

TO: Columbia River Gorge Commission

FROM: Lisa Naas Cook, VSI Planner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
Casey Gatz, Resource and Planning Staff Officer, USDA Forest Service, CRGNSA

DATE: June 13, 2023

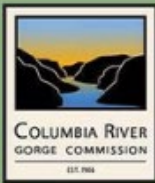
RE: **Information Item*:** Climate Change Action Plan and Vital Sign Indicators Program
Quarterly Progress Report – July 2023

Purpose

This memo provides an overview of progress on Climate Change Action Plan implementation and Vital Sign Indicators (VSI) monitoring program development using a standardized dashboard reporting template approved by the Commission at its June 13th meeting.

The purpose of the two quarterly reports that follow is to share progress on the key work items included in the 2023 Work Plans for Climate Change Action and VSI programs, presented to the Commission in February 2023. The attached Climate Change Action and VSI reports include accompanying 2023 Work Plan Timelines for each program as a reference. In addition, the Climate Change Action quarterly progress report includes a summary of the 10 priorities included in the Climate Change Action Plan.

Staff welcomes questions on these quarterly progress summaries at the July 11th Commission meeting.



Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

Climate Change Action Plan Priorities 2023-2030

OVERALL PRIORITIES



Inclusive Climate Action

Engaging with diverse communities and partners across the Gorge



High Climate Resilience Areas

Identifying and conserving areas expected to support species in a changing climate

ADAPTATION



Cold Water Refuge Streams

Protecting water temperature and flow for fish



Wetlands

Improving wetland habitat for associated plants and wildlife



Tribal Treaty Rights

Supporting Tribes to ensure ecosystems and land use promote accessible, thriving First Foods



Oak Woodlands

Improving oak woodland habitat and corridors

MITIGATION



Regional Transportation

Reducing single-passenger vehicle travel and promoting regional transit



Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Increasing charging stations and collaborative electrification planning



Carbon Sequestration

Enhancing land-based carbon sequestration



Fire Risk







Supporting resilient forests and fire-adapted communities



2023 Climate Change Action Timeline

Climate Change Action Plan
Adopted (12/13/2022)

2023

	CCAP Priority	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	2024	2025
Commission Action Update	(Note: Monthly updates to be included with Executive Director's Report starting in May 2023.)		Commission review draft quarterly report template	Quarterly Update			Quarterly Update			Quarterly Update			Climate Action Annual Report (Tentative Feb. 2024)	
Staff Work	Tribal Treaty Rights: First Foods Policy Approaches			 <i>Treaty Tribe Outreach and Meeting Schedule Identified</i>	Convene meetings with staff from Columbia River Treaty Tribes to discuss and develop policy approaches for First Foods protection and access							 <i>Report on Goals, Strategies, and Policy Approaches for First Foods Protection and Access</i>		
	Inclusive Climate Action				 <i>Gorge Climate Change Symposium: Panelist for Adaptation & Action Session</i>				 <i>Gorge Climate Stewards Pilot Program Launch</i>		 <i>Gorge Climate Stewards Pilot Completed</i>	 <i>Strategies and Actions for 3 Key Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Goals Completed by Pro-Equity Anti-Racism Team</i>		

Key:



Interim Outcome toward Climate Action Goal



Completed Outcome toward Climate Action Goal



Climate Change Action Program: July 2023 Quarterly Progress Report

Note: The two Climate Action goals below are the focus for 2023. A progress summary for all 10 priority goals in the Climate Change Action Plan will be provided in the annual climate action report available in early 2024.

Climate Action Goals	Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On Track ● At Risk ● Off Track ● On Hold ✔ Complete
<p>By 2023, the Commission has identified specific goals, strategies, and policy approaches for First Foods protection and access, created with the Columbia River Treaty Tribes.</p>	●	
<p>By 2025, the Commission has completed a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan with specific, measurable, and timebound goals to advance climate equity.</p>	●	

Actions and Accomplishments	Deliverable	Target	Completed
<p>Tribal Treaty Rights: Coordinating with staff from Columbia River Treaty Tribes to discuss and develop policy approaches for First Foods protection and access. Key outreach events conducted this spring: Elaine Harvey, Environmental Coordinator with Yakama Nation Fisheries, presented “Tribal Connections to the Mid-Columbia and First Food Gathering” to National Scenic Area Gorge Planners Network in May. Colleen Sanders, Climate Adaptation Planner with Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), presented “Carbon and Climate Resilience: CTUIR Climate Adaptation Planning” to Commission in June.</p>	<p>Report on Goals, Strategies, and Policy Approaches for First Foods Protection and Access</p>	<p>12/2023</p>	
<p>Inclusive Climate Action: Staff presented “The Story Behind the Commission’s Climate Change Action Plan” at <i>Adapting to Climate Change in the Gorge</i> conference in The Dalles in May. With partners Oregon State University Extension Service and Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, completed Columbia Gorge Climate Stewards Pilot curriculum review, developed outreach materials, and initiated recruitment with community partners. Convened introductory Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Advisory Team meeting to discuss priorities for Commission’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan.</p>	<p>Climate conference panel completed</p>	<p>5/2023</p>	<p>5/2023</p>
	<p>Climate Stewards pilot completed</p>	<p>12/2023</p>	
	<p>Strategies and actions for 3 key DEI goals completed by PEAR Team</p>	<p>12/2023</p>	






