

Columbia River Gorge Commission
Meeting Notes
Work Session
September 10 and 11, 2004

Location: Menucha Retreat Center, Corbett, Oregon

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Harold Abbe
Kenn Adcock
Doug Crow
Judy Davis
Dan Harkenrider
Jane Jacobsen
Walt Loehrke
Joe Palena
Joyce Reinig
Kathy Sheehan
Anne Squier

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dave Robertson (excused)

STAFF PRESENT

Martha Bennett
Sue Dicile (consultant)

OTHERS PRESENT

Andersen, Steven (Saturday morning)
Casseseka, Clifford. Yakama Nation (Friday afternoon and Saturday morning)
Condit, Jeff (Saturday only)
Lieber, Bob
Simeone, Angelo (Friday afternoon and Saturday afternoon)
Thiemann, Ed (Saturday morning)
Thiemann, Phyllis
Thompson, Geoff (Friday afternoon and Saturday afternoon)

The Commission conducted a work session and training to discuss general goals, roles and responsibilities, and agreements on Commission deliberations. A complete set of notes from the discussion is attached.

The work session was called to order at 1:10 p.m. on September 10, 2004. The work session recessed for the evening at 6:30 p.m. The Commission reconvened the work session at 9:10 a.m. and recessed for lunch at 12:05 p.m. The Commission reconvened at 1:10 p.m., and adjourned the work session at 3:25 p.m. On Saturday,

the Commission invited Jeff Condit to participate in their discussions. Mr. Condit has been appointed for a term on the Commission by Oregon Governor Kulongoski, but he had not been confirmed by the Oregon Senate prior to the work session.

The Commission took no formal actions on any of the items discussed. Any formal action on these items will be taken in regular meeting of the Commission.

Meeting notes taken by Martha Bennett, Executive Director

Approved on October 12, 2004

Columbia River Gorge Commission

Commission Retreat

September 10 & 11, 2004

Worksession Notes

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**Columbia River Gorge Commission
Commission Retreat
September 10 & 11, 2004
Retreat Notes**

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**Commissioners in Attendance:** Harold Abbe, Kenn Adcock, Judy Davis, Daniel Harkenrider, Jane Jacobsen, Joe Palena, Anne Squier, Doug Crow, Walt Loehrke, Joyce Reinig, Katharine Sheehan. **Others in Attendance:** Martha Bennett, Executive Director; Sue Dicile, facilitator; Jeffrey Condit, appointed to Commission but not yet confirmed.  
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On-September 10th and 11th 2004 the members of the Columbia River Gorge Commission participated in a retreat, held at the Menucha Retreat Center. The purpose of the retreat was to further develop and refine the Commission's operating framework, including methods of working together, mutual expectations, shared principles, and clarity about roles.
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**REFLECTING ON THE RECENT PAST**

*The session opened with an open-comment debrief of Commission's recent past. During the discussion, Commissioners agreed on the following summary conclusions:*

- Plan Review represented an unprecedented amount of time and effort, with an enormous amount of that time and effort dedicated to public involvement.
- The public outreach and involvement initiatives were crucial. It was important to provide all Gorge residents with an opportunity to have their say.
- Regardless of the level of effort during Plan Review, public outreach remains an ongoing challenge.
- Plan Review offered no opportunities for easy answers, and it was to the Commission's credit that a consensus product was arrived at.
- The staff has born much of the burden of discontented stakeholders. It affects staff both professionally and personally ("directly in their pocketbooks").
- The Commission has evolved to be more fair and unbiased.
- The Commission is proud of its efforts to establish better relationships with county partners. The demonstrated willingness of the Commission to change its opinions and actions based on good input from partners has contributed to improved credibility with the counties, and their support during Plan Review. The relationship with the planning staffs at the counties is much improved, and there is now a much better process through which they are engaged and involved.
- The decrease in the appeal load is an indicator of success, as is the drop in legal expenses. Much of this is a credit to the Executive Director, her staff, and her ability to work with people.
- Commissioners have worked together well. Lines of communication are more open than ever before.
- The Commission is not likely to get external validation, as the most vocal parties are those who are disappointed. The Commission strived to bring a greater degree of balance, which has resulted in unhappiness at both ends of the poles of public opinion. But the majority are happy about protections and love the unique beauty of the Gorge.
- The media only reports conflict, so only the higher profile disputes receive air time.
- Those who attack the Commission budget do so as a way to decrease the effectiveness of the Act. It is essential to pick up support at state levels. The amount of money in question is very small in the context of the states' budgets. This punitive approach, which is driven by a very few legislators, is something that the Commission has to turn around.

