

**2015-2017 Oregon Legislature – Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources**

**Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC) – Budget Presentation**

**March 12, 2015**

---

### **Agency mission, goals, and historical perspective**

#### ***Agency Mission***

The Columbia River Gorge Commission is a bi-state regional planning agency created by an interstate Gorge Compact (Compact) between Oregon and Washington under the authority of a federal National Scenic Area Act (Act). The Commission is specifically tasked with developing and implementing a long-range comprehensive management plan for the bi-state Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area that fulfills the purposes of the Act:

*“to establish, implement and enforce policies and programs that protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and to support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and allowing economic development consistent with resource protection.”*

The Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC or Commission) is authorized by Congress’ 1986 Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act (P.L. 99-663). The Act provided advance consent for an interstate compact between Washington and Oregon to create the bi-state Gorge Commission. The 1987 Columbia River Gorge Compact (codified at ORS 196.150 and RCW 43.97.015) created the Commission and directed it to “perform all functions and responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of this compact and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act...[Compact Article 1(a)].”

#### ***Agency Goals***

The Gorge Commission has outlined several goals for its work over the prior biennium; the Commission is currently outlining its priorities for the 2015-2017 biennium pending the level of resources invested by the states of Oregon and Washington. Oregon Governor’s budget recommends an 89% increase in funding; Washington’s Governors budget recommends a status quo budget with sufficient funding to cover inflation.

The Commission has adopted the following high-level goals in its request to the states:

***Secure investment in the fulfillment of the National Scenic Area Act and Gorge Compact*** In 2014, the Commission asked for outside help to develop a stable baseline for the states' investment in the Commission's responsibilities in the National Scenic Area. The Center for Public Service at Portland State University and the Evans School Public Affairs at University of Washington conducted a series of assessments outlining the Commission's mandatory responsibilities under the National Scenic Area Act and the Gorge Compact. That baseline was then used to determine the resource and staffing needs for the Commission to fulfill its basic mandatory responsibilities. Please see the following links for a complete set of the Assessment reports:

- Organizational Functional Assessment  
<http://www.gorgecommission.org/client/CRGC%20Org%20Assessment.pdf>
- Legal Assessment  
<http://www.gorgecommission.org/client/Legal%20Assessment.pdf>
- Comparative Assessment  
<http://www.gorgecommission.org/client/CRGC%20Comparative%20Assessment.pdf>
- Synthesis Report  
<http://www.gorgecommission.org/client/CRGC%20Synthesis%20Report.pdf>

***Reduce a growing permit backlog in Klickitat County Washington.***

National Scenic Area development applications in Klickitat County decreased to an annual rate of ten to twelve during the recession. Beginning in 2013, that annual rate increased to approximately 24 and is steadily increasing. As a result, the Commission's backlog of development applications has grown from approximately 12 in 2012 to nearly 40 in 2015. Timeframes for permit reviews have grown commensurately from around 8 months (2012) to nearly 18 months (2014). While permit reviews are not the primary priority for the Commission's functions, they are a critical function in the successful implementation of the National Scenic Area and current timeframes are a growing concern for the Commission, the county, and citizens.

***Settle decades-old uncertainties and disputes over urban area boundary locations***

Historic disagreements over the location of urban area boundary lines resulted in a seven-year series of lawsuits in Klickitat County. At the public urging of the Commission, the parties developed a successful settlement agreement and the Commission convened regional stakeholders to address a long-term solution to resolve the location of the urban area boundaries throughout the National Scenic Area. In 2015-2016, the Commission will finalize legal descriptions for each of the thirteen urban areas in the National Scenic Area.

***Assess potential for collaborative policy re: urban areas and resource protections***

In 2012 the Commission began to enlist the help of Oregon Consensus and the William D. Ruckelshaus Center to identify and assess collaborative solutions to the Commission's public policy responsibilities. The Commission successfully built on those collaborative efforts to complete a series of 2012-2013 collaborative capacity workshop trainings, develop 2013-2015 work plan priorities, and to complete a 2014 administrative assessment of the agency's responsibilities. In 2015-2017, the Commission will begin implementing the recommendations from this assessment, but will need the assistance and action of the states and other stakeholders.

***Build relations with Columbia River Treaty Tribes***

The Commission is committed to work closely with four Columbia River Treaty tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, and the Nez Perce Tribe. The Commission is also formally directed by the federal National Scenic Area Act to work with the four tribes in its planning for the Columbia River Gorge. Once each year since 2008, the Commission and the four Treaty tribes meet in a Government-to-Government capacity to discuss current and upcoming issues. The annual Government-to-Government summits are invaluable in building constructive relationships and addressing important issues of shared interest.

