Scenic Resources Technical Review

The Management Plan for the CRGNSA
The Vision

“The Columbia River Gorge is an area of worldwide importance, where scenic qualities and diverse landscapes, together with their natural and cultural components, are paramount…”

The Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, p3
SCENIC CHAPTER:
Goals, objectives, policies, and guidelines to...

1. Maintain the **DIVERSITY** of Scenic Area landscapes, to protect and enhance its scenic beauty, and retain the **CHARACTER** of its **LANDSCAPE SETTINGS**.

![Map of Scenic Area landscapes]
Coniferous Woodland
Oak Woodland
Gorge Walls, Canyonlands, and Wildlands
River Bottomlands
Developed Settings:
Village, Residential, Rural Residential
SCENIC CHAPTER:
Goals, objectives, policies, and guidelines to...

2. Emphasize protection and enhancement of Gorge landscapes seen from KEY VIEWING AREAS

**Key Viewing Areas**
- Historic Columbia River Highway
- Crown Point
- Highway I-84, including rest stops
- Multnomah Falls
- Washington State Route 14
- Beacon Rock
- Panorama Point Park
- Cape Horn
- Dog Mountain Trail
- Cook-Underwood Road
- Rowena Plateau and Nature Conservancy Viewpoint
- Portland Women’s Forum State Park
- Bridal Veil State Park
- Larch Mountain
- Rooster Rock State Park
- Bonneville Dam Visitor Centers Columbia River
- Washington State Route 141
- Oregon Highway 35
- Sandy River
- Pacific Crest Trail

**SMA only:**
- County Road 1230/Old Highway 8
- Wyleh Bench Road
- Larch Mountain Road
- Sheppard Point on Larch Mountain
3. Establish and protect **SCENIC TRAVEL CORRIDORS** to protect and enhance scenic resources within these corridors.
4. Provisions for minimizing visual impacts of signage and the development of a **GRAPHIC SIGNING SYSTEM** for signage necessary for commerce, recreation, safety, and public information.
Proposed Technical Updates

**Update, clarify, and provide consistency** within the language and tools of the Scenic Chapter so the Management Plan can:

1. Assess, protect, enhance, and monitor Scenic resources
2. Ensure efficiency in carrying out goals of the Act

---

**Scenic Resources**

The Columbia Gorge is world renowned for its outstanding scenic beauty. The sheer cliffs of the Columbia River Gorge cut through the Cascade Mountains, and the dramatic diverse landscapes that it contains, create unparalleled grandeur. Within an hour’s drive, one can witness towering cliffs and forests, orchards and farms, and sweeping grasslands. It is acknowledged that the need to protect the visual resources of the Gorge was identified by a number of stakeholders and land management agencies. To ensure efficiency in carrying out goals of the Act, the Scenic Area Act provisions should be clarified and made consistent.
Proposed Technical Updates

- Landscape Setting Descriptions
- Visibility Related Definitions (*KVA, Scenic Standards, Topographic Visibility, Skyline, Distance Zones, Unobtrusive*)
- Sign Guidelines
- Remove/Update Superseded Language
- Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook
- Existing Condition Mapping

Update, clarify, and provide consistency
The MP states all developments shall be compatible with their landscape setting, even if not visible from a KVA or scenic corridor.

