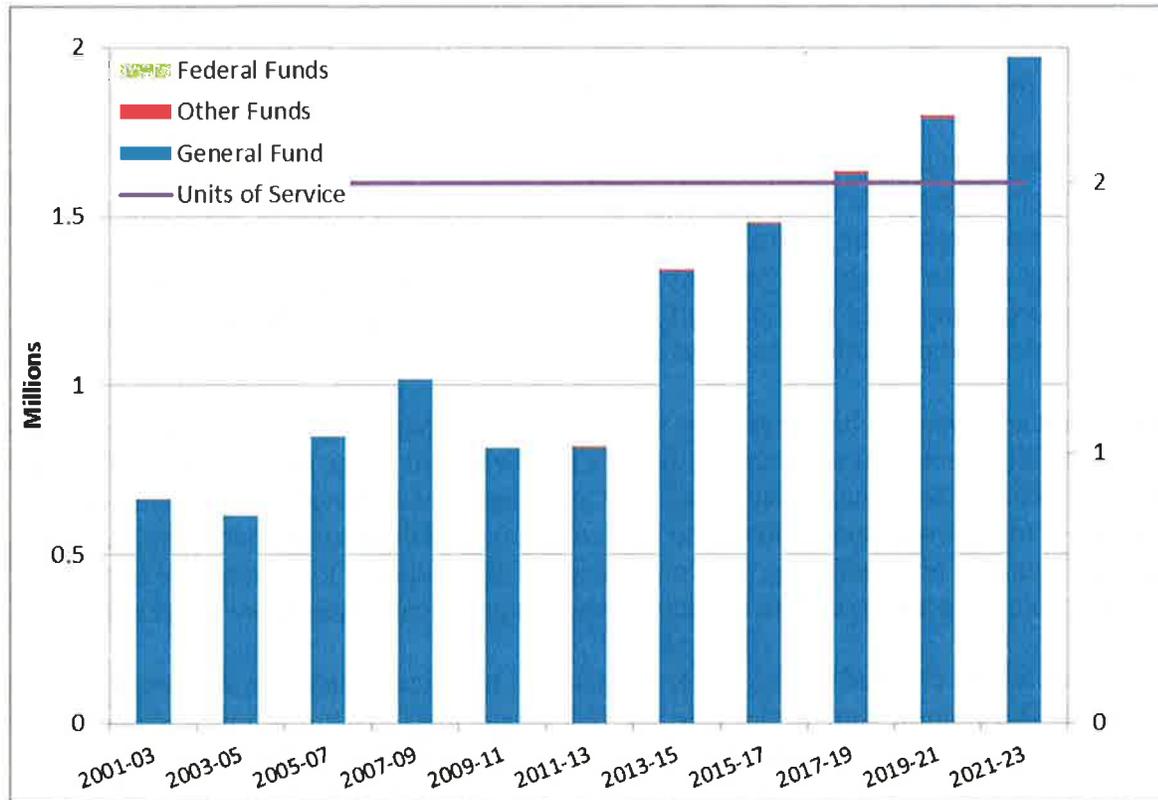


# Columbia River Gorge Commission: Interstate Compact Agency

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Primary Outcome Area: Healthy Environments  
Secondary Outcome Area: N/A  
Program Contact: Darren Nichols, Executive Director – 509.493.3323



## Executive Summary

The Columbia River Gorge Commission is a primary steward of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act and the resulting interstate agreement between Oregon and Washington authorized by the United States Congress. The Gorge Commission coordinates and monitors the efforts of local governments, state and federal agencies, Tribes, and citizens to protect scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources, and to support a vibrant economy in one of America’s greatest treasures: The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

## Program Funding Request

The Columbia River Gorge Commission requests an Oregon general fund budget of \$1,303,279. The request is based on a current service level budget of \$908,279 and includes four critical policy option packages totaling \$395,000.

## **Program Description**

The Gorge Commission is a bi-state agency that works closely with two states, four treaty tribes, six counties and thirteen Gorge communities to coordinate regional planning and economic development in one of America's most outstanding natural resource areas. At a minimum the Commission must be able to fully participate in monthly meetings, maintain advisory committees, reach out to local and state agencies, and meet with the four Columbia River Treaty tribes. The Commission also relies on a competent professional staff to manage day-to-day operations and maintain a current, relevant regional Management Plan that meets the needs of communities and protects the National Scenic Area.

The Gorge Commission is responsible to achieve two fundamental purposes:

- To protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and
- To protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development that is consistent with the resource protection described above.