***Keep skilled staff***

The Commission has lost three of its six skilled staff within the past eight months. The resulting 50% staff turnover compounds the agency's 50% staffing reduction as a result of cuts during the recession. In the light of the recent Assessment reports from Portland State University and the University of Washington, the Commission is currently working with just five of an estimated minimum twenty-six staff positions needed to fulfill the agency's responsibilities; less than 12% of the staff needed to do the job.

***Improve commission functions***

The agency assessment reports clearly indicate that no amount of operational efficiency will meet the backlog of mandatory and critical agency functions. The Commission's current staff are spread thin to the point that the efforts required to achieve any marginal efficiencies would far outweigh the benefits of those efficiencies.

**Program Summary**

See Governor's Recommended Budget

**Agency organizational information**

See Governor's Recommended Budget

**Overview of agency performance and outcome measures, how measures are used by the agency, and progress toward achieving performance goals**

See Governor's Recommended Budget

**Major budget drivers and environmental factors**

***Budget Drivers***

Long range regional planning

Under the National Scenic Area Act, the Commission required to complete a comprehensive update to the management plan for the National Scenic Area once every five to ten years. The Commission had to cut short its first plan review in 2004 and has no resources to begin the next (now overdue) review. The Commission has never had the resources to complete that comprehensive update in 23 years. Under the terms of the federal Act, the Commission should have begun the initial assessment and analysis of the plan in 2014. Most of the plan and the data underpinning Gorge policies is now 24 years old and is out of date for 2015 conditions.

In 2013, the region and the Commission identified urgent needs for a regional Recreation Assessment and an Urban Area Policy Assessment. Both assessments would provide a baseline for planning the future of the National Scenic Area, consistent with the federal Act. Due to limited bi-state funding, the Commission was only able to complete one portion of the urban area vision – an initial series of interviews with interested parties to help the Commission determine whether and how to proceed with a collaborative urban area policy. While the interviews provide a good start, the Commission will need additional resources to develop a long-range policy for the future of the Gorge’s urban communities.

The Commission is also responsible to provide regional convening and coordination for local, state and federal agencies, tribes, communities and citizens (see Environmental Factors below). The Commission currently does not have the staff or funding to adequately provide regional convening, including convening functions to support and ensure that other agencies’ project comply with the National Scenic Area Act.

Current state agency projects that require b-state coordination with the Commission include:

- The Oregon Department of Transportation’s (ODOT) restoration of the Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH). The Historic Highway has received little if any regional bi-state planning.
- The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department’s update of its Gorge Parks Master Plan.
- Washington Parks and Recreation Department’s investment in new parks and facilities in Skamania and Klickitat Counties, including the recently opened Columbia Hills State Park.
- ODOT regional transportation planning, including the designation of Hood River County within an Area Commission on Transportation without providing National Scenic Area bi-state coordination with the Gorge Commission and other bi-state jurisdictions in the National Scenic Area.
- WSDOT regional transportation planning requiring National Scenic Area bi-state coordination with the Gorge Commission and other bi-state jurisdictions in the National Scenic Area.
- USFS planning for the potential relocation of the Multnomah Falls parking area without the benefit of a coordinated comprehensive regional recreation and transportation plan for the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area.
- Regional planning for infrastructure, economic development and land use capacity for Gorge Cities, Counties, Ports;
- Convening needed regional discussions with states, communities, agencies, tribes, railroads, and citizens about the future of rail transportation through the National Scenic Area;
- Convening needed discussions of policies to improve forest health and minimize wildfire risks;
- Building bi-state awareness and leadership among Oregon and Washington legislators; and
- More.

***Budget Needs and Requests in Response to Budget Drivers***

- 1.0 FTE Principal Planner
  - And funding to address backlog of Long Range Planning now 11 to 24 years overdue
- 2.0 FTE Development Review Specialists
  - Development Permitting – 37 in the queue, with an 18 to 24-month backlog
- 1.0 FTE Resource Specialist (Scenic, Natural, Cultural, Recreation, Economic)
- Funding for Administrative Staff position – position authorized, budget not allocated
  - Related to recessionary staffing cutbacks
- Funding for long-range planning updates

## **Environmental Factors**

Like other public agencies, the Gorge Commission faces a dynamic geographical and political landscape. Some of the Commission's most relevant environmental factors are outlined below.