Landscape Settings Descriptions

proposed technical updates

- move to a standalone section
- clarify existing descriptions to depict scenic character within a broader ecological context
- distinctive characteristics of landscape attributes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT</th>
<th>PROPOSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral Overview and Land Use</td>
<td>Pastoral Overview, Land Use, and Cultural Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoral settings are essentially agrarian in character, typified by areas of pastures and intensive agriculture. This setting includes areas where orchards, vineyards, row crops, and irrigated pasture predominate the landscape. Visual features distinguishing this setting include large expanses of cultivated fields and pastures, punctuated by clusters of farm accessory buildings and hedgerows or poplar rows defining distinct fields. Some small parcels with residences occur, but many parcels range between forty and several hundred acres in size.</td>
<td>Pastoral settings are essentially agrarian in character, typified by areas of pastures and intensive agriculture often backing up to forested lots or bodies of water. This setting includes areas where orchards, vineyards, row crops, and irrigated pasture predominate the landscape. Distinct cultural features include, according to the sense of place, or valued visual image of the pastoral setting include wooden fence types, stone walls, barns (sometimes colorful), and other agricultural structures harmonious with the setting. Historically cultivated landscapes and their associated structures, such as historic landmarks, and farmssteads are invaluable to the pastoral setting. This setting often includes forested lots and scattered rural residential development. Visual features distinguishing this setting include large expanses of cultivated fields and pastures, punctuated by clusters of farm accessory buildings and hedgerows or poplar rows defining distinct fields. Some small parcels with residences occur, but many parcels range between forty and several hundred acres in size. Seasonal interest in this setting can be a dramatic aesthetic experience when contrasted with adjacent natural appearing landscapes. Agricultural related tourism is common and experienced seasonally. Fire periodicity is variable and influenced primarily by adjacent vegetation types and human interaction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landforms</td>
<td>Landform Patterns and Features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These settings usually occur on level ground or gently rolling terrain. Some of these landscapes are found on relatively flat terraces and benches at the top of steep slopes that form the walls of the Gorge. Other pastoral areas occur in the fertile valleys of the major tributaries flowing into the Columbia River.</td>
<td>These landscape profiles read as predominately horizontal with occasional ome shaped features, and minimal landform complexity. Large swaths (40 acres or more) and expanses of unbroken, moderately level terrain punctuated by hedgerows and cultivated farmland form some of the more distinctive and memorable landform features. These settings usually occur on level ground or gently rolling terrain, with grades averaging from 0-25% and elevations ranging from sea level to 2000 feet. Some of these landscapes are found on relatively flat terraces and benches at the top of steep slopes that form the walls of the Gorge. Other pastoral areas occur in the fertile valleys of the major tributaries flowing into the Columbia River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetation</td>
<td>Vegetation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-native vegetation patterns are predominant. They include alfalfa fields and irrigated pasture, vineyards and fruit orchards, row crops, hedgerows, and poplar rows. Scattered woodlots interspersed throughout this setting reflect the natural vegetation of the portion of the Gorge in which they are located (e.g. Oregon oak and ponderosa pine in the eastern Gorge; Douglas-fir, big leaf maple, and western red cedar in the west).</td>
<td>Non-native vegetation patterns are predominant. They include alfalfa fields and irrigated pasture, vineyards and fruit orchards, row crops, hedgerows, and poplar rows. Scattered woodlots interspersed throughout this setting reflect the natural vegetation of the portion of the Gorge in which they are located (e.g. Oregon oak and ponderosa pine in the eastern Gorge; Douglas-fir, big leaf maple, and western red cedar in the west).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waterform</td>
<td>Waterform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodland elements are not typically distinctive identifying elements in this setting. Wetlands, streams (ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial), ponds and man-made ponds are common. Add visual interest in form, line, color, and texture. Man-made ponds and irrigation features are seen occasionally but do not tend to contribute to the scenic quality of the setting.</td>
<td>Woodland elements are not typically distinctive identifying elements in this setting. Wetlands, streams (ephemeral, intermittent, and perennial), ponds and man-made ponds are common. Add visual interest in form, line, color, and texture. Man-made ponds and irrigation features are seen occasionally but do not tend to contribute to the scenic quality of the setting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Landform Patterns and Features
Vegetative Patterns
Proposed Technical Updates

- Landscape Setting Descriptions
- Visibility Related Definitions (KVA, Scenic Standards, Topographic Visibility, Skyline, Distance Zones, Unobtrusive)
- Sign Guidelines
- Remove/Update Superseded Language
- Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook
- Existing Condition Mapping
Key Viewing Areas

