

CHAPTER
1

Gorge Commission Role

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Gorge Commission recognizes that the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area represents rich and diverse cultures. The National Scenic Area is located within the ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples who have protected these lands since time immemorial. The Gorge Commission acknowledges that European settlers and their governing authorities took Indigenous land and resources within this region by unjust and inequitable means. Indigenous leaders negotiated treaties that reserved rights to fish at usual and accustomed sites, hunt, and gather traditional foods and medicines on public lands and waters throughout their ceded lands. Despite these treaties, Indigenous people have experienced loss of land and resources essential to their spiritual, cultural, and economic well-being and livelihoods.

Other cultures in the Gorge have also prospered and been discriminated against. Citizens of Japan, China, Latin America, and elsewhere came to the Gorge to work in apple and pear orchards, build railroads, and prepare Columbia River fish and produce for world markets. Their land and possessions were also seized at times, some were taken to internment camps during World War II, and many were discriminated against by unjust federal and state laws and bigotry from fellow citizens.

The Gorge Commission acknowledges that this legacy created systemic inequities in the policies and decision-making of National Scenic Area governments and commissions. The Gorge Commission commits to listening, learning, and understanding, and developing diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies that take into account and redress this legacy.

Policies

1. The Gorge Commission shall develop and adopt a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan to address systemic inequities in its work and policies. The Plan shall be reviewed and updated as necessary.

Part IV – Administration

2. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan shall include specific measures and outcomes to:
 - A. Ensure a diverse staff and commission;
 - B. Develop and apply an equity lens to implementation of the Management Plan, Gorge Commission operations, and policy decisions; and
 - C. Engage under-represented communities in the Columbia Gorge region.
3. Based upon the measures and outcomes of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, the Gorge Commission may determine that conditions in the National Scenic Area have significantly changed and may exercise its authority to develop responsive Management Plan amendments pursuant to section 6(h).