

**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.