



September 4, 2020

Columbia River Gorge Commission
PO Box 730
White Salmon, WA 98672

Subject: Comments on the Draft Equity Language and Policies

Dear Columbia River Gorge Commissioners and Staff:

Thank you for your work on drafting a new equity section for the Management Plan. Friends of the Columbia Gorge (Friends) appreciates your interest in addressing equity issues in the Columbia River Gorge.

Friends generally supports the proposed equity language and policies drafted by staff and commissioners. The only glaring omission is the lack of acknowledgement of Oregon's exclusion laws, including its 1857 constitution. These laws barred black citizens from residing in Oregon, voting, owning property, or entering into contracts. The exclusion clauses in the constitution were not repealed until the 1926 and 1927, yet their legacy continues today.

Many Oregonians are not aware of this history of structural racism in Oregon. We can all learn from the words of Maya Angelou who said, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

Friends' proposed language to add to the introductory statement (New text in bold blue):

The Commission acknowledges and regrets Oregon's history of structural racism including its exclusionary laws and its 1857 constitution, barring black citizens from residing in Oregon, voting, owning property, or entering into contracts.

Friends' proposed addition to the equity policies (New text in bold blue):

- d. Support local governments in existing urban areas in planning for affordable housing.**
- e. Support and uphold treaty rights and the rights of indigenous persons.**

Thank you for considering this addition to the draft revised Management Plan.

Sincerely,

/s/ Michael Lang

Michael Lang
Conservation Director