## THE BIG PICTURE

During this discussion Commission members created an overview, beginning with the vision contemplated in the Act, and moving through the current situation and toward a vision for the future.

| ROLE                         | VISION CONTEMPLATED IN THE ACT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | WHERE WE ARE NOW                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | VISION GOING FORWARD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Scenic and Natural Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Scenic values maintained, without erosion from development. Conversion to another type of landscape prevented.</li> <li>▪ Numerous, growing recreation opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Improving health of scenic, natural and recreation resources.</li> <li>▪ Protection for the long term, not just the slowing of the inevitable.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A "pretty good job" of protecting values since the Act's inception.</li> <li>▪ A resource with great intrinsic value.</li> <li>▪ Increasing pressure toward conversion.</li> <li>▪ Many wonderful enhancement projects, including the restoration of the Scenic Highway, Skamania Lodge, Mosier Waterfront.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Getting better at regulation, such that there could be more, but less visible, houses, logging accommodated within scenic values, more recreation opportunities.</li> <li>▪ Putting forward a description of what we see as "balance" as we move into the future.</li> <li>▪ Balancing broader interests, both regional and national, not just local.</li> <li>▪ Developing and using good information that supports good analysis and decisions, and indicators so that we can monitor "what's going on".</li> <li>▪ New and creative thinking about how to leverage the resources for economic development, framing the case for the economic value of the viewscape.</li> </ul> |
| Economic Development         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ People can live and work in the Gorge.</li> <li>▪ Vibrant urban areas as the focal point for development, characterized by viable, forward-thinking, positive economic development.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ In possession of a resource that is potentially a powerful economic development tool.</li> <li>▪ Accelerated property values in many areas.</li> <li>▪ A shifting demographic, toward second home owners, is impacting communities.</li> <li>▪ Traditional agriculture industries have declined due to global economic forces.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More visibility, transparency, accessibility.</li> <li>▪ An asset and a partner in the Gorge, but not responsible to solving all of the problems of the Gorge.</li> <li>▪ Klickitat County adoption of the Act.</li> <li>▪ Enhanced relationship with tribal communities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Community Involvement        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Communities planning in concert with each other</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Low level of general public awareness.</li> <li>▪ Lack of a forum to inform and educate on regional and national levels.</li> <li>▪ Those who are angry over Commission actions or policies have the loudest voices in the media and with legislators.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Recognition of our pioneering model.</li> <li>▪ Circumspection about the degree to which pioneering ideas and change bring resistance.</li> <li>▪ Balanced, proportional relationship with funders at legislatures in both states.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Management Model             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A new management model, incorporating, but not duplicating, models from the Parks and Forest Services.</li> <li>▪ Learning from mistakes in other parts of the country, and taking the opportunity afforded by the condition of resources in the West.</li> <li>▪ A new model, grounded in an "Early 1930's conservation focus", but geared to address complexities, and appropriate to the large landscape, multiple jurisdictions, and multiple uses and values. (There was understanding that it would be a pioneering initiative and an evolutionary process, requiring ongoing compromise.)</li> <li>▪ Acknowledgement of the difficulty of assigning a dollar value to long term, intrinsic values.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moving on, and living with the legacy of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the Gorge Commission.</li> <li>▪ A component of that legacy is the current budget crisis, and the budget-to-workload imbalance.</li> <li>▪ Another component is lingering tensions and adversarialism with and among some of the communities-of-interest.</li> <li>▪ At the point of needing to examine new policy issues.</li> <li>▪ The Commission has adopted some of the language of past criticisms - much of which isn't true/doesn't hold up.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Moving on, and living with the legacy of the 1<sup>st</sup> generation of the Gorge Commission.</li> <li>▪ A component of that legacy is the current budget crisis, and the budget-to-workload imbalance.</li> <li>▪ Another component is lingering tensions and adversarialism with and among some of the communities-of-interest.</li> <li>▪ At the point of needing to examine new policy issues.</li> <li>▪ The Commission has adopted some of the language of past criticisms - much of which isn't true/doesn't hold up.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                          |

## THE COMMISSION'S ROLE GOING FORWARD

During this discussion, commissioners identified key roles of the Columbia River Gorge Commission, and crafted definitions of those roles going forward.

### KEY ROLES

### DEFINITION

### ACTION

#### Enhance effectiveness through shared stewardship

- Getting better at regulation by making the regulations more understandable, relevant, user-friendly.
- Giving back value-added as an outcome of compliance.
- Celebrating what's good, and those who make it work.
- Fostering a culture of stewardship in Gorge communities.

#### Protect and enhance via:

- Regulation
- Partnerships
- Cultivation of broader involvement and stewardship.

#### Partner and Facilitate

- Being mindful of the impact of our policies and actions on economic development, but not duplicating the activities of the agencies ("the 72") that have direct responsibility for economic development in the region.
  - Instead of duplicating, being at the table with them.
- Viewing economic development from a system-wide perspective, NOT as single actions or single properties.

#### Economic Development

- Facilitate, within staff resources.
- Streamline our processes to the degree possible.
- Articulate successes

#### SHORT TERM: Create a compelling message about what we can deliver:

- Begin speaking to the states in a different way about what the budget can purchase.

#### Achieve a reasonable and productive budget-to-workload ratio.

- Creating and driving the strategy and case for a budget that enables fulfillment of obligations under the Act.
- Establishing an "election campaign ethic", but on behalf of the Commission and the resources. (Constituency-building)
  - Locally, through initiatives like a speaker's bureau.
  - At the legislature.
  - With and for partners and partnerships.
- Involving others in ownership of regulation.

#### Target:

- o Governors' office;
- o US Congress representatives;
- o Key state legislators.
- Approach county partners.
- Organize capitol visits (most importantly, Salem)
- Coordinate with partners.
- Highlight the message.
- Goal: Convince "the handful of key legislators" in each state."

#### LONG TERM:

- Pursue federal funding.
- Cultivate general public opinion.

#### Implementers of Measure!

- Illustrating impacts and results.
- Articulating and celebrating the successes of a pioneering resource protection model.

#### Best Methods and Practices

- Implement data gathering and evaluation practices.

## COMMISSION WORKING AGREEMENTS

*During this discussion, commissioners identified key agreements as guidelines for working together. The agreements are:*

- We serve the purposes of the Scenic Area Act, with a view to the future. The Act is the policy framework in which we make decisions.
- As appointees, we contribute the concerns of the appointing jurisdiction; however the constituencies we serve are broad, including local, tribal, state, regional, and federal arenas.
- We will consider and discuss issues that come before us in the context of the Act, and the long term.
- We seek efficiencies to our discussions, with each commissioner recognizing and taking responsibility for:
  - limiting re-statement;
  - framing proposals and solutions, instead of general concerns or positions.
- We will refer media inquiries that have legal or quasi-judicial ramifications to the Executive Director.
- When responding to inquiries about an official Commission action, we will articulate the reason the action was taken. It is acceptable to explain the reason for dissent.
- Once an action is taken, it becomes a part of the Commission's policy framework, unless it is specifically re-opened as part of the Commission's official business.
- We agree to treat each other, staff, and those who give testimony to the Commission, with courtesy and respect.
- It is appropriate to ask informational or clarifying questions during testimony, and to refer questions that they pose to the Chair or the Executive Director. It is not appropriate to respond to questions, engage in debate, or promise action for those giving testimony.
- In order to develop better understanding of each other's values, ideas, and communication styles, we will create opportunities to spend informal time together outside of Commission meetings (at a minimum once a year).