The Commission achieves and balances these two objectives by adopting a regional management plan and by providing technical assistance, guidance and oversight to the local, state and federal agencies implementing the management plan. The Commission also provides a quasi-judicial forum for parties to resolve disputes about the implementation of the management plan. As part of its statutory planning responsibility, the Commission is also required to monitor the health of the National Scenic Area and to update the management plan at least once every ten years.

The Commission serves city and county governments with technical assistance and development review services. The Commission serves state and federal agencies as a consulting agency and as a regional facilitator on large-scale development projects. For example, the Commission reviews development applications for consistency with the management plan on power transmission facility upgrades, shoreline development proposals, cultural resource protection and enhancement, and on timberland management decisions. To serve the public, the Commission maintains a "front counter" to provide drop in service for citizens. At the counter, the Commission provides real property mapping tools and informational maps, housing development guidelines and other resources to assist land owners, Gorge businesses and the general public with guidance for resource protection and development.

In its role as a regional facilitator, the Commission meets on a quarterly basis to hear land use proposals, appeals of local decisions, and to discuss policy matters in the National Scenic Area. In between formal Commission meetings, the Commission's staff hosts and attends a series of standing monthly, quarterly and annual meetings with agency partners, economic development organizations and with the governors' offices in both states. In its roles as a public service agency, the Commission hosts several public inquiries on a daily basis. Historically, the Commission has staffed six planners who are available to attend meetings and answer questions on an as needed basis. The Commission currently staffs only 1.5 FTE to meet these needs; the Commission is considering options for providing a continued high level of customer service.

Local governments implement the Commission's management plan on a day-to-day basis and the Commission supports local planning programs with technical assistance and periodic monitoring. These local government planning programs are key to the success of the overall National Scenic Area program. Due to the regional nature of the National Scenic Area, however, local governments cannot implement the program alone. And, because of the inherent tensions between resource protection and economic development, the Commission provides a regional forum for dispute resolution. In order to provide these planning, coordination and resolution functions, the Commission requires at least a core staff (planning, geography, legal, and administration) and the ability to meet as a body on a periodic basis. These needs are the primary drivers for the program cost. Given the depth of budget cuts to the Commission since 2008, there is essentially no room to find program efficiencies. And, due to the interstate nature of the Commission's mission, there are few if any options for alternative service delivery that would not either cost the states more or present complex legal and political governance challenges.

### **Program Justification and Link to 10-Year Outcome**

The Commission has recently undertaken two significant projects to assist in its efforts to monitor and meet the policy needs of the region. First, the Commission has re-engaged a 2009 effort to develop a comprehensive monitoring system tracking Gorge resources. The effort, referred to as the Gorge Vital Signs Indicators (VSI), provides objective measurements of the health of fifty-one Gorge resources in five areas: Natural Resources, Scenic Resources, Cultural Resources, Recreation Resources, and the Economy. Together, the VSI provide a policy "dashboard" by which the Commission and its partners will be able to assess and prioritize policy improvement opportunities and regional investment needs. The Commission does not have the budget resources to complete the VSI data collection all at once. It does, however, have the staff capacity and strategic partnerships in place to provide a critical mass of data in each of the five outcome areas (see attached Vital Signs Indicators Current Efforts 2012). As individual indicators are reported, the Commission will be able to link to program areas identified in the Healthy Environment Policy Vision and better support the objectives of Oregon agencies working in the National Scenic Area.

Secondly, the Commission is working with Portland State University and the University of Washington to conduct a National Scenic Area Consensus Assessment. The assessment is intended to ask three fundamental questions of up to 130 regional stakeholders: what are your aspirations for the NSA, what are your concerns about the future of the NSA, and how willing are you to work with others in addressing those concerns and aspirations collaboratively. The Assessment will provide the Commission with key insights into its best opportunities for partnership with individual stakeholders on specific regional issues. The Commission's intent is to provide regional leadership and innovation to policy and practices that build trust and cooperation while efficiently implementing the NSA management plan.

Together, the VSI and Consensus projects will enable the Commission to work more effectively with agencies, interest groups and the public to successfully balance the two purpose of the National Scenic Area Act. Perhaps most importantly, the Commission will be much better positioned to utilize non-regulatory tools to solve regional challenges. The Commission will also

be better equipped to work with specific fiscal and policy objectives such as Oregon's 10 Year Budget Project and the Healthy Environment Policy Vision.

The following outline the Gorge Commission's program as it supports and implements the Healthy Environment Policy Vision:

**Strategy 1: Invest in programs that improve water quality and air quality**

Among the key indicators the Commission will monitor over the next few years are habitat quality, forest health and water quality/quantity. Between Gorge Commission staff and USFS staff, the Commission will use remote sensing data to monitor and document changes in water quality and will be able to identify specific and cumulative resource impacts over time.

