

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Vital Signs Indicators Project Technical Advisory Team
Meeting Notes
2:30 – 4:30 pm – October 11, 2007
White Salmon, Washington

Technical Advisory Team Members Present: Dr. Susan Wolff, chair, Brian Bainson, Todd Cornett, Sally Duncan advisor to the chair, Greg Griffith*, Jimmy Kagan, advisor to the chair, Kevin Price, Carolyn Sanco*, Bill Weiler,

Commissioners Present: Doug Crow*

Staff: Jill Arens, Tom Ascher, Dan Harkenrider, Angie Kenney, Jessica Metta and Diana Ross and Jeff Tryens*, indicators consultant.

Other Attendees: Robert Leipper

The meeting began with a welcome message from Gorge Commission Executive Director Jill Arens and USFS Scenic Area Manager Dan Harkenrider (Dan is also the chair for the Commission's Assessment Committee). It was explained that the Commission is in need of a system of measurements in which to measure how well the Management Plan currently implements the National Scenic Area Act and how well we are doing as an agency. The indicators project will enable the Commission to use adaptive management in the next plan review and ensure the continued protection of Gorge resources.

Jill explained the role of Jimmy Kagan and Sally Duncan, from the Oregon State University Institute of Natural Resources, as advisors to the chair of the Technical Advisory Team (Dr. Susan Wolff). Dan emphasized the need for the team to work in a transparent manner with the public and to keep the project simple to ensure that the community understands our measures and process.

Jeff Tryens gave a presentation explaining the need for and importance of indicators projects (presentation attached). He explained that the Technical Advisory Team (TAT) members are being asked to identify the most important pieces of the puzzle, the critical few measures, not everything and anything that is out there. He also explained that team will not be asked to set targets as part of this project.

Angie Kenney stated the two goals of the National Scenic Area Act and presented a list of goals, objectives and potential indicator categories that she had worked with Jeff Tryens and Pieter Klymeer (indicators summer intern) over the last summer to develop (handout is attached). It was explained that the objectives are still somewhat flexible at this point, and that we are really looking to the team members to fine tune them and create the indicators.

* These members were emailed the materials discussed ahead of time and participated in the meeting via teleconference.

Jimmy Kagan asked how important it was for the data to match up with specific indicators and objectives. He provided an example in which one data source satisfied more than one objective or indicator. Jeff explained that the data sources do not need to be mutually exclusive and that it is probably preferred if individual data sources could provide information for more than one indicator or objective. Jill, Dan and Angie agreed that an overlap in data would be preferable.

Angie briefly discussed the draft timeline of the project. She explained that the group should be meeting with the Community Advisory Team (CAT) by mid-November to discuss the first set of draft indicators and that the first set of real indicators should be ready by early January of 2008. Jill explained that she would prefer to see interim reports from the team to document the process and progress made. Sally Duncan and Jimmy Kagan will assist in the creation of these reports. Dan discussed the importance of keeping the project simple to stay on the aggressive time schedule. He emphasized that the team should be looking for only the most important indicators.

Chair Wolff addressed the team and explained that she does not come with a technical background. She said that by asking questions, she is simply trying to understand and encourage other ways of thinking, and is in no way challenging anyone's expertise or opinions.

Chair Wolff asked the team members what resources (scenic, natural, economic, cultural and/or recreation) they were interested in working on. She explained that each team member would essentially go out as a co-chair of a resource sub-group (two team members for each resource) and lead sub-group meetings that would focus on the creation of indicators for that one resource. Some overlap is expected and encouraged. As a result of this discussion, Todd Cornett and Brian Bainson have been assigned as co-chairs for the scenic resources sub-group, Bill Weiler for the natural resources sub-group, Carolyn Sanco and Randy Bluffstone for the economic resources sub-group, Greg Griffith and Charles Hudson for the cultural resources sub-group, and Rich Davis, Kevin Price and Bill Weiler for the recreation resources sub-group. Jimmy Kagan, an advisor to the team, volunteered to assist Bill Weiler with the natural resources sub-group. These groups will go out on their own to contact additional experts and schedule meetings to create indicators. Jill explained that staff support would be available for all of these meetings as long as we were notified of them. She also asked the team to assign a note taker for each meeting so that we can track discussions and developing indicators.

The organization of the sub-groups was discussed. Jeff explained that it was up to the co-chairs to decide how they would like to approach the meetings and members/data resources. A partial list of potential data contacts has been started by Angie, but it is no way a comprehensive or mandatory list (attached). It was discussed that the sub-groups would work on the creation of preliminary indicators first, with some cross over where necessary, and then bring them back to the larger team on a regular basis for further discussion.