...where exactly is “Multnomah Falls?”
Scenic Standards

Linked to distinctive characteristics of landscape settings...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CURRENT</th>
<th>PROPOSED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not visually evident (SMA):</strong> A visual quality standard that provides for development or uses that are not visually noticeable to the casual visitor. Developments or uses shall only repeat form, line, color, and texture that are frequently found in the natural landscape, while changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., shall not be noticeable.</td>
<td><strong>Not visually evident (SMA):</strong> A description of the relative visibility of a development, structure or use that provides for developments, structures or uses that are not visually noticeable to the casual visitor, and the defining landscape setting characteristics appear intact. Deviations may be present, but must repeat form, line, color, texture, and pattern common to the natural landscape setting so completely and at such scale, proportion intensity, direction, pattern, etc., that it not be noticeable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visually subordinate:</strong> A description of the relative visibility of a structure or use where that structure or use does not noticeably contrast with the surrounding landscape, as viewed from a specified vantage point (generally a key viewing area, for the Management Plan). As opposed to structures that are fully screened, structures that are visually subordinate may be partially visible. They are not visually dominant in relation to their surroundings. Visually subordinate forest practices in the SMA shall repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the natural landscape, while changes in their qualities of size, amount, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., shall not dominate the natural landscape setting.</td>
<td><strong>Visually subordinate:</strong> A description of the relative visibility of a development, structure or use where that development, structure or use does not noticeably contrast with the defining landscape setting characteristics, as viewed from a specified vantage point (generally a key viewing area, for the Management Plan), and the setting appears only slightly altered (distinctive characteristics of that setting remain dominant). As opposed to structures that are fully screened, structures that are visually subordinate may be partially visible but would be difficult to discern to the common viewer. Visually subordinate development, as well as forest practices in the SMA shall repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the natural landscape, while changes in their qualities of scale, proportion, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., shall not dominate the natural landscape setting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Topographic Visibility
Skyline

**Figure 3**
Proposal Remains Below the Skyline

The site selection and design of this structure keep the roofline below the skyline, allowing it to blend in with the backdrop created by the hillside behind it.

**Figure 4**
Proposal Breaks the Skyline

The structure stands out much more clearly against the skyline because the roofline breaks the skyline rather than blending into the hillside behind it. This site is prohibited by the Management Plan.
Proposed Technical Updates

- Landscape Setting Descriptions
- Visibility Related Definitions *(KVA, Scenic Standards, Topographic Visibility, Skyline, Distance Zones, Unobtrusive)*
- Sign Guidelines
- Remove/Update Superseded Language
- Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook
- Existing Condition Mapping
Proposed Technical Updates

- Landscape Setting Descriptions
- Visibility Related Definitions (KVA, Scenic Standards, Topographic Visibility, Skyline, Distance Zones, Unobtrusive)
- Sign Guidelines
- Remove/Update Superseded Language
- Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook
- Existing Condition Mapping
Distance Zones

- **Foreground**: within ½ mile
- **Middleground**: 1/2 to 4 miles
- **Background**: 4 miles to horizon

Diagram:
- Observer
- Immediate Foreground Distance: 0° to 300'
- Foreground: 300' to 1/2 mile
- Middleground 1/2 mile to 4 miles
- Background: 4 miles to horizon
Proposed Technical Updates

- Landscape Setting Descriptions
- Visibility Related Definitions (KVA, Scenic Standards, Topographic Visibility, Skyline, Distance Zones, Unobtrusive)
- Sign Guidelines
- Remove/Update Superseded Language
- Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook
- Existing Condition Mapping

Update, clarify, and provide consistency
Building in the Scenic Area
SCENIC RESOURCES IMPLEMENTATION HANDBOOK