**Strategy 2: Invest in programs that conserve, protect and restore key watersheds, stabilize populations of fish and wildlife species and improve forest and rangeland health**

The Commission is specifically responsible to protect and enhance Natural Resources in the NSA. As part of its mission, the Gorge Commission monitors the quality and quantity of habitat in the NSA and changes to habitat over time. Gorge Commission data can be used to support current public policy, encourage new or amended public policy, or to prioritize between agency investment strategies. The Commission's partnership with state and local agencies, the USFS and Tribes also presents Oregon and Washington with a unique opportunity to experiment with multi-jurisdictional resource management.

**Strategy 4: Build great communities for a growing population**

The Gorge Commission is the sole body responsible to decide on the location and amount of land within urban area boundaries in the NSA. As a result of its Consensus Assessment Project, the Commission will have opportunity to explore alternative growth management strategies that complement NSA resource protection and support vibrant community development. The Commission is uniquely positioned to weigh and balance regional resource protection and urban development, not only in Oregon but in the two-state NSA. The Commission's regulatory authority, combined with its ability to develop innovative public policy offers the northwest an opportunity to explore and test improved community development policy and to achieve national recognition for Oregon's leadership in land use and community development.

**Strategy 5: Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of natural resources management in Oregon, and provide a stable base for addressing existing and emerging resource challenges**

See also notes under Strategies 1 and 2 above.

The Gorge Commission, as an interstate compact agency acting with congressional authority offers Oregon a unique opportunity to leverage technical assistance and potential funding for a wide variety of natural resource management efforts. The innovative nature of the Commission's jurisdiction and its flexibility to development innovative public policy offer the State of Oregon and unparalleled opportunity to achieve efficient and effective resource management. The Columbia River Gorge Commission is a recognized and celebrated institution in Oregon, the northwest and nationally. As Oregon (and Washington) are willing to invest in the Commission's efforts to develop successfully resource protection and community development policy, those efforts can be recognized and leveraged nationally in a way that an individual state, acting alone may not be able to achieve.

**Program Performance**

While the Columbia River Gorge Commission does not produce a standardize “unit” of service, the Commission effectively meet the needs of two states, six counties, thirteen urban communities, and countless interested citizens.

In Oregon, the Commission’s service is evaluated in five primary ways:

- The percentage of commission advice to local governments that is incorporated into county decisions;
- The percentage of development review decisions that are issued within 72 days;
- The percentage of customers rating the Commission with above average or excellent for:
  - Timeliness
  - Accuracy
  - Helpfulness
  - Expertise
  - Information availability
- Percent of Best Practices met by the Commission
- Percentage of participants in presentations made by the Commission who state that they have a better understanding of the National Scenic Area after the presentation.

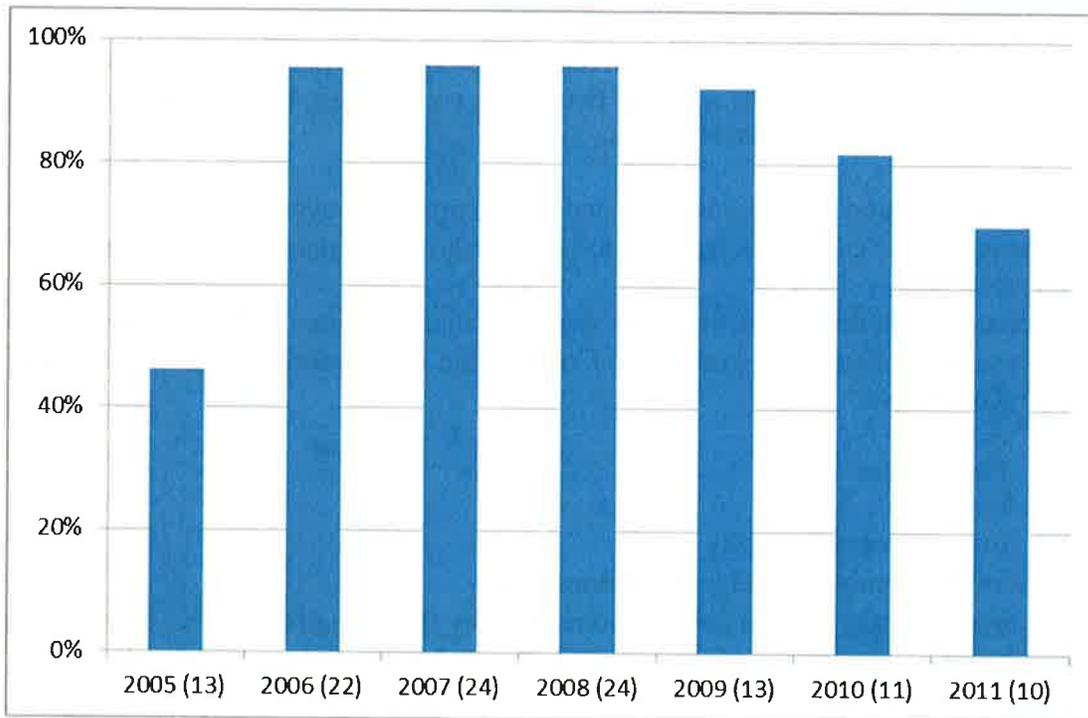
**Total Number of Development Applications reviewed by CRGC from CY 2008 to 2011**

