

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA



**Oregon Budget Presentation
March 8, 2021**

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Columbia River Gorge Commission

- ❖ 1986 National Scenic Area Act: 2 Purposes
- ❖ Gorge Commission Role
- ❖ Key Performance Measures
- ❖ Budget Drivers
- ❖ Environmental and External Factors
- ❖ Commission Priority Initiatives
- ❖ 2021-2023 Governor's Budget (Oregon's Share)
- ❖ 10% Oregon Budget Reduction Impact
- ❖ Policy Option Package #101: Replacing ACCESS

National Scenic Area Act Passed By Congress November 17, 1986



The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act of 1986 is a bold and innovative vehicle which recognizes that a median position between little or no Federal protection for a scenically important area on the one hand, and a wilderness or national park designation on the other, is both prudent and necessary in this age.

—Sen. Mark Hatfield¹



Two Purposes of the National Scenic Area Act (Sec. 3)

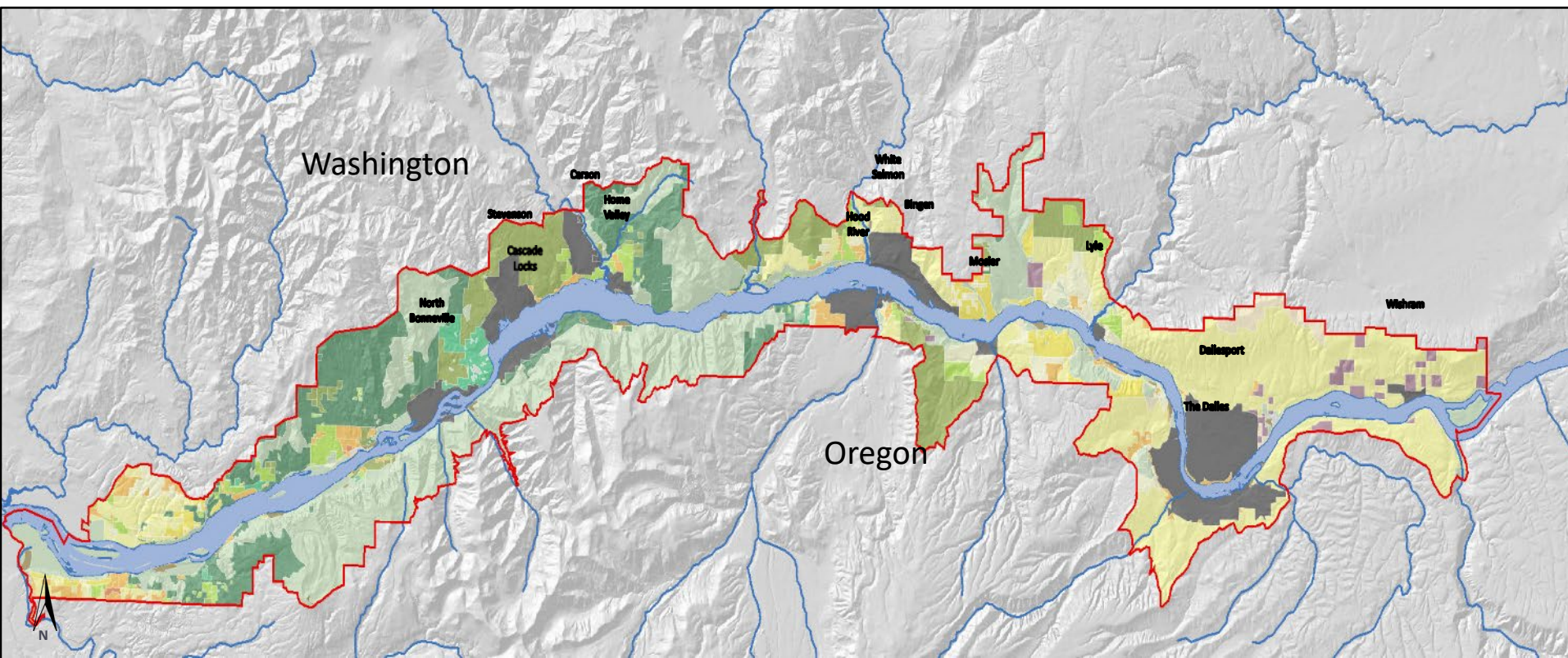
(1) to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and

(2) to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph (1).

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

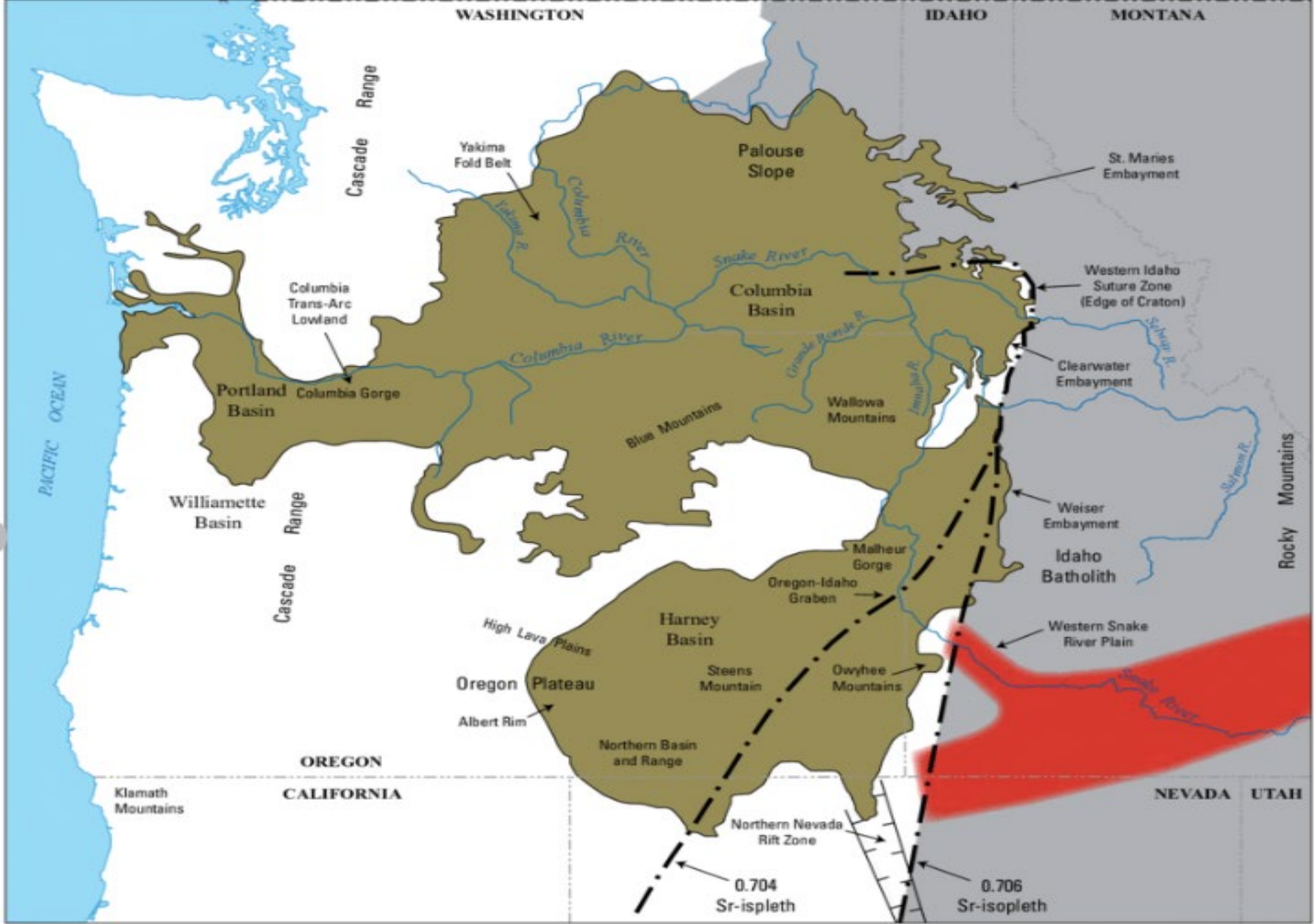
85 miles of the Columbia River
292,500 Acres