Figure 21
Conformance Info

Western Gorge

Eastern Gorge

Figure 1
Topographic screening from a low elevation

Figure 2
Topographic screening from a high elevation
Mapping Visibility and Existing Conditions
• Scenic Technical Updates
LANDSCAPE SETTING & CHARACTER DESCRIPTIONS

During the course of the establishment of the National Scenic Area, inventories were carried out to help visually comprehend the fabric of Gorge. National Scenic Area landscapes were classified into different sub-regions, or setting types, which demonstrate unique qualities culturally, visually, and ecologically. Each Landscape Setting type has distinct characteristics and attributes, such as land use patterns and cultural features, landform patterns, vegetative patterns, and waterform patterns, which make it identifiable. Understanding what makes National Scenic Area landscapes special allows for the protection and enhancement of their intrinsic beauty and the integrity of their character into the future.

Pastoral

Overview, Land Use, and Cultural Features

Pastoral settings are essentially agrarian in character, typified by areas of pastures and intensive agriculture, often backing up to forested lots or bodies of water. This setting includes areas where orchards, vineyards, row crops, and irrigated pasture predominate the landscape. Distinct cultural features contributing to the sense of place, or valued visual image of the pastoral setting include wooden fence types, stone walls, barns (sometimes colorful), and other agricultural structures harmonious with the setting. Historic culturally modified landscapes and their associated structures, such as historic landmarks, and farmsteads are invaluable to the pastoral setting. This setting often includes forested lots and scattered rural residential development. Visual features distinguishing this setting include large expanses of cultivated fields and pastures, punctuated by clusters of farm accessory buildings and hedgerows or poplar rows defining distinct fields. Some small parcels with residences occur, but many parcels range between forty and several hundred acres in size. Seasonal interest in this setting can be a dramatic aesthetic experience when contrasted with adjacent natural appearing landscapes. Agricultural related tourism is experienced seasonally. Fire periodicity is variable and influenced primarily by adjacent vegetation types and human interaction.

Landform Patterns and Features

These landscape profiles read as predominately horizontal with occasional dome shaped features, and minimal landform complexity. Large swaths and expanses of unbroken, moderately level terrain punctuated by hedgerows and cultivated farmland form some of the more distinctive and memorable landform features.

These settings usually occur on level ground or gently rolling terrain, with grades averaging from 0-25% and elevations ranging from sea level to 2000 feet. Some of these landscapes are found on relatively flat terraces and benches at the top of steep slopes that form the walls of the Gorge. Other pastoral areas occur in the fertile valleys of the major tributaries flowing into the Columbia River.

Vegetation

Non-native vegetation patterns are predominant. They include alfalfa fields and irrigated...
3. Project Applicants, or Landowners shall be responsible for the proper maintenance and survival of any planted vegetation required by the guidelines in this chapter.

4. A site plan and land-use application shall be submitted for all new buildings, except for buildings smaller than 60 square feet in area and less than or equal to 10 feet in height, as measured at the roof peak. The site plan and application shall include all information required in the site plan guidelines in this chapter.

“Review Uses” (Part II, Chapter 7: General Policies, and Guidelines).
Supplemental requirements for developments proposed on lands visible from key viewing areas, are included in the key viewing areas guidelines in this chapter.

5. For all proposed development, the determination of compatibility with the landscape setting shall be based on information submitted in the site plan.

6. For all new production and/or development of mineral resources, and expansion of existing quarries, a reclamation plan is required to restore the site to a natural appearance that blends with and emulates surrounding landforms, to the maximum extent practicable.

At a minimum, such reclamation plans shall include:

A. A map of the site, at a scale of 1 inch equals 200 feet (1:2,400) or a scale providing greater detail, with 10-foot contour intervals or less, showing pre-mining existing grades and post mining final grades; locations of topsoil stockpiles for eventual reclamation use; location of catch basins or similar drainage and erosion control features employed for the duration of the use; and the location of storage, processing, and equipment areas employed for the duration of the use.