<u>State</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>CY08</u>	<u>CY09</u>	<u>CY10</u>	<u>CY11</u>
<b>Oregon</b>	Multnomah	28	21	21	12
	Hood River	23	13	19	10
	<u>Wasco</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>16</u>
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>78</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>38</i>
	<b>Washington</b>				
	Clark	7	4	2	2
	Skamania	88	66	51	29
	<u>Klickitat</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>11</u>
	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>119</i>	<i>86</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>42</i>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>80*</b>

\* Note: Totals for CY 2011 include applications received through August 25, 2011.

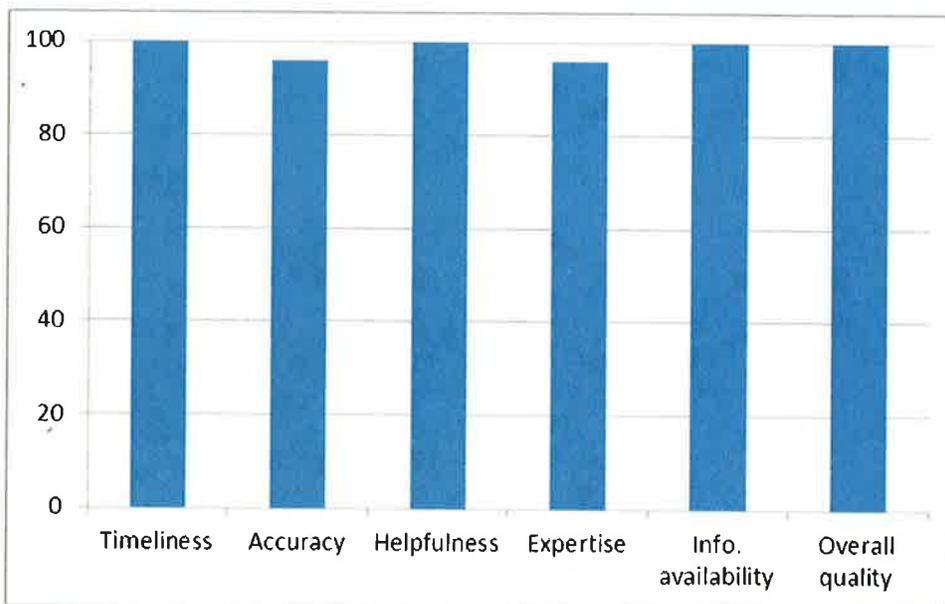
**Percent of Development Review**

**Decisions Issued by CRGC within 72 days**



*Percent of DRs issued within 72 days by calendar year with number of applications received in parenthesis. Decline attributed to loss of more than 2/3 of planning FTE due to budget reductions, layoffs and furloughs.*

**Percent of customers rating services as good or better by category for CY 2010.**



### **Enabling Legislation/Program Authorization**

This Commission is authorized under the United States Constitution Article I, Section 10, which permits states to enter into a compact with another state with Congressional consent. The Commission is mandated by Federal law under the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Act, which recognizes the compact agreement between Oregon and Washington. The Gorge Commission is also jointly authorized and mandated by state enabling legislation in both Oregon and Washington statutes. In Oregon, the Gorge Act is mandated under ORS 196.105 to 165.

### **Funding Streams**

The Columbia River Gorge Commission is funded equally by the states of Oregon and Washington. The Commission is currently funded exclusively through the general funds of each state. Under the National Scenic Area Act and the interstate compact, the states are required to provide funds necessary to fulfill the duties and powers entrusted to the Commission. By definition in the compact, the Commission's funding shall be apportioned equally between the states. The U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, typically acting through the United States Forest Service, is authorized to provide technical assistance in support of the Commission but is not required to provide direct financial support.

Oregon's investment is leveraged by matching funds from Washington and is complemented with the additional investment of the USFS through that agency's maintenance of the USFS National Scenic Area office located in Hood River, Oregon.

