

## Accessory Dwelling & Short-term Rental Discussion NOTES

### Issue:

- There is a growing interest among NSA residents in renting out accessory buildings or rooms in existing residences as short-term or vacation rentals as a means of supplemental income generation.
- There is some concern that allowing accessory dwellings in the NSA would have negative impacts to resources in the gorge.
- The standards for Bed and Breakfast Inns in the Management Plan can be restrictive to landowners who wish to rent rooms in their residence on a daily or weekly basis.

**Summary of Discussion:** Opinions were split about whether to allow accessory dwelling units in the National Scenic Area. There was a similar split in the discussion around short-term rentals; some were in favor of updating the Plan to allow short-term rentals where Bed & Breakfasts are allowed, others do not want to allow short-term rentals. Despite the disagreements on these topics, there was general agreement that clear guidelines, monitoring and enforcement are imperative, regardless of what is allowed.

### General comments

- There is confusion because of the lack of distinction between a structure (accessory dwelling unit) and a use (short term rental)
- Focus on climate, cumulative effects and enforcement
- The rules and restrictions that are in place strike the right balance between commercial, economic, and environmental interests
- Focus accessory dwelling units and short-term rentals on how they can be allowed while maintaining the character of the CRGNSA
- Monitoring and enforcement will be the only way that these can be effective

### Accessory dwelling units discussion

- There should be clarity on the intention of having an accessory dwelling unit if they're allowed.
- The urban areas are managing accessory dwelling units effectively. Have proper enforcement and allow accessory dwelling units
- Accessory structures for residential uses should not allow the use as a dwelling. No ADUs (accessory dwelling units)

- ADU's should be allowed in Residential (R-5 and R-10 zones)

#### Short-term rental discussion

- Short-term rentals should be allowed with regulation in all of the land use designations where Bed and Breakfasts are allowed
- Do not allow short-term rentals other than Bed and Breakfasts
- The Management Plan should use the Hood River county rules and guides as a template for short term rental rules in the National Scenic Area
- Bed and breakfasts are out of date. Update guidelines to reflect that short-term rentals are the main type of use today
- The guidelines for Bed and Breakfasts are adequate

## Agriculture-Based Tourism Discussion NOTES

### Issue:

- Interest and popularity of hosting commercial activities on agricultural land has increased.
- There is a desire to expand the allowed review uses on agricultural land to include a wider variety of commercial facilities and events.
- There is concern that commercial uses on agricultural land is changing the character of agricultural lands in the National Scenic Area.

**Summary of Discussion:** Agricultural producers were generally in favor of allowing farms to host different types of commercial events and uses beyond what is currently allowed on some agricultural lands by the Management Plan (*Commercial events* are defined in the Plan as: “weddings, receptions, parties and other small-scale gatherings that are incidental and subordinate to the primary use on a parcel.”) Some suggested that the scale of the commercial event/use allowed should be in relation to the size of the parcel. Others believed that the current regulations for commercial uses and events on agricultural lands are sufficient. There was general agreement that cideries should be allowed-- participants did not see a significant reason for allowing wineries and not cideries. A few wondered if there was enough current interest in establishing cideries to include it as an allowed use.

### General comments

- Already have strong noise and visitor ordinances for events on agricultural land
- The Management Plan should expand and evolve to allow review uses for cideries, food sale, farm dinners and bike tours
- The Management Plan should have more flexible options for commercial events that reflect the size of the property
- Farm economic sustainability is extremely difficult with existing land prices. Allowing uses beyond crop production can help with this
- Winery tourism is a legitimate form of recreation, which brings in an incredible amount of money to the counties and states and upholds the goal of the Gorge Act to promote conservation, recreation and economic development
- The rules and restrictions concerning commercial events strikes the right balance between economic and environmental interests
- There should be the ability for larger parcels with substantial setbacks to do larger events with more max usage in terms of people and cars

- Cideries and distilleries should not be allowed. Especially distilleries
- It's important for "events" to be clearly defined as all wineries are ready, willing and able to conform
- Winery tourism is a form of recreation and should be considered on the same as other more recognized forms of recreation like hiking, biking, watersports, etc.
- The current guidelines for commercial events properly balance resource protections and small-scale commercial use
- Commercial uses should not be expanded. Fruit and produce stands should not be expanded
- The current standards for commercial events should not be loosened or weakened
- Major focus should be on climate, cumulative effects, and enforcement
- Allow farms to expand their activity to include bed and breakfast offerings to accommodate visitors to wineries, hikers, etc.
- Allow art events to be held on agricultural lands, such as landscape painting groups, exhibit, art classes, sculpture symposiums
- Look to European models of agritourism. Review wine growing scenic areas in Europe

## Small-Scale Wind and Solar Discussion NOTES

### Issue:

- The Gorge Commission wants to support renewable energy production, recognizing the need to consider climate change in the National Scenic Area today and in the future.
- Solar panels and some wind turbines are currently allowed as review uses in the National Scenic Area, but the Management Plan does not explicitly address solar and wind power structures and generation.

