

June 29, 2020

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Dear Columbia River Gorge Management Plan Board:

Re: Public Comment on Columbia River Gorge Management Plan

My public comment regarding this plan includes the following points:

This plan needs to strive to be anti-racist. Here are some ways that we can reflect more anti-racist approaches and plans.

I'll include a link for 16 words and definitions for the anti-racism journey

<https://medium.com/@reneecherez/16-words-and-definitions-to-kickstart-your-anti-racism-journey-bd1100656b0d>

1. History- the history section is very white-sided and written from the white person point of view of history.

Recommendation is to make sure the history includes First Nation and Indigenous history and be led from the perspective of all communities that have been excluded and included on this land. Genocide of First Nation communities happened on this land, Blacks were expelled and not legally allowed to live on this land - this needs to be included in the history of the area. This also includes Black, Hispanic/Latinx and other cultures of color that have been included and excluded and exploited within the Columbia River Gorge.

Reference links below:

<https://www.confluenceproject.org/library-post/tribes-of-the-columbia-river-system/>

<https://calendar.eji.org/racial-injustice/jun/26>

2. Land Acknowledgement -

Recommendation: as a government body that is tied to the white supremacist system overseeing land that was stolen from Native and First Nation folks, we need to start all our work with land acknowledgements to acknowledge and heal from the history of land management in the area.

3. We need an Equity Plan. At this point no document that is written by our government institutions should not include an equity plan. This needs action steps to redress the hundreds of years of systemic racism and white supremacy that has excluded communities of color from the area. It also needs

to talk and create steps about how white supremacy and systemic racism is being dismantled within the management plan. For some good references check out

<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html> .

Recommendation: Make this a regular agenda item and encourage staff to support a team that can lead this work. This team should be reflective of our community and incentive the participation of local folks. As a Person of Color I know that committees and open conversation can be stressful and feel unsafe. We need to create a safe space that allows for participants to share truthful experiences. There are many local groups who are doing this work such as The Next Door, Inc., Latinx en Accion, Abogados de la Comunidad, Radio Tierra KZAS, WorkSource Columbia Gorge, One Community Health – we should collaborate to work on this plan together.

4. Every piece of this management plan needs to include more around racial justice, because racial justice is environmental justice.

Recommendation: I invite you to explore these texts to help shape arguments around edits that need to happen to this plan.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/06/05/climate/racism-climate-change-reading-list.html?fbclid=IwAR3xm3nJO08kQqo-U2600hB3tmV917JaAIAveW7U34BMAj6riQaEAptucY>

https://www.opb.org/news/article/oregon-northwest-racism-outdoors-nature-hiking/?fbclid=IwAR1nSLYbBiwFvAS-spL3ao2I_uoj20SNUhxqfN0bRTdyB-A8BFi9I3LZ1Ik

https://www.opb.org/news/article/black-birding-week-oregon-bipoc-conservation/?fbclid=IwAR1gGrJQnarG6ymUzo5vZelpJy0Di9dFGk-U5-tNc0gDS_CXGobDopO61po

https://e360.yale.edu/features/unequal-impact-the-deep-links-between-inequality-and-climate-change?fbclid=IwAR1hOZh4SrbWD09WSAXCCfS8ldxIVr_HgPodIKiHGOC4awHaqVm2xpByT9k

Respectfully,

Leticia Valle

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers