

Enhancement Strategies

The first purpose of the Scenic Area Act is "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" [Section 3(1)]. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* (C. and G. Merriam Co. 1977) defines "enhance" in the following ways: 1) to raise, and 2) to make greater (as in value, desirability, or attractiveness.)

This chapter includes the Management Plan's specific objectives for enhancement of the resources of the

Columbia River Gorge. The subjects covered include scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources, as well as forest and agricultural lands and emergency services. Some of these objectives are also referenced in the specific chapters on a particular resource or land use designation. For the most part, the enhancement strategies represent non-regulatory approaches to achieve enhancement objectives. These strategies include landowner incentives, technical assistance, educational programs, and voluntary intergovernmental agreements.

OVERALL GMA AND SMA ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

GMA/SMA Objectives

1. Encourage the establishment of a public or private conservancy to acquire or otherwise protect those lands within the GMA for which the Management Plan cannot offer adequate protection without denying a reasonable economic use. Seek funds to enhance the conservancy capability in the Scenic Area. Seek acquisition priority for tracts of private land designated Open Space; for other lands with sensitive scenic, cultural, or natural resources; and for lands whose owners are confronted with unusual hardship resulting from application of policies or guidelines in the Management Plan.

2. In consultation with state and federal agencies, the counties, and the Indian tribes, develop handbooks for landowners to inform them of opportunities to protect and enhance natural and scenic resources on their lands, including assistance programs offered by state and federal agencies.
3. Establish a Vegetation Advisory Committee to advise the Gorge Commission, the Forest Service, the Washington and Oregon Departments of Transportation, and county road departments on improvement of vegetation management techniques to protect scenic, cultural, and natural resources.

SCENIC RESOURCES ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

GMA/SMA Objectives

1. Screen or improve the appearance of discordant features in the landscape.
 - A. In conjunction with local governments, develop an inventory of discordant features in the Gorge landscape.
 - B. Establish a program of incentives to bring existing structures into compliance with guidelines for scenic resources, prioritizing discordant features in the foreground of scenic travel corridors.
 - (1) Rehabilitate roadcuts and other disturbed areas in the landscape.
 - (2) Encourage removal of abandoned structures.
 - (3) Encourage removal or replacement of signs that do not conform to the sign guidelines for the GMA (Part I, Chapter 1: Scenic Resources) and the SMA (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies and Guidelines).
 - (4) Work with local governments to offer technical assistance and design suggestions to private developers.
 - C. Establish coordinated, cooperative programs with the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation, the Bonneville Power Administration, utilities, and the railroads to reduce the visual effect of existing facilities. The programs should:
 - (1) Encourage the railroads and utilities to place signal wires and powerlines underground where they are visually dominant and detract from the visual quality of the landscape.
 - (2) Encourage the use of visually subordinate colors on existing equipment.

- (3) Encourage improvement of existing rights-of-way by restoring vegetation to its natural appearance.
 - (4) Encourage the use of integrated practices in managing vegetation in the foreground of scenic travel corridors.
- D. Undertake the following activities in the SMA:
- (1) Revegetate clearcuts and disturbed areas with native vegetation wherever appropriate.
 - (2) In the Gorge Walls, Canyons, and Wildlands setting, obliterate and revegetate unused and closed roads and remove non-historic structures or other developed features.
 - (3) Acquire scenic easements, where necessary, to reduce development pressures and maintain uses that exemplify the landscape setting.
2. Improve the visual and recreational quality of the scenic travel corridors by implementing the recommendations in the Corridors Visual Inventory (April 1990) and the highway corridor strategies for Washington State Route 14, Interstate 84, the Historic Columbia River Highway.
- A. Develop a memorandum of understanding with the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation to carry out the recommendations in the Corridors Visual Inventory.
 - B. Encourage the Oregon and Washington Departments of Transportation to take the following measures to improve the visual quality of scenic travel corridors:
 - (1) Place reflectors on guardrails rather than on free-standing posts.
 - (2) Remove unnecessary highway signs; consolidate necessary signs where possible.
 - (3) Replace sections of white guardrail where white contrasts noticeably with gray or galvanized sections.
 - (4) Eliminate unnecessary construction berms.
 - (5) Close unused road accesses from scenic travel corridors.
 - (6) Eliminate maintenance stockpile sites that are visible from scenic travel corridors.