**Summary of Discussion:** People are generally in favor of adding a provision in the Management Plan to explicitly allow small-scale solar and wind energy production, so long as it complies with all of the Scenic, Natural, Cultural, and Recreational resource protections in the Plan, and it only generates the amount of power needed for the primary use (residential or agriculture) to ensure that it is not generated for commercial use.

### General comments

- Solar is already allowed as an accessory structure or addition. No need to list it separately
- Do not allow wind power generation. Too difficult to screen from Key Viewing Areas
- No commercial energy production
- Adhere to SNCR (Scenic, Natural, Cultural, Recreation) resource guidelines
- Focus on climate adaptation, cumulative effects and enforcement
- Ensure compliance with height restrictions and non-reflective material standards

## Wineries and Tasting Room Guidelines Discussion NOTES

### Issue:

- The Management Plan allows wineries in certain land use designations in conjunction with onsite viticulture, upon a showing that processing of wine is from grapes grown on the subject farm or in the local region.
- There is some concern that the current rules make it too easy to establish a winery and tasting room, and that the term “local region” is too vague.
- There are also concerns about the environmental impacts of an increasing popularity of vineyard development in the National Scenic Area.

**Summary of Discussion:** Vineyard and winery owners and operators expressed strong opposition to defining “local region” in the Management Plan to mean the immediate area in the Gorge, as this would limit producers’ ability to acquire the necessary fruit needed for their business to survive. Participants were in general agreement that wineries are a foundational part of the economy in the National Scenic Area and should be supported as an important asset to the area. There was also much discussion about how the regulations of state and federal agencies on water usage and wastewater management already restrict the size and amount of water allowed for vineyards and wineries, so there is no need for the Management Plan to impose additional size restrictions.

### General comments

- The CRGC should focus on the following: climate, cumulative effects, enforcement
- Define “local region” for sourcing grapes, including allowances for hardship and climate change. For example, Gorge fires can make it impossible for a winery to comply with “processing wine from the local region”
- Limit wineries to grapes grown on/at the vineyard or within the immediate area
- Due to weather events (smoke damage, hail, freeze, etc.) it is not a viable business model to be restricted to only these six counties [in the National Scenic Area]
- The CRGC should focus on the following: climate, cumulative effects, enforcement
- Restrictions on fruit production and processing would be totally out of line with regulations on other fruit products. Pear, cherry, and apple packing houses would never survive if restricted to only using fruit from “local” growers
- Concerns about production size and scale are met by the limitations for each permitted winery on their square footage
- The average 5,000 case winery uses less water limits wine production than an average single-family household

- A 60 acre vineyard uses the same amount of water as a 1 acre pear orchard, not to mention that vineyards in the West part of our growing region can be farmed without irrigation

Response to questions on poster

1) *Should there be additional size and location limits or standards for vineyards and wineries in the Gorge?*

- Already strict water use regulations by state Department of Environmental Quality
- Federal-level regulations are already in place for the sizing of wineries and vineyards that restrict the sizing and location limits from an ecological point of view
- Size of buildings- already restricted in Plan
- Limited to 7,500 cases by wastewater regulations
- Projects are reviewed on a case by case now- leave it that way
- Conversion from growing tree fruit to growing grapes reduces chemicals, wastewater use, etc.
- Industry dynamic is changing

2) *What voluntary programs and technical assistance for landowners should the Commission support?*

- Technical assistance from conservation districts, such as current partnership with Underwood Conservation District
- Salmon Safe Certification
- Provide a “kit” for winegrowers: have a checklist for applicants of available certifications and assistance programs

3) *How could “local region” be better defined to ensure that local wineries are only producing wine made with grapes grown in the area? What is “local” enough?*

- Limiting where grapes are sourced from would stifle people from coming in to the industry. Only those with a lot of money could afford to do that.
- Hinders farmers if they can only sell grapes in the area.
- The term “local region” could be economically devastating if focused or constrained to just the AVA of the Columbia Gorge, due to the variability of grapes being an ag product.
- The “region” needs to be diversified to perhaps outlying AVA’s even the entire state of WA. “Local region” should be WA state for economical sustainability
- “Local region” should be within a 10 mile radius