### Related issues discussed:

- It is a good practice for members to share information and keep each other in the loop about their thinking.
- It is fine for individual members to discuss issues and share information outside of formal meetings, as long as they "keep the gate" between "sharing information and viewpoints" (okay) and "determining the outcome in advance" (not okay). Communicating is fine - pre-judging is not.
- Commissioners find it helpful to allow some time, prior to calling for a motion, to ask questions and frame an issue; however the time dedicated to such pre-motion exchange should be limited. The Chair may want to place and monitor the time limit.

- “It is often easier for the receiver of feedback to forgive than to change”. Acknowledging that it is difficult to change long-held communication habits, commissioners should be able to give respectful constructive feedback if another commissioner is out of step with the Commission’s working agreements - and be able to hear without rancor when they are the object of such feedback.

## THE AGREEMENTS SCORECARD

*The scorecard on the next page integrates the Working Agreements established by the Commission at the retreat (previous page) into a format to help assess “how are we measuring up?”*

The Agreements Scorecard is a way for teams to evaluate and track their development and for keeping their attention on their Working Agreements. The Scorecard uses a 5-scale” to rate how the team as a whole is doing on each of the agreements.

### **Using the Scorecard**

Here are the components of the Scorecard and a description of how to use them:

**Working Agreements:** The agreements established at the retreat.

**How are we doing?:** Rate the degree to which the team has integrated each agreement.

**Key Team Vulnerability:** Identify the agreement that is most important for the team to improve on, for its ongoing health and development.

**Personal Challenge:** Identify the agreement that most challenges you as an individual.

**Recommendations:** A spot to take some brief notes or record suggestions.

**Blank row:** A spot for the team to add an agreement should other issues arise.

The team should agree on a timeframe for using the Scorecard to rate its performance relative to the agreements, for instance, on a monthly or quarterly basis.

It isn’t necessary to compare or compile Scorecard results, but it is important for team members to discuss the “highs and lows” of their ratings, and their suggestions for ongoing improvement.

# AGREEMENTS SCORECARD

## How're we doing?

Not getting it      Struggling      Getting it sometimes      Getting it      Got it!

Key Team Vulnerability

Personal Challenge

Recommendations

### TEAM MEMBER AGREEMENTS

We serve the purposes of the Scenic Area Act, with a view to the future. The Act is the policy framework in which we make decisions.

As appointees, we contribute the concerns of the appointing jurisdiction; however the constituencies we serve are broad and inclusive of the range of Act beneficiaries.

We consider and discuss issues that come before us in the context of the Act, and the long term.

We seek efficiencies to our discussions, with each commissioner recognizing and taking responsibility for limiting re-statement; and framing proposals and solutions instead of concerns/positions.

We refer media inquiries that have legal or quasi-judicial ramifications to the Executive Director.

When responding to inquires about an official action, we will articulate the reason the action. It is acceptable to explain the reason for dissent.

Once an action is taken, it becomes a part of the Commission's policy framework, unless it is specifically re-opened as official Commission business

We agree to treat each other, staff, and those who give testimony to the Commission, with courtesy and respect.

During testimony we may ask informational or clarifying questions, and refer testifier questions to the Chair or the Executive Director, but will not respond to questions, debate, or promise action.

We will create opportunities to spend informal time together outside of Commission meetings (min. once a year).

(Other)