B. Cross sectional drawings of the site showing pre-mining and post mining grades.

C. Descriptions of the proposed use, in terms of estimated quantity and type of material removed, estimated duration of the use, processing activities, etc.

D. Description of drainage/erosion control features to be employed for the duration of the use.

E. A landscaping plan providing for revegetation consistent with the vegetation patterns of the subject landscape setting, indicating the species, number, size, and location of plantings for the final reclaimed grade, as well as a description of irrigation provisions or other measures necessary to ensure the survival of plantings.
GMA Guidelines

1. Except for signs allowed without review pursuant to "Uses Allowed Outright" (Part II, Chapter 7, General Policies and Guidelines), all new signs must meet the following guidelines unless these guidelines conflict with the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices for public safety, traffic control or highway construction signs. In such cases, the standards in the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices shall supersede these guidelines.

A. The support structure shall be unobtrusive and have low visual impact.

B. Lettering colors with sufficient contrast to provide clear message communication shall be allowed. Signs shall be colored to blend with their setting to the maximum extent practicable.

C. Backs of all signs shall be unobtrusive, non-reflective, and blend in with the setting.

D. Spotlighting of signs may be allowed where needed for night visibility. Backlighting is not permitted for signs.

E. Except for signs along public highways necessary for public safety, traffic control, or road construction and consistent with the Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, the following signs are prohibited:

   (1) Luminous signs are those with intermittent or flashing lights. These include neon signs, fluorescent signs, light displays, and other signs that are internally illuminated, exclusive of seasonal holiday light displays.

   (2) New billboards.

   (3) Signs with moving elements.

   (4) Portable or wheeled signs, or signs on parked vehicles where the sign is the primary use of the vehicle.

F. In addition to A-F, signs shall meet the below guidelines according to Recreation Intensity Class (and subject to compliance with the "Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses" and "Facility Design Guidelines For All Recreation Projects, In Recreation Resources, GMA Provisions, Recreation Intensity Classes.

   (1) Recreation Intensity Class 1 (Very Low Intensity) - Simple interpretive, signs and/or displays, not to exceed a total of 50 square feet. Entry name signs, not to exceed 10 square feet per sign.

   (2) Recreation Intensity Class 2 (Low Intensity) - Simple interpretive signs, and displays, not to exceed a total of 100 square feet. Entry name signs, not to exceed 20 square feet per sign.

   (3) Recreation Intensity Class 3 (Moderate Intensity) - Interpretive signs, displays and/or facilities, visitor information and environmental education signs, displays, or facilities. Entry name signs, not to exceed 32 square feet per sign.

   (4) Recreation Intensity Class 4 (High Intensity) - Entry name signs, not to exceed 40 square feet per sign.

G. For recreation facility design projects, signage shall be limited to that necessary to provide relevant recreation of facility information, interpretive information,
**SMA Design Guidelines Based on Landscape Settings**

1. The following guidelines apply to all lands within SMA landscape settings regardless of visibility from KVAs (includes areas seen from KVAs as well as areas not seen from KVAs):

   **A. Pastoral:** Pastoral areas shall retain the overall appearance of an agricultural landscape.

   (1) The use of plant species *common* to the landscape setting. *Examples of native species are identified in the Scenic Implementation Handbook as appropriate to the area* shall be encouraged. The use of *agricultural* plant species in rows, as commonly found in the landscape setting, is *also* encouraged.

   **B. Coniferous Woodland and Oak-Pine Woodland:** Woodland areas shall retain the overall appearance of a woodland landscape. New developments and land uses shall retain the overall visual character of the natural appearance of the Coniferous Woodland and Oak-Pine Woodland landscape.

   (1) Buildings *shall be designed* to have a vertical overall appearance in the Coniferous Woodland landscape setting and a horizontal overall appearance in the Oak-Pine Woodland landscape setting. *shall be encouraged.*

   (2) Use of plant species native to the landscape setting. *Examples of native species are identified in the Scenic Implementation Handbook as appropriate to the area* shall be encouraged. Where non-native plants are used, they shall have native-appearing characteristics.