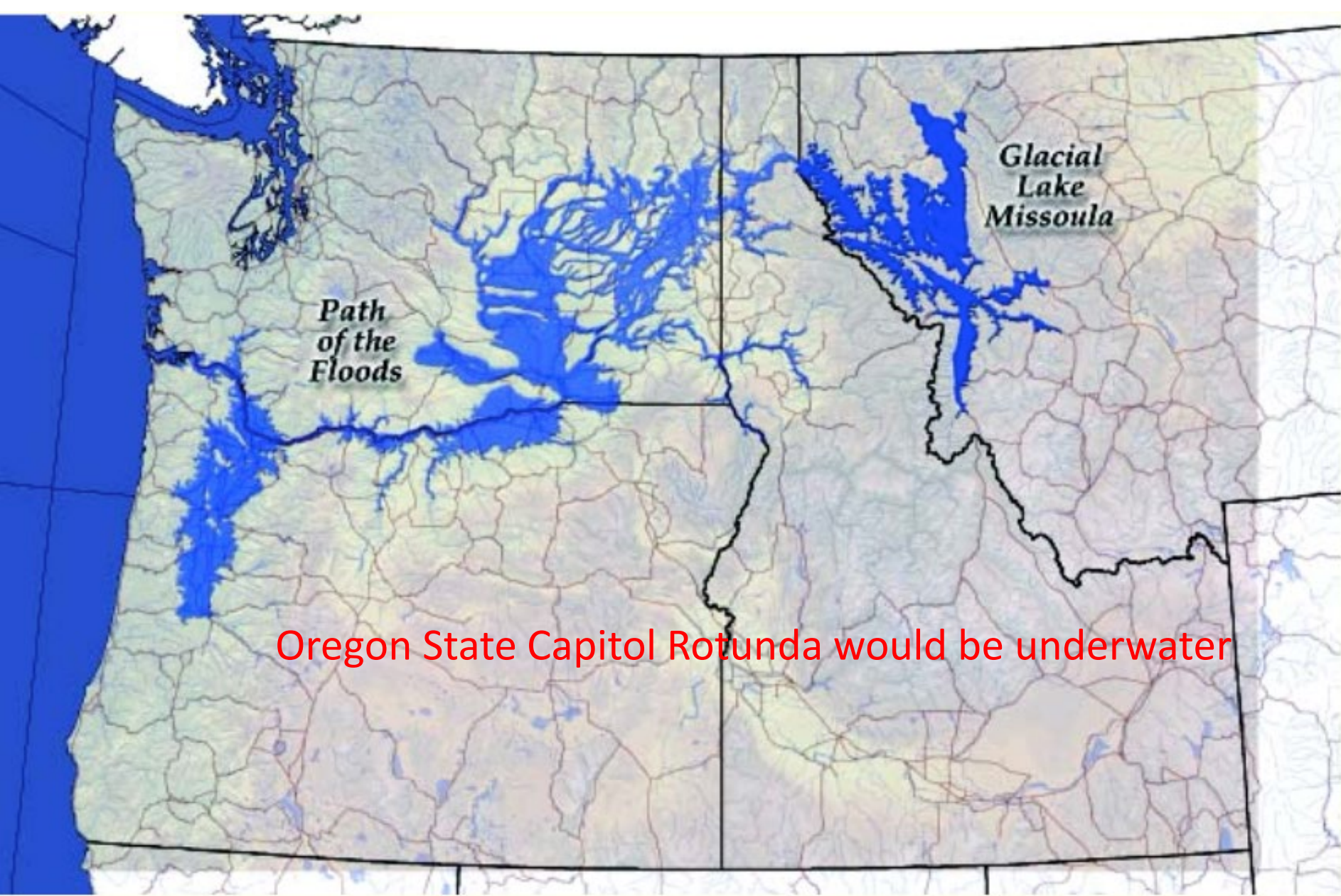
Largest and Most Unique NSA in the US



What Makes the Gorge So Unique?

- ❖ Ancient lava flows erupted from fissures in ID, WA and OR and flowed to the coast 17 million years ago
- ❖ Columbia Gorge basalts are 3 miles thick
- ❖ Missoula Floods shaped Gorge landscape 15,000 years ago
- ❖ Only sea level passage through west coast mountains
- ❖ Three ecoregions from western cascades, eastern cascades and dry Columbia Plateau
- ❖ Hundreds of unique species of plants and wildlife