- C. Increase public awareness of historic structures and sites and of the National Register of Historic Places.
 - D. Encourage increased efforts to research and document the cultural history of the area through ongoing oral history projects, including interviews of "oldtimers" and Native Americans.
2. Promote the protection, restoration, and enhancement of cultural sites.
- A. Seek funds for a complete cultural resource inventory of the Scenic Area, in coordination with Indian tribal and local governments and state and federal agencies.
 - B. Determine an appropriate strategy for protection of sensitive cultural resource sites such as Miller Island.
 - C. Identify and map traditional plant-gathering areas and restore the plant habitat wherever possible.
 - D. Identify and interpret Oregon trail locations throughout the Scenic Area.
 - E. Develop a comprehensive strategy for the entire Scenic Area to integrate all law enforcement efforts for purposes of cultural resources protection.
 - F. Expand education programs to gain public support for vandalism prevention.
3. Encourage enhancement of historic and landmark structures and cultural landscapes.
- A. Promote public awareness of tax and other incentives available for the protection of historic buildings.
 - B. Promote retention or rehabilitation of historic rock guardrails and other historical components of the highway rights-of-way wherever practicable.
 - C. Ensure that restoration projects are in keeping with National Register status of structures, facilities, or landscapes.
 - D. Encourage local governments to expand existing incentives for the protection of historic buildings, including adopting resolutions or ordinances that facilitate landowner access to federal and state programs providing such incentives.

NATURAL RESOURCES ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

GMA/SMA Objectives

1. Enhance soil, water, and air resources to ensure sustainability of natural resources over time.
 - A. Facilitate implementation of Natural Resources Conservation Service and land-grant university cooperative extension programs to increase soil productivity.
 - B. Develop a program to enhance soil water retention and reduce runoff. Give preference to use of native species.
 - C. Encourage federal and state agencies to undertake a comprehensive water quality monitoring program on the Columbia River and its major tributaries.
2. Establish cooperative programs to enhance significant natural resources in the Scenic Area. Programs should emphasize public lands, but encourage participation by private landowners.
 - A. Develop a comprehensive program to inventory existing oak woodlands and propose methods for their protection, including incentives for property owner cooperation and support, acquisition of sensitive stands, and easements to preserve the oaks on large parcels.
 - B. Work cooperatively with private owners, native plant societies, concerned individuals, and other organizations to enhance floral habitats. Expand the inventories of wildflower areas throughout the Scenic Area; develop protection guidelines and strategies, such as easements, acquisition, and mitigations; and encourage nurseries to carry native species for landscaping or mitigation proposals.
 - C. Support the Northwest Power Planning Council's efforts to restore anadromous fish runs in the Columbia River. Participate in these efforts by implementing the Forest Service three-region fish policy for coordinated management of anadromous fish resources.
 - D. Work cooperatively with the state wildlife agencies and landowners to enhance conservation of winter range and to identify and develop strategies (including tax incentives) for non-game wildlife habitat conservation and enhancement.
 - E. Continue and expand programs to enhance waterfowl habitat and shallow-water fish habitat.

- F. Provide Forest Service evaluation of identified natural areas for possible designation as a Research Natural Area (RNA). Where appropriate, prepare reports and recommendations for designation as RNA.
 - G. In cooperation with state and federal agencies, design and implement a restoration and enhancement program for wetlands and riparian areas, to include revegetation and stream channel improvements for wildlife and fish habitats.
 - H. Encourage the use of fire to restore and perpetuate natural ecosystems.
3. Develop educational and technical assistance programs to expand public awareness and understanding of ecological principles and ecosystem management.
- A. Develop public education opportunities that will foster better appreciation and understanding of the natural resources and land stewardship. These opportunities should be closely linked to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Interpretive Strategy.
 - B. Develop an interagency education program to foster protection of wetlands and riparian areas from cattle grazing.
 - C. In cooperation with the appropriate state and federal agencies (e.g., State Extension Service), develop supporting documentation and provide technical assistance for landowners exploring alternatives to chemical use for vegetation management.