   **C. Residential:** The Residential setting is characterized by concentrations of dwellings.

   (1) At Rowena Dell, new buildings shall have a rustic appearance using natural materials. At Latourelle Falls, new buildings shall have an appearance consistent with the predominant historical architectural style.

   (2) Use of plant species native to the landscape setting. *Examples of native species are identified in the Scenic Implementation Handbook as appropriate to the area* shall be encouraged. Where non-native plants are used, they shall have native-appearing characteristics.
C.—A reclamation plan to restore the site to a natural appearance that blends with and emulates distinctive characteristics of the designated landscape setting to the maximum extent practicable has been approved. At minimum, the reclamation plan shall comply with Guidelines 6 and 7 in the “Overall Scenic Provisions” section of this chapter.

D.—A written report on a determination of visual subordinance has been completed, with findings addressing the extent of visibility of proposed mining activities from key viewing areas, including:

1. A list of key viewing areas from which exposed mining surfaces (and associated facilities/activities) would be visible.
2. An estimate of the surface area of exposed mining surfaces that would be visible from those key viewing areas.
3. The distance from those key viewing areas and the linear distance along those key viewing areas from which proposed mining surfaces are visible.
4. The slope and aspect of mining surfaces relative to those portions of key viewing areas from which they are visible.
5. The degree to which potentially visible mining surfaces are screened from key viewing areas by existing vegetation—excluding winter screening considerations.
6. The degree to which potentially visible mining surfaces would be screened by new plantings, berms, etc. and appropriate time frames to achieve such results, including winter screening considerations.

27.—Unless addressed by Guideline 27 of this section, new production and/or development of mineral resources may be allowed upon a demonstration that:

A.—The site plan requirements for such proposal pursuant to this chapter have been met.
B.—The area to be mined and the area used for primary processing—equipment & storage, stockpiling, etc., associated with the use—would be fully screened from any key viewing area.
C.—A reclamation plan to restore the area to a natural appearance that blends with and emulates surrounding landscapes to the maximum extent practicable has been approved. At minimum, the reclamation plan shall comply with Guidelines 6 and 7 in the “Overall Scenic Provisions” section of this chapter.

28.—An interim time period to achieve compliance with visual subordinance—requirements for expansion of existing quarries and development of new quarries, located more than 3 miles from the nearest visible key viewing area.
GMA Guidelines

1. New buildings and roads shall be sited and designed to retain the existing topography and to minimize grading activities to the maximum extent practicable.

2. New buildings shall be compatible with the general scale (height, dimensions and overall mass) of existing nearby development. Expansion of existing development shall comply with this guideline to the maximum extent practicable. Findings addressing this guideline shall include but are not limited to:
   A. Application of the landscape setting design guidelines, if applicable.
   B. A defined study area surrounding the development that includes at least ten existing buildings, not including existing buildings within Urban Areas or outside the National Scenic Area.
   C. Individual evaluations of scale for each separate proposed building in the application and each separate building in the study area, including:
      (1) All finished above ground square footage,
      (2) Total area of covered decks and porches,
      (3) Attached garages
      (4) Daylight basements
      (5) Breezeways, if the breezeway shares a wall with an adjacent building.
      (6) Height, based on information from the application or Assessor’s records.
   D. An overall evaluation demonstrating the proposed development’s compatibility with surrounding development. Buildings in the vicinity of the proposed development that are significantly larger in size than the rest of the buildings in the study area should be removed from this evaluation.

3. Project Applicants/landowners shall be responsible for the proper maintenance and survival of any planted vegetation required by the guidelines in this chapter.

4. A site plan and land-use application shall be submitted for all new buildings, except for buildings smaller than 50 square feet in area and less than
Questions & Next Steps