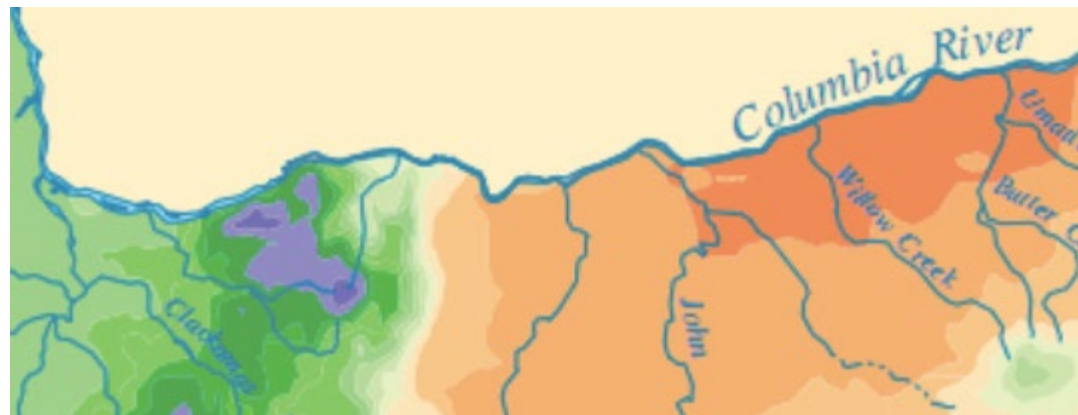
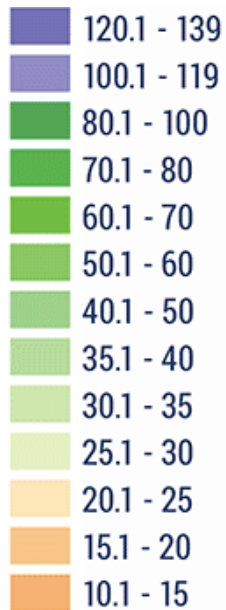


Oregon State Capitol Rotunda would be underwater

Area impacted by Glacial Lake Missoula and the Floods

From temperate marine climate, to rain forest, to dry grasslands in 85 miles

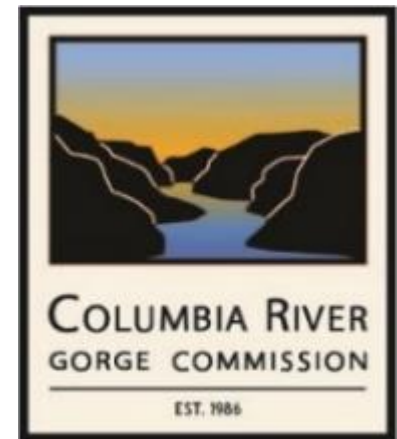
Rainfall in Inches



What is the Gorge Commission?

Bi-state regional planning agency created by a compact between Oregon and Washington in 1987.

Mission is to establish, implement and enforce policies through a long-range comprehensive management plan for the bi-state Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to fulfill purposes of the Act, and hear land use appeals within the National Scenic Area.



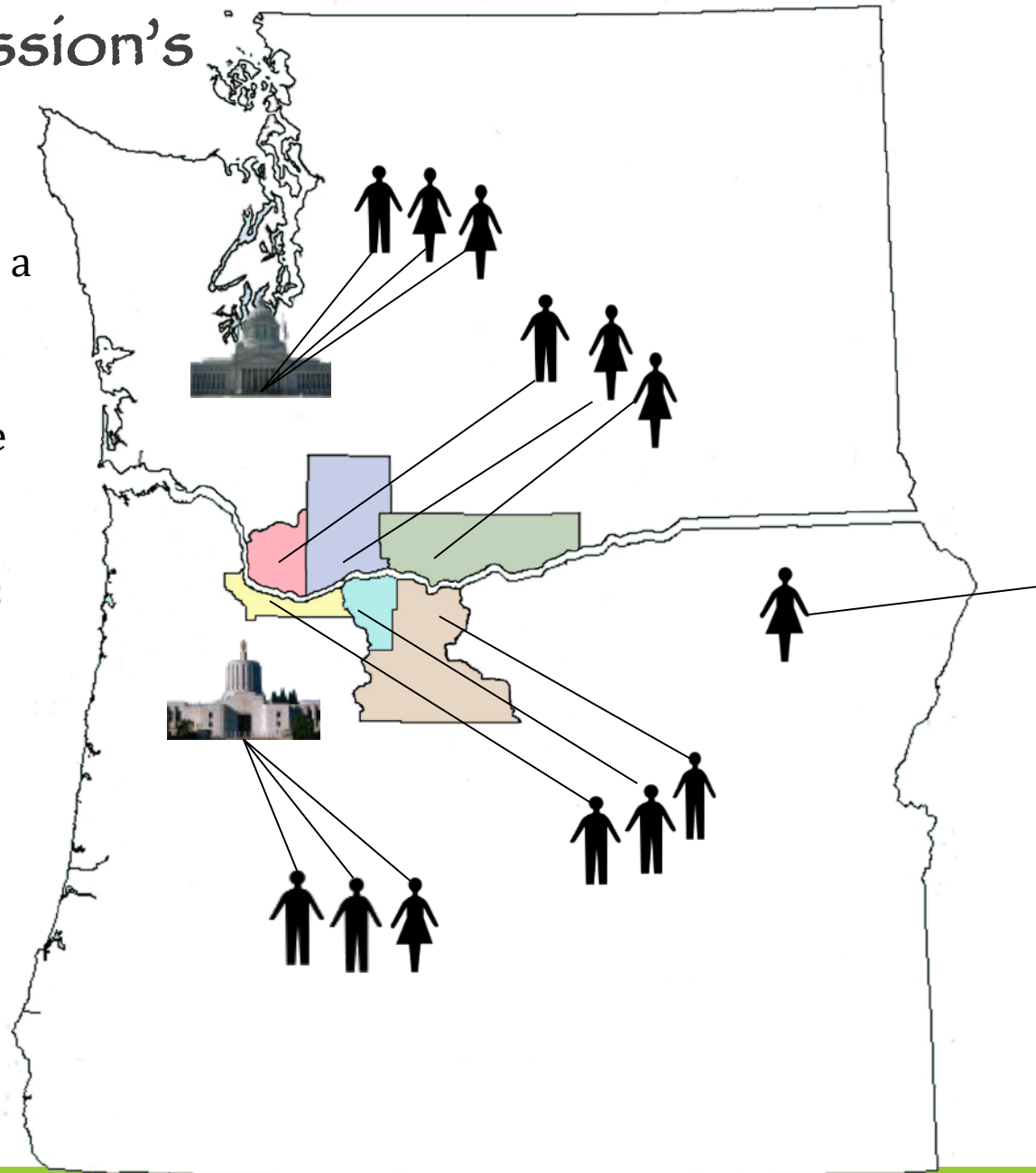
The Gorge Commission's 13 Members

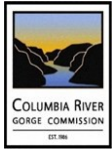
Each of six counties county selects a Gorge Commissioner

Two Governors select three Gorge Commissioners

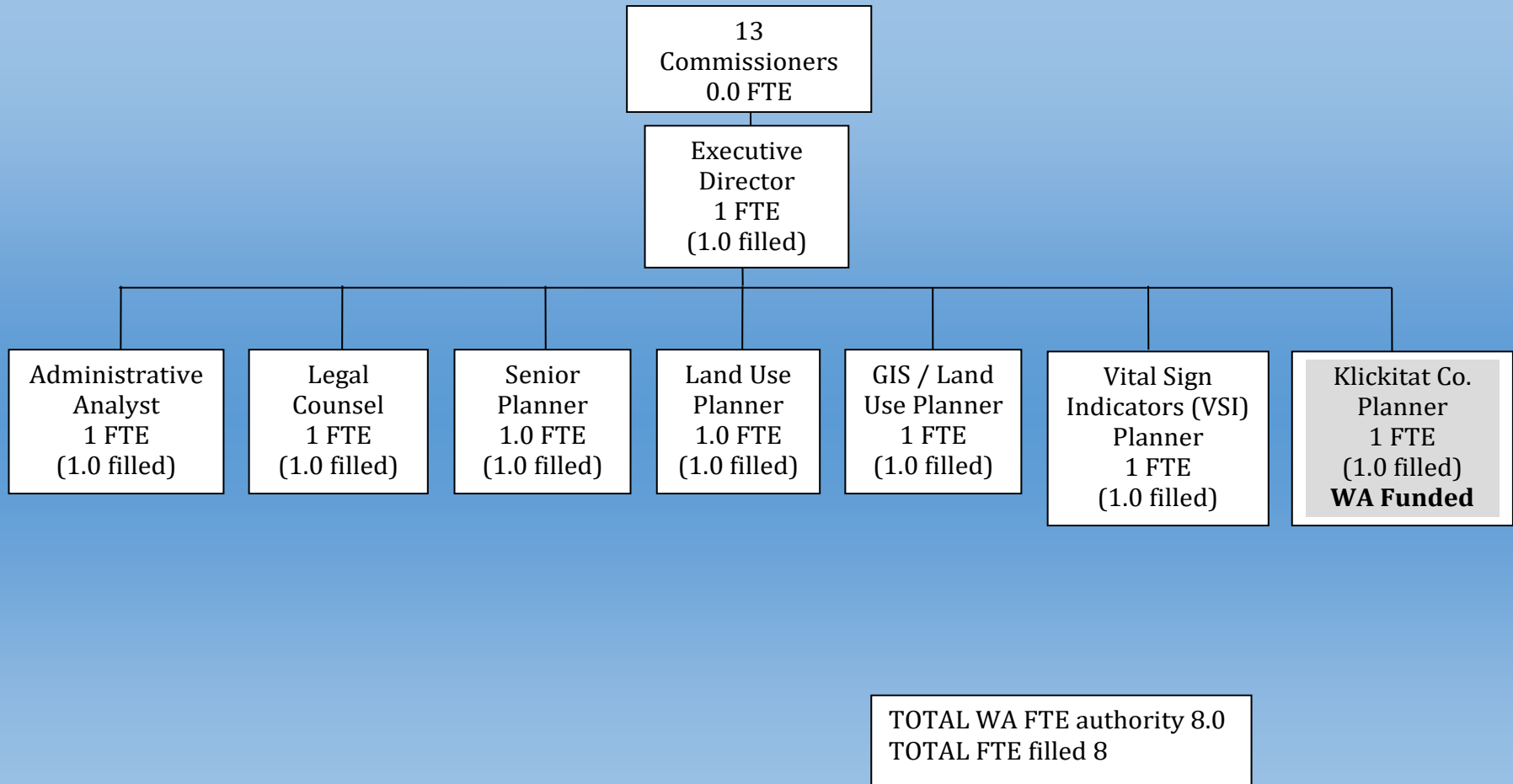
Two of the six are tribal members representing Yakama Nation and Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs.

The United States Secretary of Agriculture selects one USFS representative





Organizational Chart: 2019-2021



The Management Plan is protecting our treasured landscape and resources...



...as a vibrant place where 55,000 people live, work, and play.....



with over 3,000,000 US and international visitors each year contributing to the economy

Scenic protections

Assure that new development does not diminish the quality of views from key viewing areas



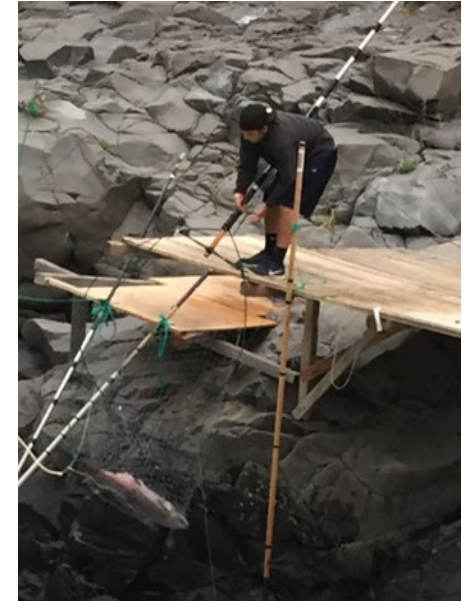
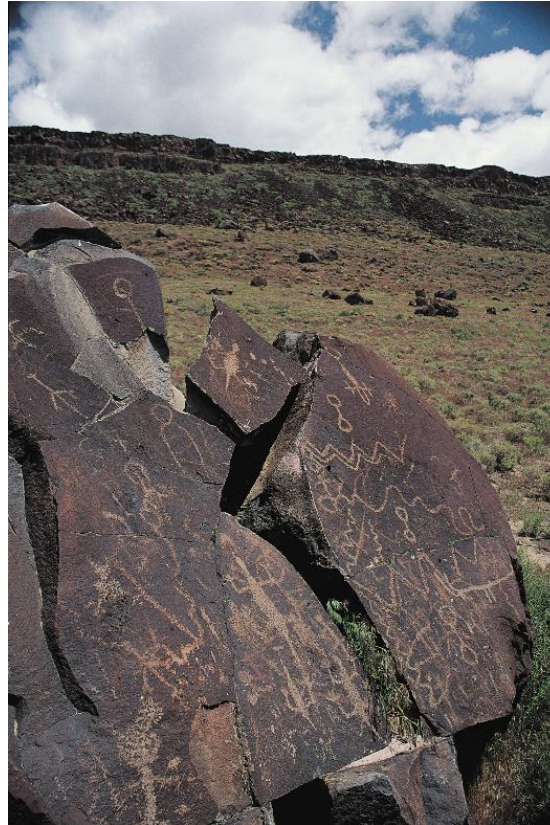
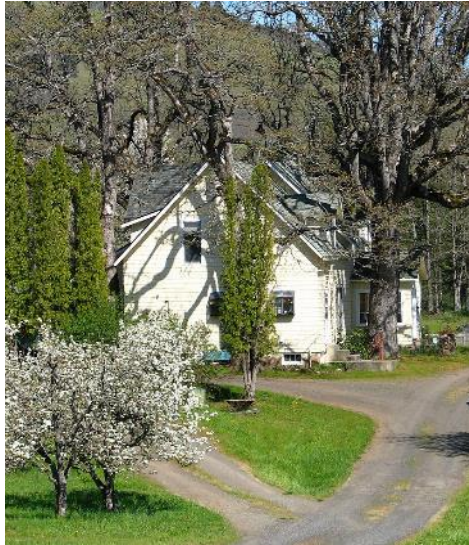
Natural protections

Includes protections for native plant, wildlife, and habitats, as well as air and water quality.



