

On Sep 7, 2020, at 10:39 PM, Polly Wood <pollywood47@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Columbia River Gorge Commissioners and Staff

Thank you for this opportunity to comment. Across the board I support the strongest possible protections for the Gorge but I want to address urban area expansion in particular.

Neither residents of the National Scenic Area nor its visitors live, work or recreate here for the love of sprawl. Creative problem solving and innovative urban planning practices keep our existing urban areas utilized or revitalized in the best possible ways. We need to stay committed to this.

I oppose urban area boundary expansion when there is still a surplus of developable land available within existing urban areas. I recognize that the commission's new policies to limit urban area expansions to 20 acres or 1% of the land within the existing urban area, whichever is less, and limit cumulative revisions to not exceed 50 acres (or 2%, whichever ever is less) are compromises reached after many years of public involvement and I support the commission's work to define "minor revision." I also support the new policy requiring a regional analysis of growth potential within existing urban boundaries.

Wise management of the Gorge's urban boundaries is so important and it positively addresses other items in the Management Plan as well. Limiting urban sprawl helps protect farm and forest land as well as habitat and wildlife. Vibrant, compact, livable towns foster walkable, bike-able communities that are less reliant on cars and help to lower carbon emissions that cause climate change.

As we know in the Gorge - it's all connected and every link must be well protected.

Thank you for your work over the last four years to update and strengthen the Management Plan for the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.

Sincerely,

Polly Wood
Hood River, OR