### **Significant Proposed Program Changes from 2011-13**

The 2011-13 budget included severe cuts that resulted in a crippling loss of core staff. The 2013-15 request includes a series of conservative policy option packages specifically targeted to stabilize the Commission's basic functions:

The first priority is a ***Stable Funding Package*** to restore the Commission's base operating budget to maintain core functions, including the Commission's statutory mandates and its role as a regional coordinating body implementing the National Scenic Area Act. This package includes resources for the commission to: meet more frequently than quarterly, maintain productive working relationships, build momentum on critical policy discussions. It will also help the Commission establish and maintain functional committees, provide outreach and technical assistance to communities and citizens, and collect and analyze the planning and resource protection needs of the National Scenic Area and its communities.

The restoration will enable the Gorge Commission to accomplish two fundamental objectives: fulfill the Commission's congressional and bi-state statutory requirement to update the National Scenic Area Management Plan, and to protect resources and support the regional economy of the Gorge through coordinated planning and community development.

The second priority is the restoration of two specialized ***Economic Development Planning Positions*** dedicated to balancing economic and community development with the resource protections in the Management Plan. Commission funding at the current service level has been inadequate to provide fundamental staff to meet the needs of Gorge communities and the Gorge economy. In particular, the Gorge Commission urgently needs additional planning capacity in two core areas: recreation planning and community development.

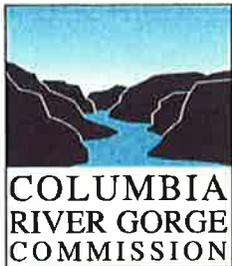
The restoration of two planning positions will enable the Commission to balance the interests envisioned by the National Scenic Area Act and the bi-state Compact. This package directly achieves the Commission's core functions, including: regional planning for scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resource conservation, and regional economic development. The package also enables the Commission to provide critical functions such as interagency and regional coordination, public communication, hearing and resolving land use appeals, tribal consultations, litigation and policy development, and Management Plan review. These functions cannot be accomplished without adequate planning staff. The commission's current reduced staffing results in delays to communities, citizens, stakeholders and partner agencies and significantly hampers efforts to improve the function of the National Scenic Area. Restoring two planning positions will replace roughly one-third of the Commission's immediate planning needs.

The Commission's third priority package is the restoration of a ***Principal Planner***. This package requests the restoration of a principal planner position to maintain adequate oversight and management of the Commission's core planning functions. For over twenty years the Commission has relied on a skilled principal planning position to oversee and coordinate the Commission's planning program with other agencies' programs. The Commission lost its principal planning position in 2009 and the functions have largely been placed on the executive director and other planning staff. Without a senior-level principal planner, the Commission is unable to adequately prepare for and complete mandatory plan updates that meet the needs of communities and support a vibrant Gorge economy. Restoring the principal planner position will ensure the efficient, effective operation of the Commission's day-to-day and long-range planning functions. Restoring the principal planning position will also restore a significant portion of the function of planning staff, in-house counsel, and the executive director.

The fourth priority package is a request to provide ***Equal Compensation*** for Oregon commissioners. While the package is a relatively small request, the difference in compensation for Oregon commissioners compared to their Washington colleagues makes a subtle but important statement about the value of commissioners' service from one state to the next. Oregon currently compensates commissioners at \$30 per day of commission service. Washington compensates its commissioners at \$50 per day; the difference represents \$20 a day in absolute terms and 66% more in relative terms. A small concession from the State of Oregon can make a statement about the state's appreciation for the valuable contribution its commissioners make to the future of one of the Northwest's greatest places.