Cultural protections

Includes archaeological and historic resources, and tribal treaty rights



Recreational protections

Includes access that does not erode the quality of the environment for future users



Economic Development

Encourages growth in Urban Areas and allow development outside UAs that is consistent with resource protections

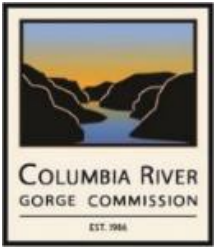
Assures that **Agricultural** and **Forest** uses are protected, wineries and commercial recreation allowed



Gorge Commission Supports Economic Vitality through:

- ✓ Certifying Oregon Investment Board Loans for Small Business
- ✓ Certifying Washington Investment Board Loans for Small Business
- ✓ Providing Support Letters for Infrastructure Project Grants
- ✓ Providing Comment Letters on Proposed Developments
- ✓ Working with the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District



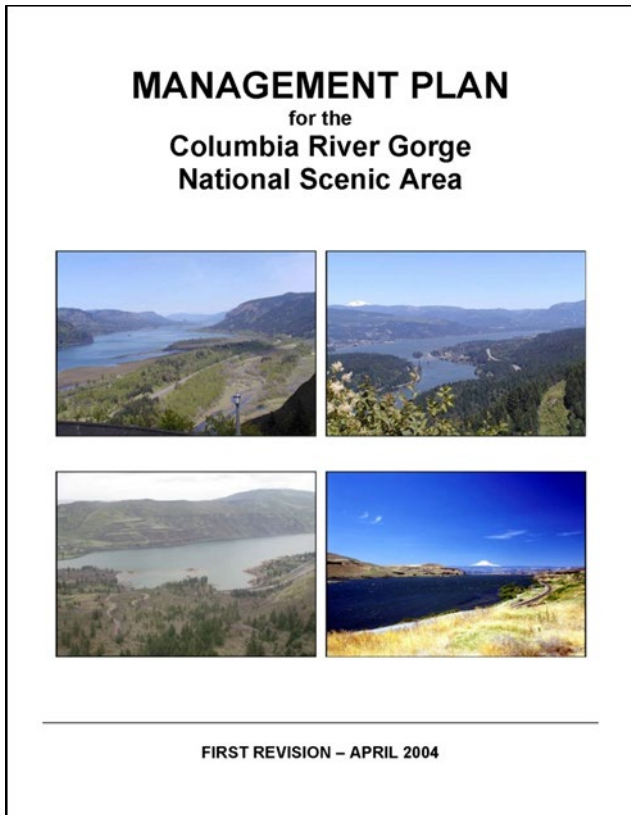


Bi-State Inter-Agency Collaboration

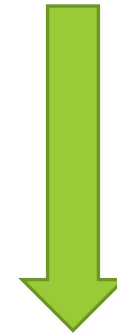
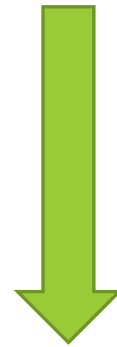
Engage and **coordinate a large web of stakeholders and agencies**, in addition to serving individual & business landowners in our NSA