In 2014-2015, the Commission endured a 50% staff turnover. That turnover follows several years of staff changes:

- 2008 = 10.5 FTE overall, 4.5 FTE Planning staff
- 2013 = 5.6 FTE overall, 1.6 FTE Planning staff
- 2014 = 5.0 FTE overall, 1.0 FTE Planning staff
  - Includes 100% turnover in Planning staff
- 2014 = agency 50% staff turnover
  - During the 2015 fiscal year, the Commission lost two senior planners and its executive director to career transitions. This represents the loss of 22 years of institutional expertise and a 50% staff turnover within an 8-month period.

The Commission's development permitting backlog has grown steadily as the recession recedes. Following are the number of applications received or anticipated for each of the past four years. Staffing levels have not increased and planning staff has turned over 100%:

- 2012 = 12
- 2013 = 21 (nearly 100% increase from 2012)
- 2014 = 42 (more than 300% increase from 2012)
- 2015 = 50-60 (estimated 400 to 500% increase from 2012)

In February 2015, Klickitat County signed an historic Agreement with the Commission that will enable the County to provide a skilled planner on a part-time basis to assist the Commission with development reviews. The agreement provides much-needed staffing assistance and is importantly symbolic – the first of its kind in more than twenty-eight years. The agreement marks an important cultural shift at the Commission and in the Gorge region. The Commission's agreement with Klickitat County marks a regional shift toward collaborative partnerships and shared local stewardship of the Gorge.

The Commission was asked in 2013 to assist Gorge Ports with planning and investment in critical regional Infrastructure, including requests for assistance with the long-term functions, maintenance and operations of the Bridge of the Gods in Cascade Locks and Stevenson, and the Hood River Bridge between Hood River and White Salmon/Bingen.

In 2014, the Commission adopted a resolution and convened regional discussions with both governors offices, tribes, and both the Union Pacific Rail Road and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to assess risks and to constructively, proactively address coal and oil transport in the Gorge. Emerging challenges, including fossil fuel transport, are mentioned among the Commission's resource needs in the 2015-2017 Governor's Recommended Budget.

Also in 2014, the Commission helped to convene a regional discussion panel with Washington Governor Jay Inslee on the health of Gorge forests and forestlands in the face of pervasive drought conditions and invasive species such as the California fivespined ips beetle and the pine bark beetle. Invasive beetles have decimated

the ponderosa pine population on both sides of the Columbia River in the Gorge, creating unsightly visual impacts, economic losses and increased wildfire risks.

The Gorge faces increasing threats from wildfire.

- Anticipated Northwest population growth is anticipated to increased demands on Gorge resources, many of which are already at or over capacity.
- Regional recreation and tourism demand continue to increase, including 3-5% increases in annual demand through the recession.
- The Commission is now between eleven and twenty three years overdue to begin a comprehensive update to its plan for the National Scenic Area. That fact was recently underscored by the Assessment reports from Portland State University and the University of Washington that concluded the Commission has never had adequate resources from the states to do its job as the regional planning agency for the National Scenic Area.
- The US Forest Service (USFS) has experienced chronic federal budget reductions that now leave even the most directly responsible of federal agencies unable to meet basic demands for planning and management of lands and facilities in the Gorge.

### **Budget Issues**

Administrative assessment reports from the Center for Public Service at Portland State University and the Evans School Public Affairs at the University of Washington highlighted several weaknesses in the budgeting and oversight functions of the bi-state relationship with the Gorge Commission.

Among the reports' most telling findings:

- The Commission has never had adequate resources to do its job;
- The Commission currently has only about 20% of the staff needed to implement the federal and bi-state requirements of the Act and Compact.
- The Commission faces challenges with bi-state cooperation and coordination, especially in the face of competing agencies' priorities
- The Commission faces unique complexities in its responsibilities to implement the Act and Compact; and
- The Commission faces unnecessary administrative redundancy due to the states' competing requirements for reporting, measurement and fiscal management.

### **Program Changes**

The Commission has undergone several program changes within the past six years.