Brian Bainson suggested that we discuss the interrelated connections shared by the resources, before the groups break out on their own. Chair Wolff suggested starting that discussion as part of this first meeting. Dan explained that not all of the technical resources will have a general understanding of the Scenic Area Act or the Commission's

Management Plan. He suggested that the members familiarize themselves with these documents. Jill handed a hard copy out to team members present at the meeting and advised those team members teleconferencing to view the documents online at our website (www.gorgecommission.org) Jill advised everyone to start with the Act - it is a shorter read and is actually our true guide in this process.

Jimmy questioned the natural resources objective and how naturally occurring fires (and other once common – but no longer common issues) fit into the picture if at all. Brian suggested that visual development patterns would probably be useful to all of the groups and that we should work together to reduce the workload. Angie and Chair Wolff agreed that they would be available to coordinate this kind of information overlap between groups. Jeff responded to Jimmy's original question regarding fire patterns and scenic resources by suggesting that the groups look to the Act for guidance. The Act actually directs the Commission to measure scenic resources by the level of change caused by humans, such as physical development and to look towards natural resources with a more environmental orientation. It is simply a matter of interpreting the Act. The group discussed that one of the important qualities of the team is the ability to see and hear many different interpretations and discuss them as a group of resource experts.

Bill Weiler suggested the addition of a third object to Goal five, recreation resources. He suggested that the recreation group take a real look at recreation's impact on natural resources. Kevin Price added that recreation actually overlaps with almost all of the other SNECRs. Todd Cornett explained that all of the SNECRs overlap with one another on a regular basis and that we will just have to work together to ensure that these cross-overs are discussed.

Chair Wolff suggested that the team schedule the next four meetings ahead of time. All of them will be held at the Gorge Commission's White Salmon, Washington office from 1:30 to 3:30 pm. The dates are: October 25, November 16, November 29 and December 13.

Jill explained that the TAT and CAT should probably meet in late November or early December to ensure a good collaborative relationship. Jeff agreed and added that the earlier the CAT is involved in the process of creating indicators, the more their values and needs will be incorporated into the process. Dan suggested waiting on setting the date of that meeting until the TAT had a chance to meet with their sub-groups and meet as a team a few more times. Chair Wolff said that her preference would be to have the two teams meet after the TAT has had a couple of meetings, but as soon as possible.

Greg requested clarification regarding the role of the CAT. Jeff explained that the CAT would not be able to throw out or deny any potential indicators, but that they would be engaged in the production of the indicators themselves to provide feedback, and a layer of transparency to the process. Jill explained that staff is currently recruiting gorge community members and leaders to be members of the CAT. She said that she would like to see these people embrace the project and discuss it with their local communities. The members are self-nominated, but will be chosen by the Commission's Assessment Committee and Executive Director.

Angie explained that every team meeting will be open to the public and offered staffing assistance. Jill requested that the team members contact Angie prior to the meetings so

that it could be posted on the website for interested parties and members of the public and to ensure adequate staff support.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 4 pm.

Attachments

AK

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Vital Signs Indicators Project
Technical Advisory Team Meeting
2:30 – 4:30 pm, October 11, 2007
White Salmon, Washington

2:30 – 2:40:
(5 minutes)

Jill Arens, Executive Director for the Columbia River Gorge Commission and Dan Harkenrider, Scenic Area Manager for the USDA Scenic Area Office and Chair for the Assessment Committee welcome members and meeting attendees.

Brief explanation of the Vital Signs Indicators Project.

2:40 – 2:55:
(10 – 15 minutes)

Introductions.

- Handout: diagram showing the Technical Advisory Team members and charter

2:55 – 3:10:
(15 minutes)

Presentation by Jeff Tryens, Indicators Consultant, explaining the need for indicators and how they are chosen.

- Handout: Jeff's presentation

3:10 – 3:30:
(20 minutes)

Presentation by Angie Kenney explaining the goals, objectives and potential indicators categories.

- Handout: An outline containing the goals, objectives and potential indicator categories.
- Handout: Tentative timeline

3:30 – 4:30:
(60 minutes)

Dr. Susan Wolff will lead the group in discussing how they will begin their work.

Vital Signs Indicators Project

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
Columbia River Gorge Commission & USFS National Scenic Area Office

The purposes of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act are:

- (1) to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and
- (2) to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph (1)

Overview of the Vital Signs Indicators Project:

The future of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area involves complex interconnections between various aspects of society – economic, environmental, and social. These aspects must be monitored to ensure that the purposes of the National Scenic Act are being appropriately implemented.