Gorge Commission Role



Regional Planning



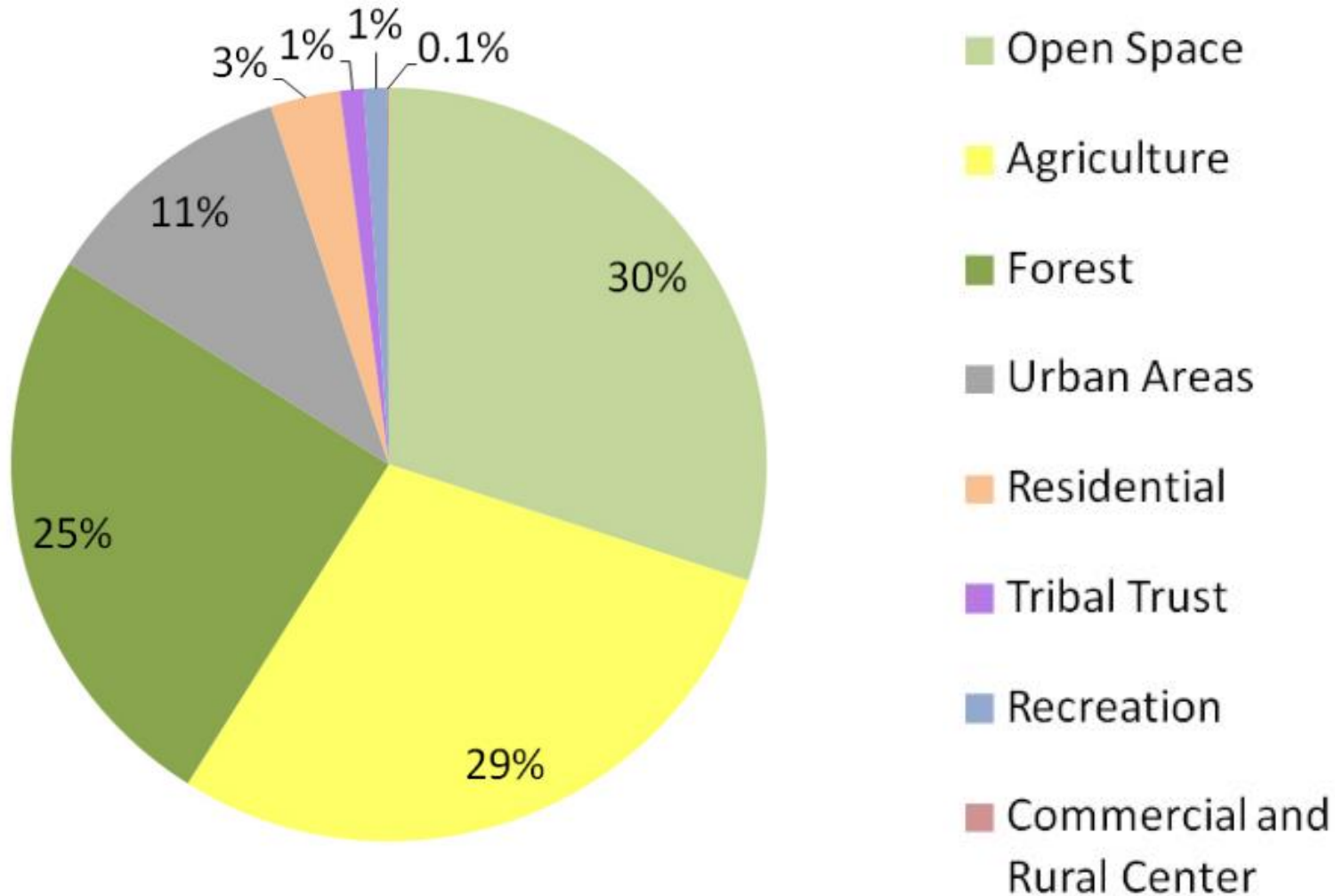
5 Counties Adopted
Ordinances

Klickitat County



GORGE 2020

Land use designations in NSA





Management Plan Update



“... at least every ten years, the Commission shall review the Management Plan to determine whether it should be revised.” Sec. 6(g)

Revision completed in October 2020

Secretary of Agriculture Concurrence in February 2021

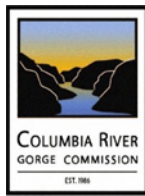
Transmit to Counties to Develop Ordinances March 2021





Key Performance Measures-2019

1. County Decisions: Percentage and number of county decisions where Gorge Commission comments were addressed in the decision
Target 90%/Actual 100%
2. Percentage of development reviews that are issued in the required timeframe **Target 85%/Actual 83%**
3. Customer Service: percentage of customers rating their satisfaction with the agency's customer service as "good" or "excellent", overall customer service timelines, accuracy, helpfulness, expertise and availability of information
Target: 85%/Actual 75%
4. Percent of total best practices met by the Board
Target 95%/Actual 83%
5. Number of Public Presentations **Target 40/ Actual 49**



Budget Drivers



- ❖ Need to Pro-Actively Engage with Counties, Public, Agencies and Treaty Tribes to implement Gorge 2020 Management Plan
- ❖ Rapidly Growing Population and Regional Recreation Demands Requires a Coordinated Bi-state Interagency Response
- ❖ Need for Thorough and Consistent Monitoring and Review of All County Development Applications and Actions (NSA Act)
- ❖ Continue to Review, Issue Permits, Do Inspections for Klickitat County
- ❖ Need to Recognize and Plan for Climate Change Impacts on NSA Resources and Tribal Treaty Rights



Environmental and External Factors Affecting Budget Requests



- ❖ Address Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation
- ❖ Recognize and Incorporate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Values
- ❖ Address County Planning Capacity for NSA Development Reviews—DLCD Grants Driven
- ❖ Increase Compliance Monitoring and Enforcement/Oversight
- ❖ Address Increasing Public Records Requests with Online/Web-based Capabilities



Commission Priorities for 2021-2023 Biennium



- ❖ Increase *Monitoring, Compliance and Enforcement*
- ❖ Develop and Adopt a *Climate Change Action Plan*
- ❖ Implement the “*Vital Sign Indicators*” Program
- ❖ Adopt a *Diversity, Equity and Inclusion* Workplan
- ❖ Transition to a *New Information Management System* for Tracking Data/Online Permitting

Climate Change Action Plan



Vital Signs Indicators Program

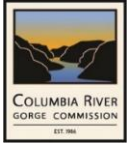
- Monitor the health of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area to assess if we are achieving Management Plan goals
- Vital Sign Indicators *track a change in condition over time*



1988 Memaloose Overlook



2016 Memaloose Overlook



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



Newly-Adopted DEI Policies in Management Plan:

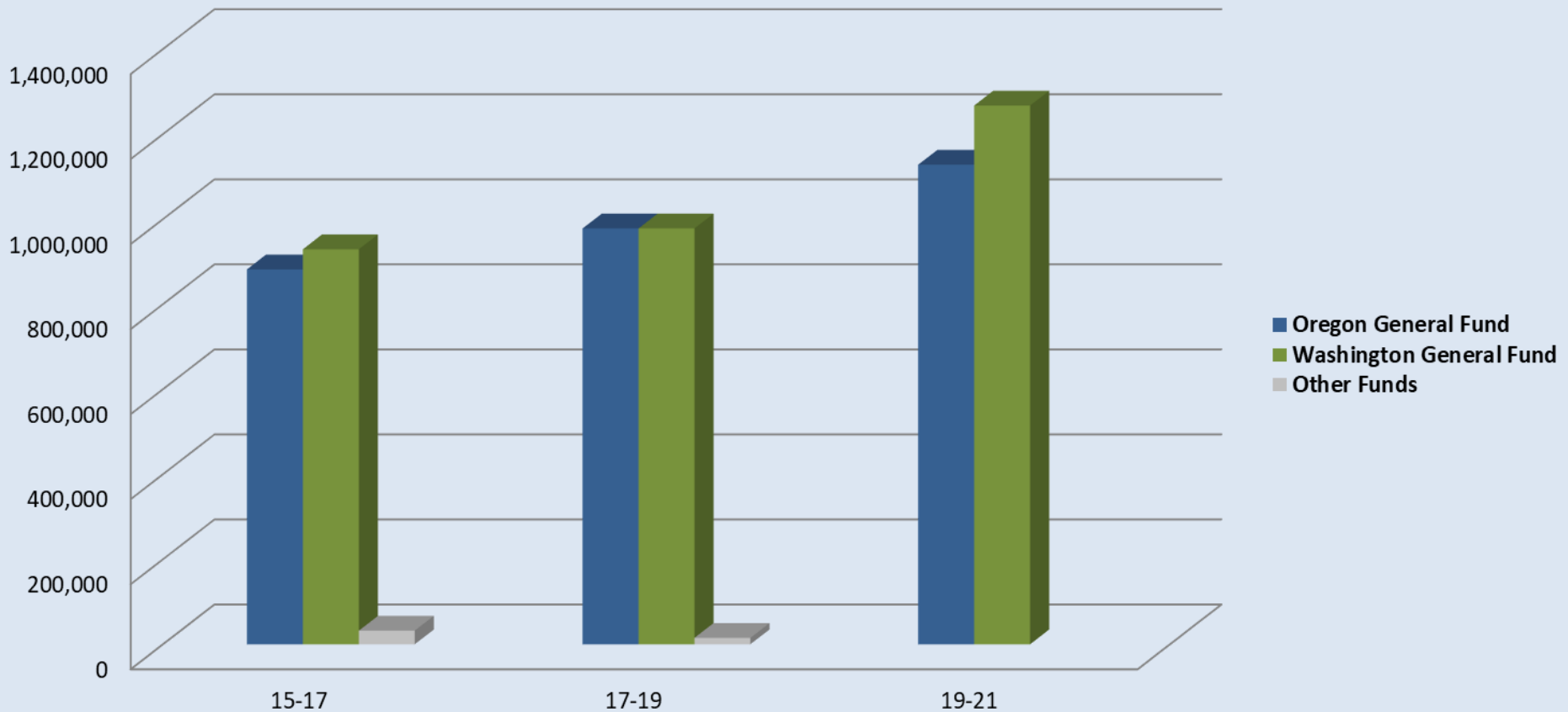
1. Adopt a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan to address systemic inequities identified or discovered in our work and policies.
2. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan will include specific measures and outcomes to:
 - a. Ensure a diverse staff and commission;
 - b. Develop and apply an equity lens to implementation of the Management Plan, Gorge Commission operations, and policy decisions; and
 - c. Engage under-represented and marginalized communities in the Columbia Gorge region.
3. Based upon the measures and outcomes of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan, amend the Management Plan.