RECREATION RESOURCES ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

GMA/SMA Objectives

- 1. Enhance the recreational experience in the Scenic Area.
 - A. Encourage the creation or restoration of openings in vegetation along Washington State Route 14, Interstate 84, and the Historic Columbia River Highway to provide or improve views of the Columbia River and the walls of the Gorge.
 - B. Promote programs that increase awareness and appreciation of the great diversity of natural, cultural, scenic, and recreation resources of the Scenic Area.

- C. Encourage provision of alternative modes of transportation (including bus, shuttles, rail, and boat) to recreation destinations in order to reduce resource impacts and to facilitate visitation by all segments of the public.
- D. Encourage provision of transportation modes that are recreational in nature.
- E. Improve linkages between different modes of transportation at major recreation sites in the Scenic Area.
- F. Encourage comprehensive recreation planning that fosters a unified, regional approach.
- G. Provide additional opportunities and facilities for recreational access to the Columbia River and its tributaries, scenic appreciation, and other resource-based recreation uses.

FOREST LAND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

SMA/GMA Objectives

- 1. Enhance the ability of forest land to ensure continued productivity and economic benefits over time.
 - A. Enhance forestry on lands designated Commercial Forest Land or Large or Small Woodland by encouraging consolidation of small, inefficient tracts into more efficient ownerships.
 - B. Enhance forestry by encouraging Washington and Oregon to consider grants and loans to secondary processors of forest products under Section 11 of the Scenic Area Act and other economic development programs.
 - C. Undertake the following actions by the Forest Service:
 - (1) Develop cooperative programs with state agencies, educational groups, and concerned individuals to encourage the protection and integration of soils, forest ecosystems, long-term productivity, and natural resources.
 - (2) Initiate forest management projects to demonstrate good stewardship and long-term sustainable forest management
 - (3) Provide technical assistance to forest managers for design of forest management activities to ensure sustained productivity.

- (4) Increase public awareness of existing programs designed to ensure sustained productivity, such as the forestry incentive program and the use of easements.
- (5) Develop incentive programs to encourage long-term stewardship for small woodlot management.
- (6) Assist with marketing and research efforts to enhance the economic viability of secondary manufacturing for wood products, increased utilization of wood products and other miscellaneous forest products.

AGRICULTURAL LAND ENHANCEMENT STRATEGIES

GMA/SMA Objectives

- 1. Enhance the sustainability of agricultural land to ensure continued economic benefits.
 - A. Encourage consolidation of small, inefficient parcels of agricultural land into larger, more efficient tracts.
 - B. Support and promote the Oregon and Washington farm value assessment programs that provide tax incentives for continued agricultural use and enhance the competitive capabilities of farms and ranches, thereby encouraging the long-term enhancement, preservation, and expansion of agricultural lands. Support programs that encourage agricultural practices that preserve other natural resources.
 - C. Develop new strategies to provide incentives for soil and water conservation and for sustained agricultural productivity.
 - D. Promote public education programs that foster greater understanding of agricultural practices, agricultural ecosystems, and good stewardship of the land.
 - E. Encourage cooperative programs with state and federal agencies and the Soil Conservation Service to explore the integration of wildlife needs with agricultural practices. Such practices could include retention of hedge rows, construction of windrows, management of small commercial woodlands, restoration of native grasses, restoration of wetlands, and integrated pest management.
 - F. Encourage the protection of non-commercial woodlands, such as oak stands, for groundwater replenishment, soil retention, and wildlife habitat needs.

- G. Enhance agriculture by allowing processing and packing of agricultural products and other uses that offer direct marketing opportunities, subject to review to minimize the loss of agricultural land and to limit the size and scale of use.

EMERGENCY SERVICES STRATEGIES

GMA/SMA Objectives

1. With facilitation by the Forest Service, develop a coordinated, interagency emergency response plan for the Scenic Area. The plan should address law enforcement; search and rescue services; and fire, hazardous materials, and catastrophic event response services. The plan should include the following elements:
 - A. A coordinated incident command system developed by the agencies and communities in the Gorge, including federal, state, county, city, and protection district agencies.
 - B. A Forest Service interagency fire management strategy, including an assessment of fire potential.
 - C. Consultation with a Forest Service resource advisor during emergency situations, including fire suppression, law enforcement, search and rescue, hazardous materials, and other catastrophic incidents, in order to avoid adversely affecting scenic, cultural, recreation, and natural resources.
 - D. Increased law enforcement services on National Forest lands by the Forest Service and by interagency agreements.