).

6 Enhancement is a management practice with the express purpose of improving the scenic quality or visual condition of a degraded site (partially derived from USFS, 1995, *Landscape Aesthetics*).

7 Change would include both natural successional change and human caused change. Human caused would include change such as clearing trees for agriculture or the introduction of invasive species. Natural change would include fire, floods and disease etc.

8 *Landscape setting is the combination of land use, landform, and vegetation patterns that distinguishes an area in appearance and character from other portions of the Scenic Area.*

FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- 1.2.b) Percent of Gorge agricultural landscape that has changed in purpose and/or pattern.
- 1.2.c) Percent of developed acreage for each landscape setting.

NATURAL RESOURCES

(Draft from the January 14th TAT sub-group meeting)

[NOTE – THE NATURAL RESOURCES SUB-GROUP IS STILL WORKING ON ITS INDICATOR SET. STAY TUNED FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.]

Goal 2: Protect and enhance the natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge region

Objective 2.1 Protect natural plant and animal communities of the Columbia River Gorge by protecting and enhancing the habitats which support them.

Potential Indicator Topics:

fragmentation, patch size, connectivity, travel corridors, linkage, levels of disturbance and invasive species.

Objective 2.2 Protect and enhance quality of water and aquatic habitat in the Columbia River Gorge.

Potential Indicator Topics:

Not clear on potential indicator topics yet. Might want to include a place holder indicator to address the main stem of the Columbia River⁹

Objective 2.3 Protect and enhance air quality of the Columbia River Gorge¹⁰

Potential Indicator Topics:

Indicators not clear yet

ECONOMIC RESOURCES

(Draft derived from January 7 TAT sub-group meeting)

Goal 3: Protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge region.

Objective 3.1: Enhance and sustain the economic vitality of the urban areas¹¹.

- 3.1.a) Per capita income as a percent of state non-metro per capita income: i) total, ii) Oregon side; iii) Washington side.
- 3.1.b) Net job growth: i) total; ii) Oregon side; iii) Washington side
- 3.1.c) Average wage by business type: i) total; ii) Oregon side; iii) Washington side
- 3.1.d) Unemployment as a percent of the state non-metro unemployment rate: i) total; ii) Oregon side; iii) Washington side
- 3.1.e) Percent of Gorge residents aged 18 – 34.
- 3.1.f) Number of building permits by urban area: housing, commercial, and industrial.

⁹ Possible to use data from other agencies as it becomes available -it would be a developmental indicator

¹⁰ This is a placeholder for addressing air quality. The Commission could use data from projects currently being conducted by other agencies to address air quality at some point in the future. This is a highly developmental indicator that may not be available for quite some time.

¹¹ Collect all data by urban area over time to the extent possible

FOR DISCUSSION PURPOSES ONLY

- 3.1.g) Average number of buildable sites by urban areas: i) housing, ii) commercial, iii) industrial.
- 3.1.h) Average commercial rental vacancy rate by urban area.
- 3.1.i) Total assessed value of residential, commercial and residential property by state.
- 3.1.j) Percent of Gorge residents at or below median income spending 30% or more on housing (including utilities).
- 3.1.k) Number of tourists visiting the Scenic Area per year.
- 3.1.l) Average expenditure per tourist visit to the Scenic Area.

Objective 3.2 – Protect and enhance agriculture and forestry¹².

- 3.2.a) Total number of agriculture and forestry enterprises
- 3.2.b) Total revenue and payroll of agriculture and forestry enterprises
- 3.2.c) Agriculture and forestry revenue as a percent of total Gorge revenue
- 3.2.d) Total acreage by crop type in agriculture and forestry
- 3.2.e) Total crop production amount and value by crop type
- 3.2.f) Total processed agricultural output amount and value by type (e.g. juices, fruits, wines)

Objective 3.3 – Allow economic development in rural centers and non urban areas consistent with the protection and enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge¹³.

- 3.3.a) Total number of rural and rural center enterprises by type (by state).

CULTURAL RESOURCES

(Draft derived from January 22 TAT sub-group meeting)

Goal 4: Protect and enhance cultural resources¹⁴¹⁵.

Objective 4.1: Protect and enhance significant¹⁶ archeological resources¹⁷.

- 4.1.a) Percent of monitored archeological sites that are undisturbed each year.
- 4.1.b) Percent of all monitored archeological sites that have been damaged by human activity
- 4.1.c) Percent of monitored, damaged archeological sites where mitigation or enforcement has occurred.
- 4.1.d) Number of archeological resources enhanced¹⁸.

12 Collect all values over time for Scenic Area as a whole

13 Collect all values over time, as possible, for Scenic Area as a whole

14 Cultural resources are defined as evidence of human occupation or activity that is important in the history, architecture, archaeology or culture of a community or region. Cultural resources include, but are not limited to, archeological resources, historic resources, and traditional cultural properties.

15 Enhancement examples include: listing an archeological site on the National Register of Historic Places; restoring native plants to an area; cleaning or restoring rock art; and providing new interpretive opportunities.

16 Cultural resources are "significant" if they are: a) included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; or b) determined to be culturally significant by a state, local or Indian tribal government, based on criteria developed by that government and filed with the Gorge Commission

17 Archeological resources are defined as physical evidence or ruins of human occupation or activity located on or below the surface of the ground and are at least 50 years old.

18 Enhancement examples include: listing an archeological site on the National Register of Historic Places; restoring native plants to an area; cleaning or restoring rock art; and providing new interpretive opportunities.