



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10**

1200 Sixth Avenue, Suite 155
Seattle, WA 98101-3188

WATER
DIVISION

June 30, 2020

Columbia River Gorge Commission
PO Box 730
1 Town & Country Square
57 NE Wauna Avenue
White Salmon, WA 98672

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the “Gorge 2020” Draft Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 10 appreciates and supports reference in the Draft Management Plan of rivers in the CRGNSA that have been identified by EPA as providing cold water refuge (CWR) for migrating salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River. Protecting the volume of cold water in the lower portions of the rivers that provide CWR is important to ensure attainment with Oregon’s Clean Water Act cold water refugia narrative water quality standard and support the recovery of salmon and steelhead throughout the Columbia River Basin. As noted in the Draft Management Plan, the EPA has identified the Sandy River, Tanner Creek, Eagle Creek, Herman Creek and Cove, Wind River, White Salmon River, Little White Salmon River and Drano Lake, Hood River, Klickitat River, and the Deschutes River as “primary CWR” in EPA’s 2019 Draft Columbia River Cold Water Refuge Plan, which EPA plans to soon finalize. Further, EPA has identified Bridal Veil Creek, Wahkeena Creek, and Rock Creek as non-primary CWR tributaries and Fifteenmile Creek as having the potential to provide CWR if restored.

EPA recognizes the important role the Management Plan for Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area serves to protect these important rivers that provide CWR. We support the application of best available science and the proposed 200-foot stream buffer protection for these rivers within the General Management Area as part of the Climate Change Action Plan.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please don’t hesitate to contact me at 206-553-6521.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Palmer".

John Palmer
Senior Policy Advisor