## Vital Signs Indicators Current Efforts - June 2012

Vital Sign Indicators (VSI)	General Direction & Status	Progress Report
<b>Scenic</b>		
1.1.a: Overall Scenic Quality: Percent of public who perceive scenic resources to be in good condition or better according to both: (a) residents and (b) visitors.	→	Public perception of scenic quality was captured in 2010 Burns survey.
1.1.b: Development Impacts: Percent of seen area, as viewed from public vantage points, containing development that highly contrasts with its surrounding landscape: a) within 1/4 mile; b) between 1/4 mile and 3 miles; and c) beyond 3 miles.	→	Monitoring visible development to track the amount of highly contrasting development as seen from select key viewing areas; work is ongoing.
1.1.c: Development Impacts: Number of developed areas, as seen from public vantage points, that highly contrast with its surrounding landscape: a) within 1/4 mile; b) between 1/4 mile and 3 miles; and c) beyond 3 miles.	→	
1.1.d: Vantage Point Quality: Number of scenic observation points with significantly impaired panoramic views due to vegetation.	→	Quality of views experienced from travel corridors; Oregon DOT is working to improve select sites.
1.1.f: Night Light: the effect of ambient light on the night sky.	→	Participation in annual star counts proved unreliable and sources show that impacts are from urban areas or outside the NSA.
<b>Natural</b>		
2.1.a: Habitat Quality: Percent of priority habitat types rated as properly functioning.	→	Perform landcover classification of 2011 imagery.
2.1.b: Habitat Fragmentation: Percent of priority habitat types that are lost or fragmented by human activity.	→	Extract fine feature (buildings, roads, small wetlands, etc) from 2011 imagery and LiDAR (where available).
	→	Research and conduct fragmentation and habitat modelling based on subset of species and habitat types.
2.2.a: Surface Water Quality: Percent of streams, including the Columbia River, whose water quality is a) poor, b) fair, c) good, and d) excellent.	→	Compile and report limited water quality streams and lakes.
2.2.b: Habitat Quality: Percent of native fish habitat that is properly functioning.	→	Compile and report stream flow from known and calibrated gauges.
	→	Compile and report available data related to USFS watershed condition framework metrics.
2.2.c: Surface Water Quantity: Percent of streams with satisfactory in-stream flows.	→	
<b>Economic</b>		
Baseline 2010 Census and Bureau of Economic Analysis information	→	Consult with experts to determine appropriate baseline and report economic indicators to be used as context and the basis for further investigation and indicator development.
<b>Cultural</b>		
4.1.a: Condition: Percent of all monitored archaeological sites in good condition.	→	Condition of monitored historic and archaeological resources; 2010-2011 interval.
4.2.a: Condition: Percent of all monitored historic resources in good condition.	→	
4.1.c: Awareness: Percent of residents of and visitors to the Gorge understanding the importance of archaeological resources.	→	Resident and visitor perceptions of historic, archaeological, and traditional cultural property resources; included in 2010 Burns survey.
4.2.c: Awareness: Percent of residents of and visitors to the Gorge understanding the importance of historic resources.	→	
4.1.d: Inventory: Number of new significant archaeological resources identified each year.	→	The inventories do not measure the condition of cultural resources, but they identify and quantify the known resources protected by the Act & Management Plan; annual inventories are ongoing.
4.2.d: Inventory: Number of new significant historic resources identified each year.	→	
<b>Recreation</b>		
5.1.a: Recreation Demand: Percent of recreation sites at or above capacity more than X percent of the time on high season days - total and by recreation activity type.	→	Beginning in 2009, an annual recreation provider survey has been used to collect information pertaining to demand, environmental impacts, accessibility, and additional information.
5.1.b: Environmentally Sustainable Recreation: Percent of recreation sites that are environmentally degraded - total and by recreation activity type and specified as improving or not improving.	→	
5.1.d: ADA Accessibility: Percent of recreation sites that meet ADA standards - total and by recreation activity type.	→	
5.1.c: Recreation Availability: Percent of visitors and residents rating the access to recreation activities as good or better - total and by recreation activity type.	→	Public perception of multiple aspects of recreation quality and satisfaction was captured in 2010 Burns survey.
5.2.a: Recreation Quality: Percent of visitors and residents rating the overall recreational qualities of the Gorge as good or better.	→	
5.2.b: Recreation Site Quality: Percent of site users rating their overall experience as good or better - total and by recreation site.	→	
5.2.c: Recreation-Related Conflicts: Number of reported incidents relating to recreational uses by type of incident.	→	



**DATE:** August 16, 2012  
**TO:** Healthy Environments Program Funding Team  
**FROM:** Darren Nichols, Executive Director - Columbia River Gorge Commission  
**SUBJECT:** Healthy Environments Program Funding Team – Response to request for additional information in June 29 Feedback Memo

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The Columbia River Gorge Commission offers the following responses to a request for additional information from the Healthy Environments Program Funding Team outlined in a memo dated June 29, 2012. The Gorge Commission welcomes an opportunity to respond to any specific questions about the agency's mission and how the mission supports Oregon's Healthy Environments 10-year Vision.

Agency assessment of what is not being done that should be being done, including efforts to meet Healthy Environments 10-year plan outcomes

The Columbia River Gorge Commission is currently covering basic day-to-day agency operations. The Commission's 5.25 FTE maintain an office presence four days each week, provide basic development review functions for Gorge counties, and manage quarterly commission meetings. Under current staffing levels, the commission is able to continue minimal operations.

While the commission is able to maintain some basic short-term functions, it is unable to address several critical long-term functions. First, the commission is unable to adequately meet the needs of local communities and state and federal agencies. Local governments rely on the commission and its staff to provide technical assistance and coordination on a wide variety of National Scenic Area issues, including implementing the National Scenic Area Act and the commission's management plan. With only 1.5 planners on staff, the commission's workload frequently requires delays in the review of state and local projects, many of which are funded through time-sensitive grants.