- 2012 Collaborative Engagement Assessment
  - o Priorities
    - Recreation Assessment and Planning
    - Urban Area Policy Assessment
    - Vital Signs Indicators Program
    - *Tribal Relations*
- 2014 Administrative Assessment
  - o 80% shortfall → difficult priority tradeoffs
  - o Challenge meeting basic agency functions
  - o Complex, one-of-a-kind law

**Specific actions the agency has taken or plans to take to contain costs and improve programs and service**

See discussions below re: Oregon and Washington house bills proposing a bi-state task force to review the Commission's relationship with the states, the states' relationship with the Commission and the states' relationships with one another.

**Major budget information**

Current planning caseloads have increased approximately 100% within the past year, and increased 300% within the past biennium. The Commission is also 23 years behind in fundamental long range planning updates for the National Scenic Area and is facing significant impacts from population growth, second-home and vacation home demands, changing climate and skyrocketing recreation demands.

**Summary of proposed legislation affecting agency**

Washington House Bill 1453 (HB 1453) was introduced by local Washington House member Representatives Liz Pike, Sharon Wylie, Dean Takko and Brian Vick, to provide temporary staffing to assist the Commission with its review of a growing backlog of development permits. The bill would provide 2.0 FTE skilled planners hired by the Commission to focus expressly on current planning permit reviews for applications in Klickitat County Washington. The bill also commits the agency to report to the Washington legislature every six months for the duration of the 2015-2017 biennium, and to improve the Commission's development permitting processes. Funding for the bill would be provided by the State of Washington and would be eligible for matching investment from the State of Oregon.

Oregon HB 2039 and Washington HB 1954 are companion bills introduced respectively by Oregon Representative John Huffman and Washington Representative Liz Pike. The bills would create an Oregon Task Force and a Washington Task Force, specifically tasked with working with the Commission to assess the administrative relationships and functions of the states and the Commission, and to assess the relative effectiveness of the Interstate Compact and its ability to implement the purposes of the National Scenic Area Act. The Commission endorsed the companion bills with recommendations for strengthening the bills and improving the effectiveness of the bi-state task force.

**Discussion of 10% reduction options and long-term vacancies (based on the most recent quarterly report)**

The Commission operates at a 75% overall budget shortfall, including an 80% staffing shortfall<sup>1</sup>. Any reduction to Gorge Commission resources threatens the existence of the agency. Under those severe budget constraints, the Commission has selected the activities least likely to devastate vital agency functions, including staff and Commission travel, and attorney general services. The Commission currently has a partial vacancy in one of its core planning positions due to a staff turnover; that position will be filled immediately in the 2015-2017 biennium to meet a growing backlog of planning and permit services demands.