Columbia River Gorge Commission

Budget Comparison Over Time

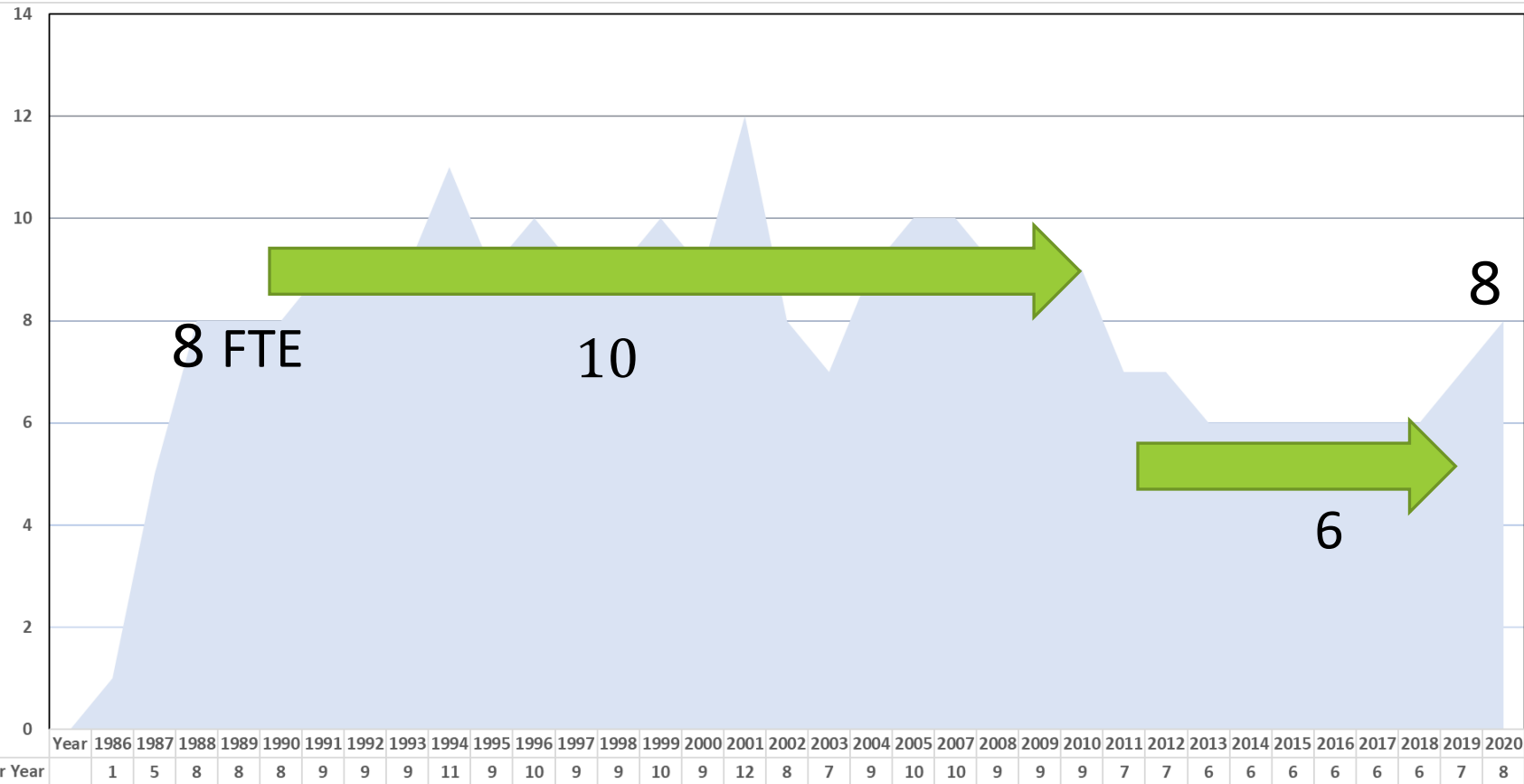
2015 - 2021

Columbia River Gorge Commission Fund Sources



Columbia River Gorge Commission

Staff Levels by Calendar Year



Staff Levels by Calendar Year

Columbia River Gorge Commission

Clean Audit Results FY 2019 and FY 2020

“In accordance with the Interstate Cooperative Agreement between the Washington State Auditor’s Office and the Oregon Secretary of State Audits Division, Oregon performed procedures to verify Oregon’s share of the Columbia River Gorge Commission’s joint expenditures and Commissioners’ compensation are in compliance with laws and regulations of the State of Oregon. The results of the Washington audit tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.”