Risks & Issues	Next Steps
<p>Staff reduction in summer may delay meetings with Tribes and PEAR Team. No funding received for Climate Change Program Manager position.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene staff-to-staff meetings with Commission, USDA Forest Service, and Treaty Tribe staff to discuss First Foods protection and access. Conduct recruitment and registration for Climate Stewards. Prepare for fall 2023 PEAR meeting.
<p style="text-align: center;">Planned Action</p> <p>Focus on presentations from Treaty Tribe staff in summer and convene meetings with Tribal staff in summer and fall 2023 as schedules allow.</p>	

2023 Vital Sign Indicators Work Plan Timeline

Draft Natural Resource, Climate Change, Scenic Resource, Recreation, and Economic Vitality Indicators presented by 12/13/2022)

2023



	Vital Sign	February 2023	March 2023	April 2023	May 2023	June 2023	July 2023	August 2023	September 2023	October 2023	November 2023	December 2023	2024	2025
Staff Work	Cultural Resources		Commission review draft quarterly update template	Quarterly Update	 <i>Cultural Resources Progress Report</i>	Convene meetings with staff from Columbia River Treaty Tribes to explore role of VSI monitoring to support policy approaches for First Foods protection and access (overlaps with Climate Change Action work)					 <i>VSI update in Report on First Foods Policy Approaches</i>			
	Wetlands, Grasslands, Oak Woodlands, Coniferous Forest, Talus, Agriculture	Data acquisition and analysis		 <i>Draft Land Cover & Land Use Map complete</i>										
	Streams & Riparian Areas: Cold Water Refuge Habitat		Initial CWR monitoring partner meeting	Develop CWR temperature monitoring framework with key partners					 <i>CWR Monitoring Progress Update</i>					
Commission Action Update							Quarterly Update			Quarterly Update  <i>Comprehensive List of Indicators</i>			VSI Annual Report (Date TBD)	

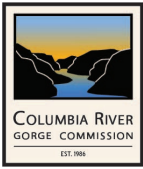
Key:



Interim VSI Outcome



Completed VSI Outcome



Vital Sign Indicators (VSI) Program: July 2023 Quarterly Progress Report



Program Purpose: To evaluate the long-term health of scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources, and local economies, of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

VSI Program Goals	Status	
2023 Goal: To finalize Vital Sign Indicators and begin implementation in 2024.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On Track ● At Risk ● Off Track ● On Hold ✔ Complete

Actions and Accomplishments	Deliverable	Target	Completed
Land Cover Map (Supports Wetlands, Grasslands, Coniferous Forests, and Oak Woodlands Vital Sign Indicators): Presented draft map at April Commission meeting.	Draft Land Cover Map	4/2023	4/2023
Cultural Resources: With USDA Forest Service Heritage Program staff, presented draft indicators at May Commission meeting and received approval to move forward with staff's suggested approach.	Cultural Resources Progress Report	5/2023	5/2023
	VSI Update in Report on First Foods Policy Approaches	12/2023	
Cold Water Refuge Streams: Convened meeting to discuss data acquisition and management with key monitoring partners. Continuing to work on monitoring framework, starting with temperature on 10 cold water refuge streams in the National Scenic Area.	Cold Water Refuge Monitoring Progress Report Update	10/2023	
Comprehensive List of Indicators: Completed actions above, along with continued work on recreation indicators (e.g., unofficial trails mapping effort to be implemented this summer).	Comprehensive List of Vital Sign Indicators	10/2023	

Risks & Issues	Next Steps
Staff reduction in summer and lack of dedicated funding for Climate Change Program Manager position may reduce capacity to work on VSI this quarter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish remaining indicator refinement tasks to finalize list by fall. • Continue coordination with Treaty Tribe staff to discuss cultural resource monitoring interests.
Planned Action	
Schedule presentation of indicator list in fall 2023. Focus on coordination with Treaty Tribe staff and pause on cold water refuge monitoring framework for summer.	