



TO: Columbia River Gorge Commission

FROM: Aiden Forsi, Land Use Planner

DATE: March 9, 2021

RE: **Information Item:** Update on Klickitat County Compliance Study Progress

Project Status

Commission staff have completed the process of selecting tax lots to review for the Klickitat County Compliance Study. Staff selected a total of 151 tax lots, split across two samples. (16 of the selected tax lots are in both samples.)

The first sample of 87 tax lots is representative of all tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County, and staff will review whether development on the selected lots is permitted under the Commission's Land Use Ordinance for Klickitat County. Commission staff excluded lots owned by the federal government from this sample. Federal entities own approximately 20% of the lots within the NSA in Klickitat County; many are undeveloped, and any development that does occur on those lots is subject to a higher degree of review or is outside the jurisdiction of the Gorge Commission. The 87 selected tax lots, then, are more representative of the state, county, city, and private lands within the NSA in Klickitat County than the sample would be if it included federal lots – that is to say, more representative of lots where the Commission's Land Use Ordinance applies.

The second sample of 80 tax lots is representative of all lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County for which the Commission has issued a Director's Decision, and staff will review whether development on the selected lots complies with Commission's Land Use Ordinance for Klickitat County and the conditions of approval included with each Decision. For many lots, this includes reviewing multiple Director's Decisions that have been issued since 1988, when the Gorge Commission began reviewing development applications under the Final Interim Guidelines.

Some Preliminary Analysis¹

Land Use Designations

Generally, tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County are designated as Agricultural Land. Approximately 45% of all tax lots in the full dataset are designated GMA Agriculture, and 12% are designated SMA Agriculture. Another 10% of lots are designated GMA Forest, and 9% are designated SMA Open Space.

Land Use Designations, all tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County

Land Use Designation	# of tax lots	% of total
<i>General Management Area</i>		
Large Scale Ag (40, 160 acre minimum)	253	24.9%
Small Scale Ag (20, 40, 80, 160 acre minimum)	164	16.1%
Ag Special	36	3.5%
Commerical Forest	41	4.0%
Small Woodland (80 acre minimum)	58	5.7%
Open Space	74	7.3%
Recreation	3	0.3%
Residential (1, 2, 5, 10 acre minimum)	78	7.7%
Other (Urban Area, BIA, Water)	90	8.9%
<i>Special Management Areas</i>		
Agriculture	118	11.6%
Forest	6	0.6%
Open Space	92	9.1%
Public Recreation	1	0.1%
Other (BIA)	2	0.2%
Total	1016	100.0%

Preliminary analysis of tax lots selected for the two study samples shows that the majority of lots designated SMA will not be reviewed, as a consequence of removing federal lots from the samples. There are only 5 lots of the 151 selected that are designated SMA. As stated above, this has the effect of focusing the study on state, county, city, and private lands in Klickitat County, where the Gorge Commission has clear jurisdiction over development.

A majority of selected tax lots in the samples are designated as Agricultural Land. 63% of selected tax lots are designated GMA Agriculture, most as Large- or Small-Scale Agriculture. 15% of the selected lots are GMA Residential, 11% of the selected lots are GMA Forest, and 5% of the selected lots are GMA Open Space. One lot crosses several SMA and GMA Land Use Designations.

¹ Because the dataset of tax lots used for these figures may include slivers of lots that are mostly within Urban Areas or outside the NSA's exterior boundary, lots may have two designations and the dataset only includes one, and lots with no ownership information, the conclusions here should be considered very generally. The intent of including information on the full dataset, despite these issues, is to provide some broad context for the analysis of the selected samples, which have been reviewed more closely for accuracy.

Land Use Designations, selected tax lots in both samples of study

Land Use Designation	# of tax lots	% of total
<i>General Management Area</i>		
Large Scale Ag (40, 160 acre minimum)	44	29.1%
Small Scale Ag (20, 40, 80, 160 acre minimum)	44	29.1%
Ag Special	7	4.6%
Commerical Forest	3	2.0%
Small Woodland (80 acre minimum)	13	8.6%
Open Space	8	5.3%
Recreation	4	2.6%
Residential (1, 2, 5, 10 acre minimum)	22	14.6%
<i>Special Management Areas</i>		
Agriculture	4	2.6%
Open Space	1	0.7%
<i>Several LUDs</i>		
One Lot	1	0.7%
Total	151	100.0%

Ownership

Overall, tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County are in private hands, owned by individual citizens, LLCs, agricultural operations, and other entities. Approximately 62% of all tax lots in the full dataset are held privately. On the other end of the spectrum, approximately 20% of tax lots are owned by federal entities such as the Forest Service or Fish and Wildlife Service. A further 11% of lots are owned by Washington State agencies.