Second, the commission is unable to meet its statutory obligation to begin a ten-year review and update of the National Scenic Area Management Plan. Local communities, Oregon agencies, public stakeholders and the commission have informally identified several needed

improvements to the Gorge Commission's economic and community development policies, as well as improvements to the efficiency of the commission's resource protection plans. From 2007 to 2009, the commission also developed a program to objectively monitor the effectiveness of commission policy; since then however, budget reductions have slashed agency staff by 50%, making any meaningful monitoring, plan review, and needed revisions essentially impossible. The most urgently needed policy updates include: regional urban boundary policy, regional economic development policies, region-wide recreation planning, and comprehensive investment coordination among local, state and federal agencies. At a stable, functional staff level, the commission can also leverage state and local investments to attract additional federal investment in the region.

Next and closely related, the commission is unable to meet as a governing body more than four or five times per year and the commission's sub-committees are currently non-functional. As a result of its infrequent meeting schedule, the 13-member commission often has difficulty effectively considering policy issues and efficiently making decisions.

Finally, the commission's severe staff shortage prevents it from adequately participating in or convening regional conversations. During recent regional job creation discussions, commission staff was forced to choose between participating in economic policy discussions and completing development applications for business and property owners making the most of the summer construction season. An effective regional planning agency should not be forced to choose between two fundamentally needed services; the agency must have the basic resources to meet both the short-term and long-term needs of citizens and communities.

#### Agency programs that link to Healthy Environments Outcome measures

The Gorge Commission's core functions all directly or indirectly support and enhance the outcomes identified in the Healthy Environments Outcome areas. In 2009, the Gorge Commission developed and now manages a comprehensive "indicators" program specifically designed to measure outcomes and link policy decisions to measureable results in the National Scenic Area. One of the key features of the indicators program is that it incorporates existing data reported and shared from multiple agencies in Oregon and Washington for the common purpose of protecting resources and supporting the regional economy. The indicators include scenic quality, recreational resources, habitat quality, working natural resource landscapes, surface water and ground water quantity and quality, species range and health, and cultural resource conditions. The program is also designed to measure and enhance economic resources, including community development, workforce housing, job growth and overall regional economic health.

As Oregon develops its Healthy Environments program area, the Gorge Commission is prepared to tailor both policy development and outcome monitoring to meet the needs of most (perhaps all) of the outcomes in the 10-year vision. Nearly all of the "indicators" (think "outcome

measurements”) measure or achieve the outcomes or can be tailored to achieve the Healthy Environments Ten-Year Outcomes.

### Incremental steps

#### *Gorge Vital Signs Indicators*

- The Gorge Commission’s Vital Signs Indicators program is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency effort to collect, analyze, and disseminate data on a wide range of policy issues that impact the future of the National Scenic Area. The incremental step is restore key Gorge Commission functions and capacity to collect and analyze indicators information in a manner that effectively and efficiently prioritizes the commission’s policy development efforts.

Among the most pressing policy development needs facing the region and the commission:

#### *Regional Economic and Community Development Strategy*

- The Gorge Commission’s most pressing need and the first step in developing an effective regional economic development strategy is to employ at least one and preferably two staff planners dedicated to regional economic analysis and coordinated policy development.
- Once the commission has stable staffing, the next step includes developing a detailed economic analysis of the Gorge economy and a strategic investment strategy for regional infrastructure and services that achieve the best overall economic performance for Gorge communities.
- As the commission builds capacity for enhancing community development in the National Scenic Area, it will be better able to develop and implement regional policy that successfully accomplishes both the *resource protection* and *economic support* objectives of the National Scenic Area Act and the 10-Year Outcomes.

#### *Regional Recreation Plan*

Since the early 1990’s the Gorge economy has shifted from a traditional natural resource-based economy to one that also relies on recreation and tourism as well as timber and agriculture. During the past decade the Gorge has seen a significant increase in the demand for recreation in the National Scenic Area. Demand is driven in part by a growing nation and international awareness of the region as a recreation and tourism destination. That demand requires an update to the commission’s management plan in order to continue to provide adequate and appropriate recreation facilities throughout the National Scenic Area. The Gorge Commission has skilled planning staff capable of managing a regional recreation planning project. That staff

capacity, however, is currently dedicated to development review, customer service, and day-to-day administrative functions. If the commission can bolster planning staff capacity for day-to-day responsibilities, that will enable existing staff to develop a regional recreation planning scope of work for future investment by local, state or federal agencies. A successful planning project will also require investment in a targeted analysis by other agency staff or recognized experts in recreation planning and recreation economics.

