

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Climate Change Action Plan



Why an action plan and why now?

Climate change is the most sweeping and urgent threat facing land and resource managers today. In the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area—an incredibly dynamic and biodiverse landscape—tribes, agencies, local governments, and communities are recognizing the need to act quickly and boldly to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (mitigation) and to build resilience in our natural and built systems to cope with climate change. The Gorge Commission's Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP) will identify mitigation and adaptation actions to address the most pressing climate change impacts on natural, scenic, cultural, and recreation resources and to the economic vitality of NSA communities.

Climate Change and the National Scenic Area Management Plan

The Gorge Commission and U.S. Forest Service recently updated the Management Plan that sets land use policies for the National Scenic Area. The revised Plan includes a new climate change chapter that prioritizes building climate change resiliency for the NSA and exploring the Gorge Commission's role in greenhouse gas reduction in the region.



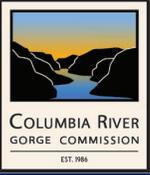
Agency leverage points to address climate change:

- Regulation – land use policies in the Management Plan
- Regional convening and guidance across six Gorge counties
- Education and landowner outreach
- Strategic partnerships – examples include East Cascades Oak Partnership and Mid-Columbia Economic Development District transportation efforts.

The Gorge Commission's Climate Change Vision

The National Scenic Area is made up of a diversity of intact landscapes, living cultures, and communities that, while vulnerable to climate change impacts, also provide a vital foundation for climate resilience. The Gorge Commission is committed to leading and working with others to reduce the greatest drivers of climate change and adapt to changing conditions with the goal of sustaining a thriving, resilient National Scenic Area for future generations.

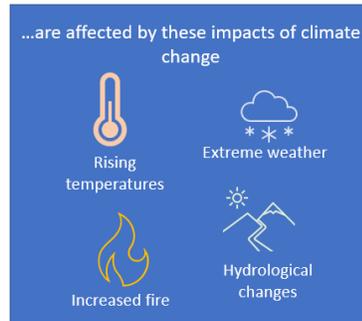
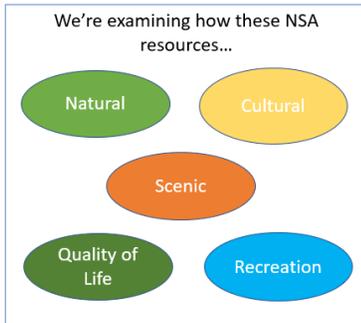
For more on the CCAP, visit: www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/climate-change



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Early steps: assessing vulnerabilities and risks



An early step in the CCAP process was to examine sensitivity and adaptive capacity of key resources, and to consider risks associated with climate change hazards and potential resource losses.

What kinds of actions will the CCAP support?

Adaptation and resilience to address vulnerabilities

- Protecting intact landscapes
- Improving water quality and protecting flows
- Supporting climate resilience priorities of the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes
- Research and modeling to fill knowledge gaps

Mitigation (emissions reduction)

- Transportation solutions – regional transit, electric vehicle planning, and bike/pedestrian connections
- Maintaining forests, grasslands, and wetlands as carbon storage assets
- Promoting energy efficiency in buildings

How does the CCAP advance other Gorge Commission initiatives?

Vital Sign Indicators – In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, the Gorge Commission is revamping a long-term monitoring effort intended to track conditions and trends of protected resources to inform decision making. We are integrating information on climate change impacts described in the CCAP as part of the overall VSI update, along with developing climate-focused indicators such as cold water refuge fish habitat.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – The Gorge Commission is committed to examining our Management Plan policies to identify systemic inequities and to engage with more diverse communities living in the Gorge. Climate change, exacerbated by a long history of colonization, racism, and inequitable policy decisions, disproportionately impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. In this first year of our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion planning effort, we are striving to learn about opportunities to address inequities, build relationships and understanding. We are also examining our role in upholding tribal treaty rights and supporting tribal sovereignty.

For more on the CCAP, visit: www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/climate-change