The highly valued natural, cultural, scenic, and recreational resources must be protected, and the economic strength and vitality of the area must be sustainable in a manner that is consistent with resource protection.

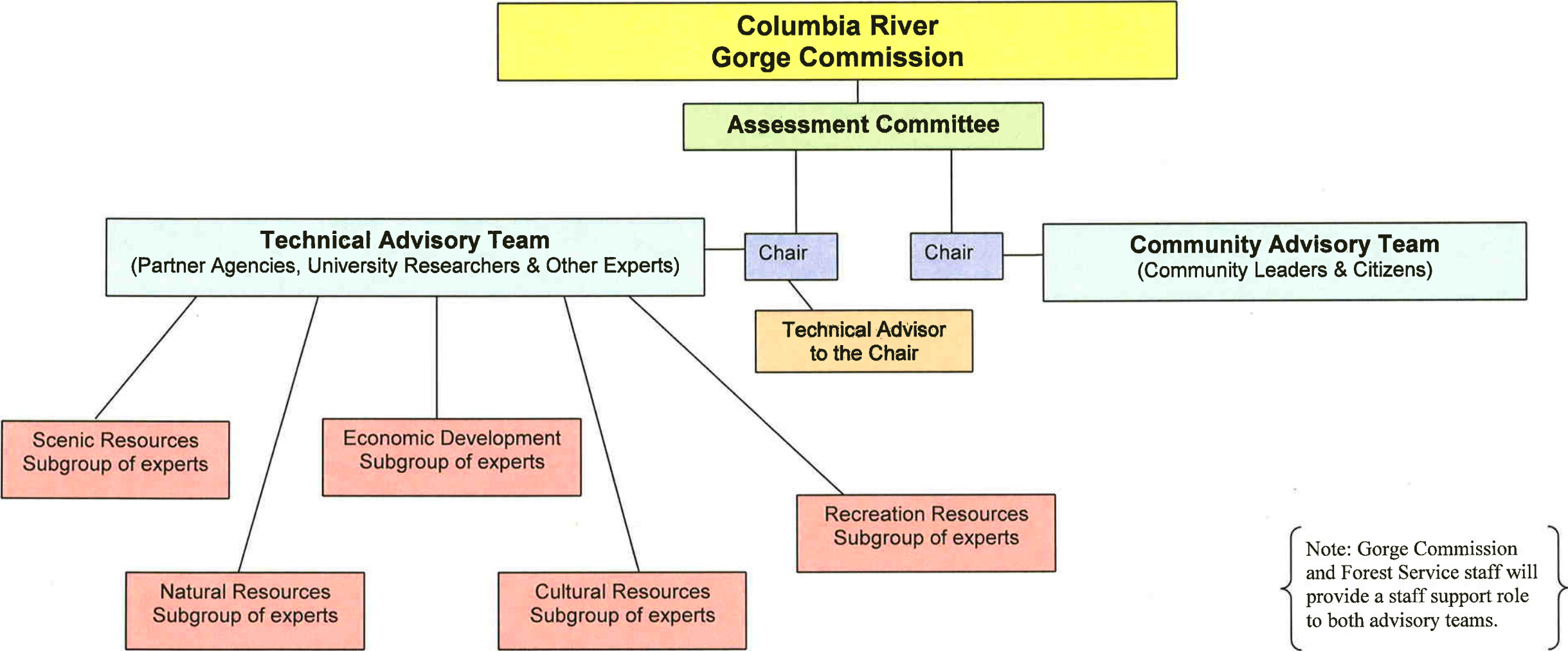
A comprehensive assessment is needed to determine the success and effectiveness of the outcomes of Columbia River Gorge Commission decisions, to inform future Management Plan reviews, and to facilitate adaptive management by the Commission.

Project Goals:

The Vital Signs Indicators Project incorporates multiple goals, some of which are listed below:

1. Provide statutory assessment of the effectiveness of the Management Plan in implementing the Scenic Area Act
2. Increase performance accountability and tie Commission actions to the purposes of the Act
3. Foster dialogue among counties, treaty tribes, business leaders, municipalities, ports, the public, and other stakeholders

Advisory Committee Structure for the Indicators Project



Note: Gorge Commission and Forest Service staff will provide a staff support role to both advisory teams.