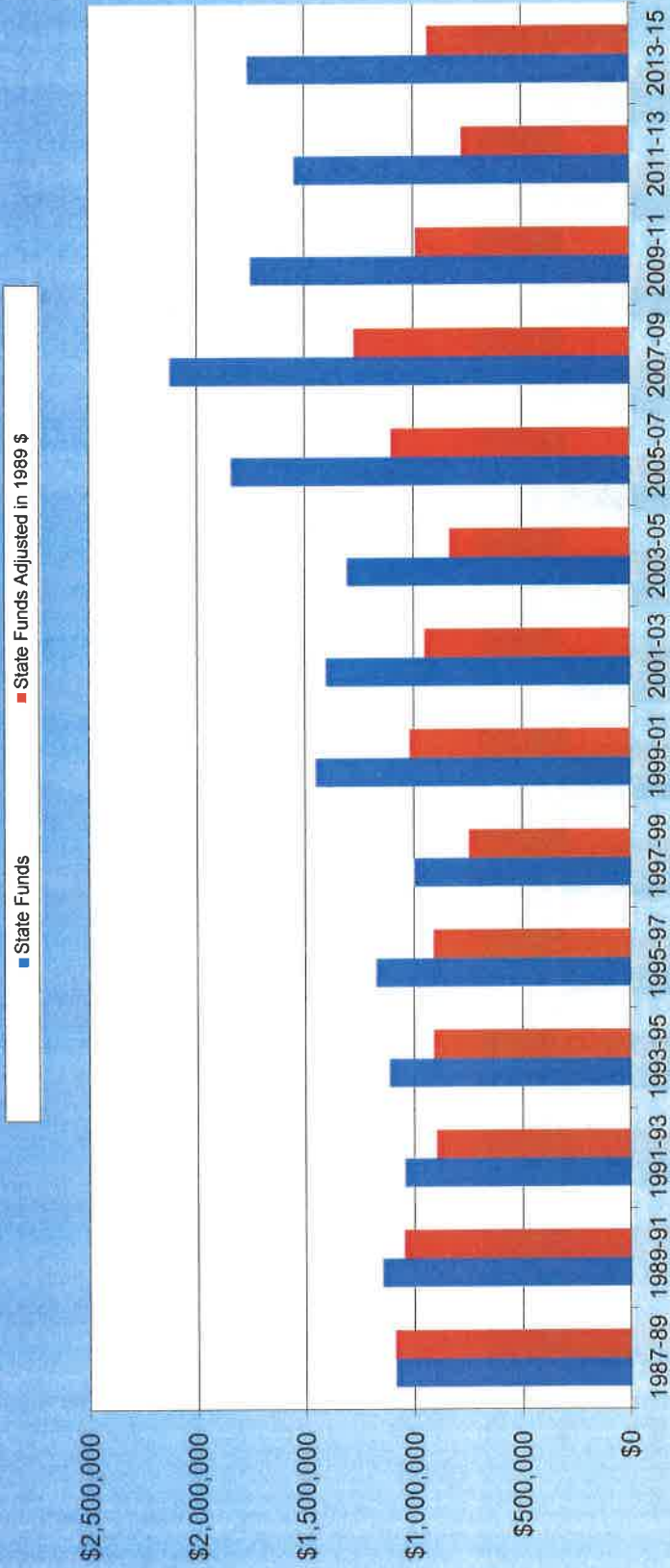
---

<sup>1</sup> See 2014 Administrative Assessment reports prepared by the Center for Public Service at Portland State University's Hatfield School of Governance and the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington. Reports are available at the agency's website: [www.gorgecommission.org](http://www.gorgecommission.org)