Ownership Type of all tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County

Ownership	# of tax lots	% of total
Federal	198	19.5%
State	108	10.6%
County	20	2.0%
City	3	0.3%
Private	625	61.5%
Tribal	27	2.7%
Railroad	35	3.4%
Total	1016	100.0%

Removing federal lots from the two study samples means that a higher number of privately owned lots are selected. 78% of selected lots in the samples are in private hands. 10% of selected lots are owned by Washington State agencies. 7% of the lots are in unknown ownership, appearing as easements or right of ways for highways and railroads – a potential data issue that staff will resolve through further analysis, selecting more lots if necessary, to complete the study.

Ownership Type, selected tax lots in both samples of study

Ownership	# of tax lots	% of total
Federal	1	0.7%
State	15	9.9%
County	3	2.0%
Private	118	78.1%
Railroad	3	2.0%
Unknown	11	7.3%
Total	151	100.0%

Acreage

The total acreage of the tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County is approximately 62,000 acres. Most of that land, 82% of it, is in the General Management Area. 65% of the land in the study area is designated as GMA Agriculture, followed by 15% designated as GMA Forest. Of the 18% of land designated as Special Management Areas, a majority of those tax lots are designed SMA Open Space, making up 13% of all land in the study area.

Acreage of tax lots by Land Use Designation, all tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County

Land Use Designation	Acreage of tax lots	% of total
<i>General Management Area</i>		
Large Scale Ag (40, 160 acre minimum)	33413.31	53.0%
Small Scale Ag (20, 40, 80, 160 acre minimum)	2473.57	4.0%
Ag Special	5205.06	8.4%
Commerical Forest	5152.57	8.3%
Small Woodland (80 acre minimum)	2471.43	4.0%
Open Space	1510.28	2.2%
Recreation	31.23	0.1%
Residential (1, 2, 5, 10 acre minimum)	394.86	0.6%
Other (Urban Area, BIA, Water)	4225.69	1.5%
<i>Special Management Areas</i>		
Agriculture	2316.36	3.7%
Forest	316.55	0.5%
Open Space	8140.61	13.1%
Public Recreation	10	0.0%
Other (BIA)	357.57	0.6%
Total	66019.09	100.0%

Since most of the tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County are privately owned, most of the 62,000 acres in the study area are privately owned as well. Approximately 38,000 acres,

or 61% of all land in the study area, is in private hands. 16% of the total acreage is held by federal entities, and another 16% is held by state agencies.

Acreage of tax lots by Ownership Type, all tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County

Ownership	Acreage of tax lots	% of total
Federal	10551.82	16.0%
State	10252.69	15.5%
County	224.55	0.3%
City	489.78	0.7%
Private	40440.64	61.3%
Tribal	3552.86	5.4%
Railroad	506.75	0.8%
Total	66019.09	100.0%

Acreage in the tax lots selected for the two samples follow the above trends. 86% of the land covered by selected tax lots is designated GMA Agriculture. 78% of the land covered by selected tax lots is in private ownership, and 19% in owned by Washington State agencies. Because federal lots were excluded from the samples, there are only about 90 acres of land in the samples that is designated in a Special Management Area – around 1% of all land being reviewed.

Acreage of tax lots by Land Use Designation, selected tax lots in both samples of study

Land Use Designation	Acreage of tax lots	% of total
<i>General Management Area</i>		
Large Scale Ag (40, 160 acre minimum)	5107.51	71.3%
Small Scale Ag (20, 40, 80, 160 acre minimum)	743.86	10.4%
Ag Special	332.13	4.6%
Commerical Forest	61.47	0.9%
Small Woodland (80 acre minimum)	224.41	3.1%
Open Space	147.04	2.1%
Recreation	110.26	1.5%
Residential (1, 2, 5, 10 acre minimum)	299.55	4.2%
<i>Special Management Areas</i>		
Agriculture	82.33	1.1%
Open Space	6.81	0.1%
<i>Several LUDs</i>		
One Lot	51.94	0.7%
Total	7167.31	100.0%

Acreage of tax lots by Ownership Type, selected tax lots in both samples of study

Ownership	Acreage of tax lots	% of total
Federal	6	0.1%
State	1347.94	18.8%
County	59.54	0.8%
Private	5562.4	77.6%
Railroad	83.91	1.2%
Unknown	107.52	1.5%
Total	7167.31	100.0%

Preliminary Conclusions

While it is too early to draw final conclusions from any of this data, this preliminary analysis of the tax lots selected for the two samples appears to show that the characteristics of the selected tax lots are similar to the overall characteristics of all tax lots within the National Scenic Area in Klickitat County.

A Note on Director's Decisions

92 of the selected tax lots, or 61%, show issued Director's Decisions on our GIS tool. Staff have not examined these and cannot speak to trends in development at this point.

Next Steps

Commission staff will collect any remaining information needed for all selected tax lots, such as aerial images or documentation from the Klickitat County Tax Assessor. Staff will then review lots for compliance with the Commission's Land Use Ordinance for Klickitat County and any applicable conditions of approval for development on those lots. Review of development in either sample follows the same process, so staff will conduct review of both samples at the same time in order to expedite review.