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## Press Release

### - For Immediate Release -

#### Joint Open House Planned for Scenic Area Landowners

Do you live in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area? Are you considering improvements such as creating more defensible space to protect from wildfire? Or perhaps a new agricultural use of the land? You may be planning to improve a road, build a house or a new outbuilding? To learn more, homeowners, prospective buyers, realtors, builders, and interested members of the public are invited to join an upcoming open house co-hosted by the Columbia River Gorge Commission and Underwood Conservation District.

This event, planned for **October 11, 6-8pm** at the White Salmon Valley Community Library, will begin with a short introductory presentation about the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, what it means to own or manage property within the National Scenic Area, and what resources are available to assist property owners. This will be followed by an opportunity to speak directly with Gorge Commission planners and Conservation District technicians to discuss specific questions and concerns you may have.

In 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, establishing the nation's second National Scenic Area. The Act is aimed at protecting and providing for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Gorge while also protecting and supporting the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area. The goal is to retain existing

rural and scenic characteristics of the Gorge while encouraging compatible growth and development within the urban areas.

In 1987, the Columbia River Gorge Commission was established by the states of Oregon and Washington. Gorge Commission staff work with local county governments to implement the National Scenic Area's Management Plan. Visit the Columbia River Gorge Commission website to find maps and learn about whether your property is within the Scenic Area - <http://www.gorgecommission.org>.

Underwood Conservation District (UCD) is a non-regulatory natural resources agency based in White Salmon and serving western Klickitat County and Skamania County residents. Anyone needing technical or financial assistance with natural resource concerns can reach out to UCD to learn about programs and services – [www.ucdwa.org](http://www.ucdwa.org). Currently, UCD is offering wildfire preparedness assistance to homeowners, including chipping and project funds to limb up trees, thin brush and reduce fuels in the defensible space area around homes in Skamania County. UCD can also assist with other concerns such as forest management, livestock exclusion fencing, farm planning, native plant establishment or noxious weeds.

More specialized assistance can be provided for homeowners within the National Scenic Area navigating the land use application process or implementing mitigation plans. The joint open house on **October 11, 6-8pm** at the library in White Salmon, will be an opportunity to learn more about the Gorge Commission's processes for approving land use changes within the National Scenic Area and related assistance UCD can provide.