**Columbia River Gorge Commission
Vital Signs Indicators Project Technical Advisory Team Charter**

PURPOSE

The Vital Signs Technical Advisory Team (the Technical Advisory Team) is created to assist the Columbia River Gorge Commission (the Commission) in creating a set of measures that will accurately and impartially measure key conditions regarding the five attributes of the Columbia River Gorge as prescribed in the Scenic Area Act. They are: scenic, natural, economic, cultural and recreational (SNECRs).

The Commission will utilize these measures for two purposes. First, the measures will be used to periodically assess the condition of the Gorge for the benefit of policymakers and the general public. Second, they will serve as the high level measures that the Commission will use to assess its performance in achieving the goals and objectives of its management plan.

Three overarching beliefs will underpin the Technical Advisory Team's work -

1. A robust set of measures, grounded in good science, can assist the Commission over time in devising better strategies for achieving the results described in the Act.
2. Measures must be developed in a holistic and comprehensive fashion in order to encompass the many interacting forces affecting the SNECRs.
3. Regular input from community representatives is critical to the success of this effort.

DELIVERABLES

The Technical Advisory Team will provide the Commission with three products:

1. Recommendations for improving the preliminary objectives that were approved by the Commission on August 14, 2007;
2. A set of specific measures for each of the SNECRs that will provide reasonable information on key conditions in the Gorge. The measures may be divided into three categories – a) ready-to-use; b) within reach; and c) developmental. At least one ready-to-use measure should be provided for each of the Commission's objectives, if practicable.
3. Recommendations for further improving the measures and their uses.

MEMBERSHIP

Members of the Technical Advisory Team will be chosen based on the following criteria:

1. recognized leadership in one or more of the SNECRs;
2. perceived as having a neutral approach;
3. respected within technical community;
4. collaborative;
5. experienced;
6. understanding of the issues in play in the Gorge; and
7. ability to meet time commitment requirements.

The Technical Advisory Team will consist of no more than 12 members with at least one with expertise in each of the SNECRs. Members shall include at least one county planning representative, one tribal representative, and one state agency representative from each state. All members will be chosen jointly by the Commission executive director and the chair of the Commission Assessment Committee.

The chair of the Technical Advisory Team will be widely recognized for her/his technical and management expertise and, unlike the other members, will not necessarily have special expertise in any of the SNECRs.

A technical advisor to the chair will be selected jointly by the Commission executive director and the chair of the Assessment Committee to assist the chair with technical expertise related to the SNECRs.

ORGANIZATION

The chair of the Technical Advisory Team will report to the Assessment Committee. Members of the Technical Advisory Team will serve at the discretion of the Technical Advisory Team chair.

The Technical Advisory Team may create subcommittees calling on other members of the technical community to serve on those subcommittees at its discretion. The Technical Advisory Team will operate under a strong chair governance model meaning it should work toward consensus on all important matters but, in the end, the chair has the final say. Minority reports may be developed when consensus is impossible.

The Gorge Commission and Forest Service will provide staff support for the Technical Advisory Team. In instances where Technical Team members can contribute other staff support, Gorge Commission and Forest Service staff will provide overall coordination.

Members of the Technical Advisory Team and its subcommittees will serve without compensation. Where appropriate, members may be reimbursed for reasonable meal and other travel-related expenses.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Technical Advisory Team and its subcommittees will operate in a transparent manner with all meetings open to the public. The chair and committee members shall meet with members of the Commission's Community Advisory Team (to be created in October, 2007) to discuss measurement issues related to community interests. The chairs of the Technical Advisory Team and the Community Advisory Team shall agree upon an appropriate protocol for exchanging information.

REPORTING

Recommendations for modifying the Commission's preliminary objectives should be submitted to the Assessment Committee on or before November 8, 2007. The Technical Advisory Team should prepare a preliminary report on proposed measures for consideration by the Assessment Committee on or before December 6, 2007. After consultation with the Assessment Committee, the Technical Advisory Team shall prepare a final report for the Commission on or before February 7, 2008.

The Technical Advisory Team will terminate six (6) months from the date of this charter unless renewed by the Commission.

*Columbia River Gorge Metrics:
The Role of the Technical Team*

11 October 2007
By Jeff Tryens
Gorge Commission Consultant

Purpose of the project

1. Identify a set of Gorge-level indicators to monitor the health of the region in areas of concern to the Gorge Commission.
2. Develop a set of agency-level performance measures aligned with the Gorge-level indicators for use by the Gorge Commission in managing the organization.

Why measure performance?

**Results-based strategic planning helps government
and its partners**



on what matters most to citizens.