State of Oregon
Office of the Secretary of State
Audits Division

2021-2023 Governor's Budget

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE COMMISSION

FTE and Program Costs - General Fund

Program	OR FTE	Personnel	Travel/ Transportation	Contracts	Goods/ Services	Total
Joint Account - Oregon Share	0.00	873,870	16,800	65,200	214,871	1,170,741
Package 091 Eliminates Standard Inflation	0.00				-62,791	-62,791
Package 096 DAS Adjustment	0.00				-3,173	-3,173
Option Package 101 Oregon Share	0.00				212,500	212,500
Joint Account w/option package	0.00	873,870	16,800	65,200	361,407	1,317,277
Oregon Commissioner Account	0.00	13,662	13,859		4,502	32,023
Total Oregon Share		887,532	30,659	65,200	365,909	1,349,300

Governor's Budget Reductions

Governor's Budget
5% - 65,964

Elimination of inflation for Services & Supplies - \$62,791

Adjustment to State Government Service Charges - \$ 3,173

All reductions will result in matching reduction of Washington Funds

**10% Additional
Reduction Detail**
\$120,407



- **Travel**
- **WA/OR Attorney General Fees**
- **Goods & Services**
- **Staff Furloughs and Layoffs**
- **Capital Equipment**
- **Eliminate Agency Vehicle/Insurance**
- **Training & Dues**
- **Facilities/Service/Rental**
- **Janitorial**
- **IT Support Services**
- **Commissioner's Fund**



**With Equal WA Reduction
Required: -\$372,742 out of
\$2.25 million for biennium**



POP 101: Accelerating Our Digital Transformation
ACCESS Database Replacement

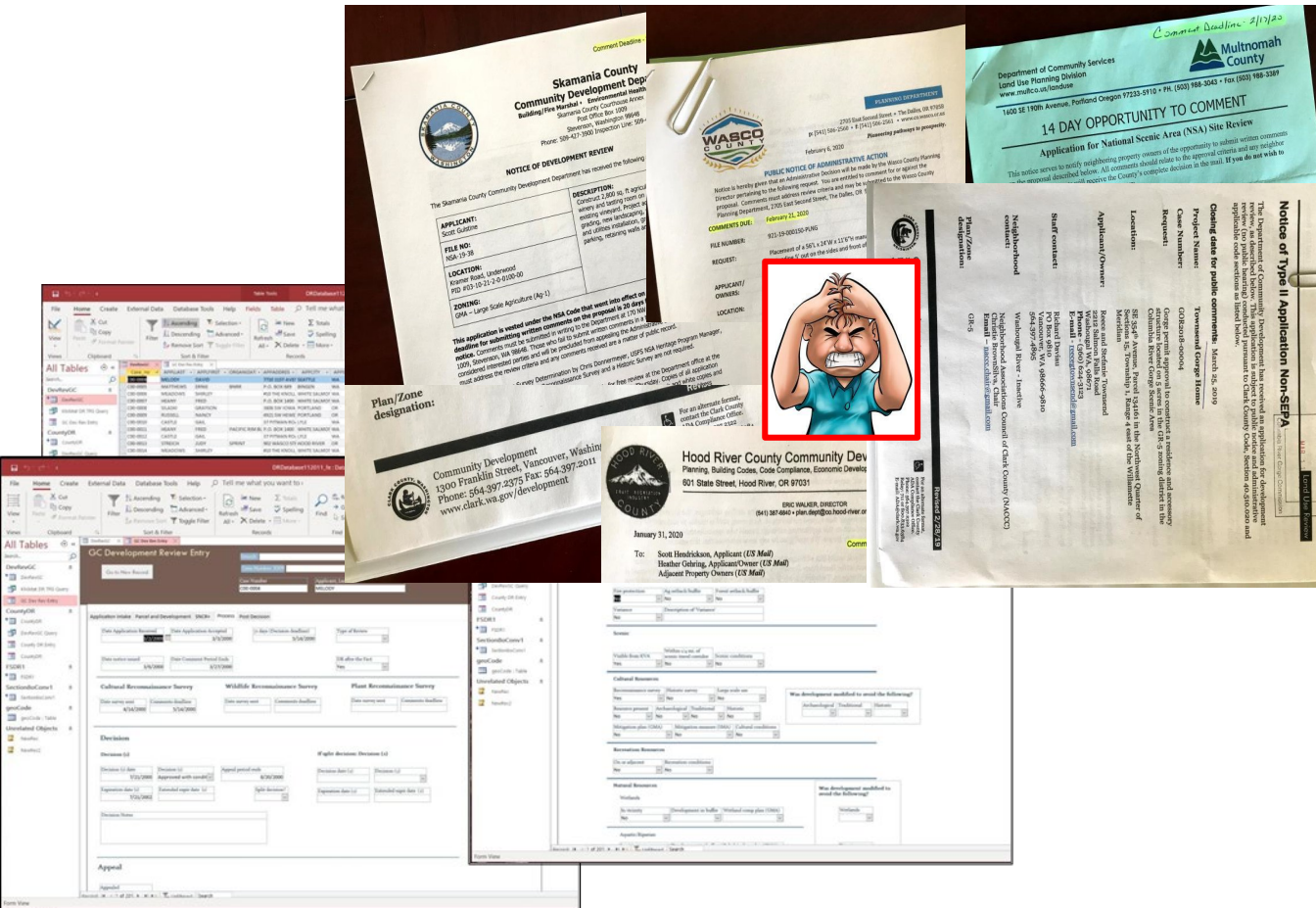
**New Information Management System will improve
CRGC workflow, transparency, accountability, and
public access to critical past and present
information in the National Scenic Area.**

The Problem: Our systems are very outdated



Our system-of-record and paperwork process is inefficient

We are losing staff time coping with complexity of database queries and repetitive manual data entry & physical case retrieval



- Manual data entry is **inefficient**
 - Error prone
 - Wastes time
 - Retrieval hard
- **34 years** of paper files
 - Not indexed
 - Not searchable
 - Not all linked to digital georeferenced information
- County **formats vary**
 - Duplicate data entry/paperwork

OR Enterprise Information Services

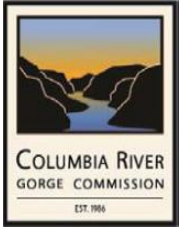
Information/Data
Stewardship

Accountability &
Transparency

Track key
performance
indicators and
trends

Similar Stage-Gate
Processes as WA to
assure agency
benchmarks met



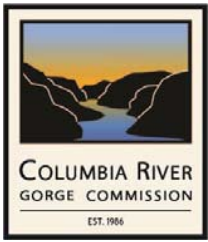


Expected Benefits from POP 101

- ❑ Improved service levels to **Landowners**, provide easy electronic **online applications and website downloads**
- ❑ Speedier collaboration with **counties** to exchange information for important decisions
- ❑ Become nimble, agile and more accurate with our **Public Records Requests**
- ❑ Systematize our **Institutional Knowledge**
- ❑ **Digitize and index archives** to speed up queries & searches
- ❑ **Link** prior applications, appeals and court decisions to track all decisions and promote transparency



“The fantastic beauty of the Columbia River Gorge has beckoned mankind for over 11,000 years..... In ancient times Chinookan and Sahaptan Indians hunted its mountains and fished along the rivers edge...” Senator Evans, 1986



Columbia River Gorge Commission

Questions?

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Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area: stewards of the future since 1986