### *Regional Urban Boundary Policy*

The commission recognized an urgent need to develop an appropriate regional urban area boundary policy in 2008. Since that time, the need for an updated policy has steadily increased in some Gorge communities. The commission was able to complete the first phase of a “collaborative assessment” in 2012. The next phase of the assessment, including a carefully coordinated regional boundary policy will require additional skilled staff and modest resources to convene regional interests and experienced consultants to facilitate continued discussions toward the development of a comprehensive regional policy.

### *Coordinated Regional Infrastructure Investment*

Oregon and Washington communities have asked the commission for assistance in convening and structuring inter-state and inter-county agreements for shared emergency services, wastewater treatment, transportation facilities, housing development, and recreation planning and development. The interstate nature of the National Scenic Area requires a high level of coordination among agencies, Tribes, states, and the public. In order to fill its role as a regional planning agency and perhaps more importantly, as a national model for successful resource protection and rural community development, the commission needs at least one and preferably two, additional skilled staff members.

### Supplemental data

The Gorge Commission works with agencies and public stakeholders on a comprehensive list of conservation and development issues. Essentially all of the commission’s resources are dedicated to coordinating with, among, and between the following public agencies in Oregon (there is a similar list of Washington agencies and stakeholders not included here):

- Local governments
  - Six Gorge Counties:
    - Multnomah, Hood River, and Wasco Counties in Oregon
    - Clark, Skamania, and Klickitat Counties in Washington

- Thirteen urban areas in Oregon and Washington
  - Including The Dalles, Mosier, Hood River, and Cascade Locks
- State agencies in both Oregon and Washington
  - Oregon's Natural Resources Cabinet agencies (DLCD, DEQ, OWEB, WRD, ODFW, DOE)
  - Departments of Transportation – including ODOT's Historic Highway Advisory Committee and ODOT's Highways and Rail Divisions.
  - Oregon Economic and Community Development Department (Business Oregon)
  - Oregon Governor's Regional Solutions Teams
  - Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- Other State and Regional Economic and Community Development Agencies
  - Oregon and Washington Investment Boards
  - Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
  - Travel Oregon
  - Ports of Cascade Locks, Hood River, The Dalles, Skamania, Klickitat
  - Chambers of Commerce
  - Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association
- Four Treaty Tribes
  - Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs
  - Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla
  - Nez Perce Tribe
  - Yakama Nation
  - Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)
- Federal agencies
  - United States Forest Service

- Bonneville Power Administration
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- United States Geological Survey
- National Park Service
- Federal Highway Administration
- In addition, the commission coordinates with local, state, and federal agencies on Vital Signs Indicators, consensus assessments, federal, state, and local development reviews, city and county technical assistance, sustainable recreation management, archaeological and historic resource assessments, coordinated litigation, forest policy and forest practices implementation, air quality, energy facilities, coal trains, and much more.

The Commission currently shares space with the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and the United States Forest Service, and makes its conference facilities available to Oregon, Washington and federal agencies on an as-needed basis.

Implementation of the National Scenic Area interstate compact falls largely to the Gorge Commission and to Gorge Counties for nearly all state, local and privately held lands in the National Scenic Area. The requisite coordination between multiple agencies at multiple levels of government requires significantly more staff resources than the commission's current FTE.

### Innovation

1. *Single strategy.* The Gorge Commission's Management Plan and the Columbia River Gorge Interstate Compact embody the concepts of a single conservation and economic development strategy. The National Scenic Area Act and the commission's management plan are applicable specifically to the bounds of the National Scenic Area and Gorge resources but they have statewide impacts on governance and resource management.
2. *Water quality and watershed planning.* The Gorge Commission currently protects watershed and hydrologic features through its rigorous protection buffers and review standards for all new developments in the National Scenic Area. The commission also tracks the link between water resources and recreational economic opportunities.
3. *Air Quality.* The Gorge Commission initiated, through management plan policy, a bi-state air quality strategy developed by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Southwest Clean Air Agency (Washington). The commission also coordinates with

ODOE, Oregon Department of Forestry, and DEQ on issues such as energy facility siting and regional air quality management.

4. *Single state portal.* The commission currently coordinates data management with several public agencies and provides public access to data through agency websites and the Oregon Explorer.
5. *Federal Funds.* The Gorge Commission offers Oregon and Washington an opportunity to pursue local, state and federal funding on several innovative partnerships. Among the commission's opportunities to pursue federal funding are the development of regional cumulative impacts analysis, sustainable natural resource landscapes research, and regional recreation planning.
6. *Strong environment.* The Gorge Commission and the National Scenic Area is an example of how world-class resource protection can *create* economic opportunities for Oregon and the Northwest. Industries are drawn to the region for its recreation and for its outstanding quality of life (e.g. Google, Insitu, Gorge Technology Alliance, Innovative Composite Engineering, and many more).