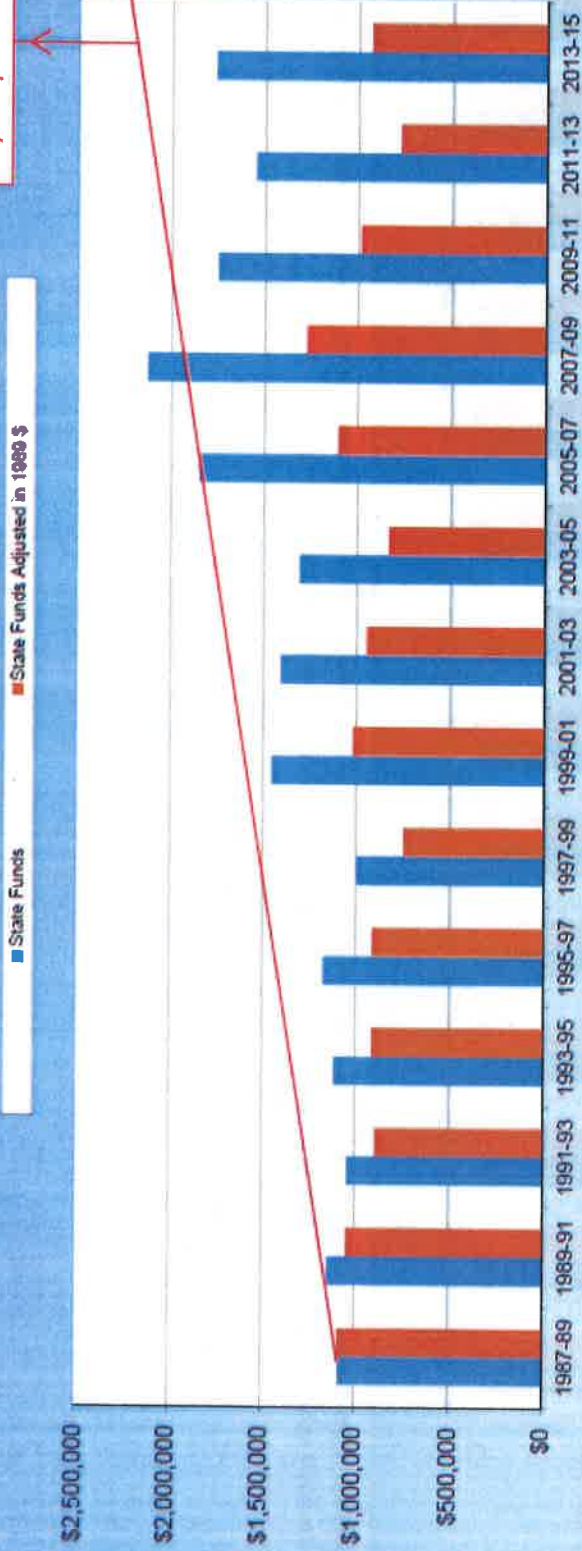


## Gorge Commission Budget Comparison Over Time

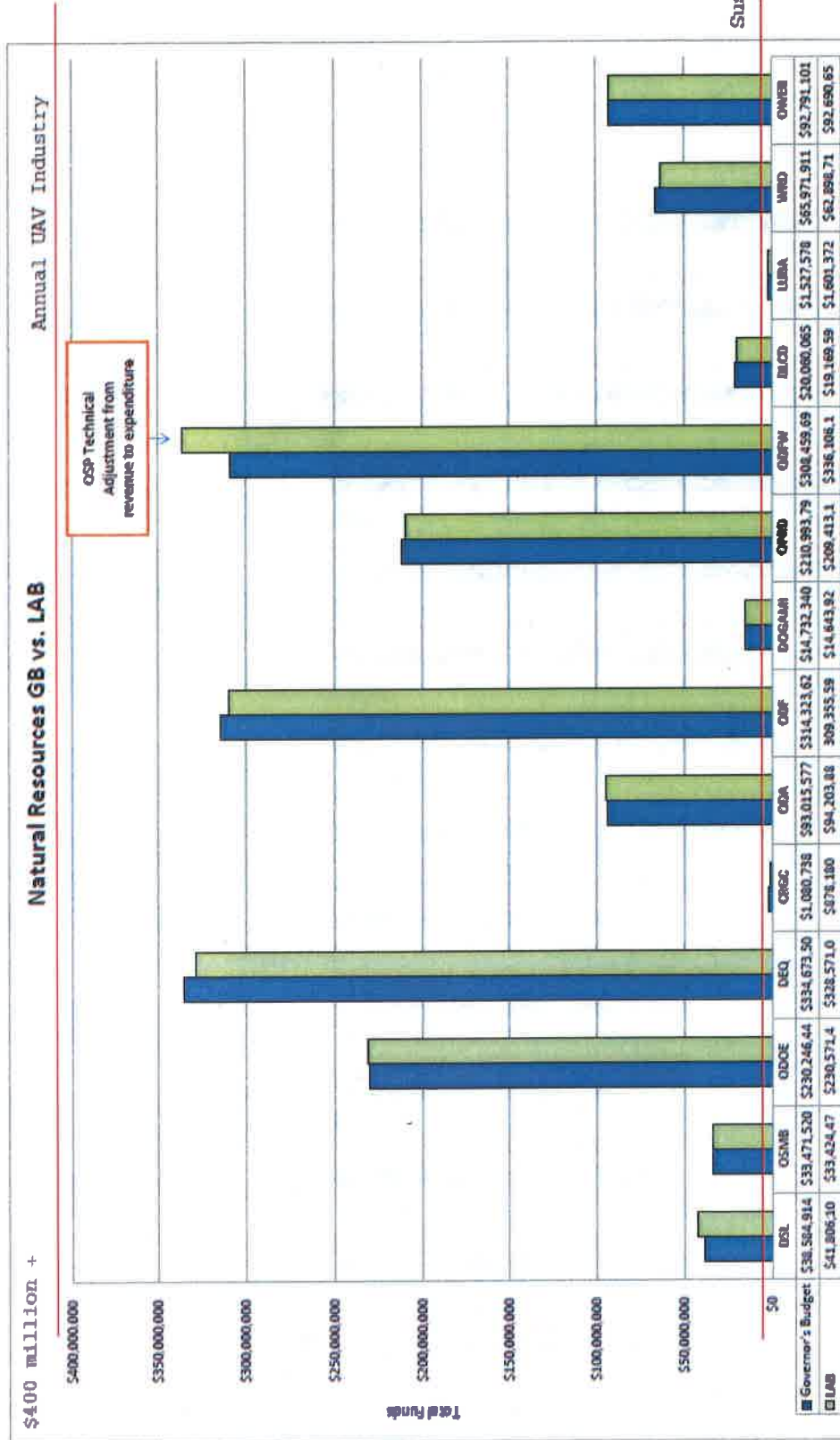


*This graph reflects total funds appropriated to the Commission. Due to differences in the states' budgeting (Oregon and Washington) and the terms of the bi-state compact, actual funds available to the Agency were less than this total amount.*

### Gorge Commission Budget Comparison Over Time



1986 budget adjusted for inflation in 2014: \$2,228,147.

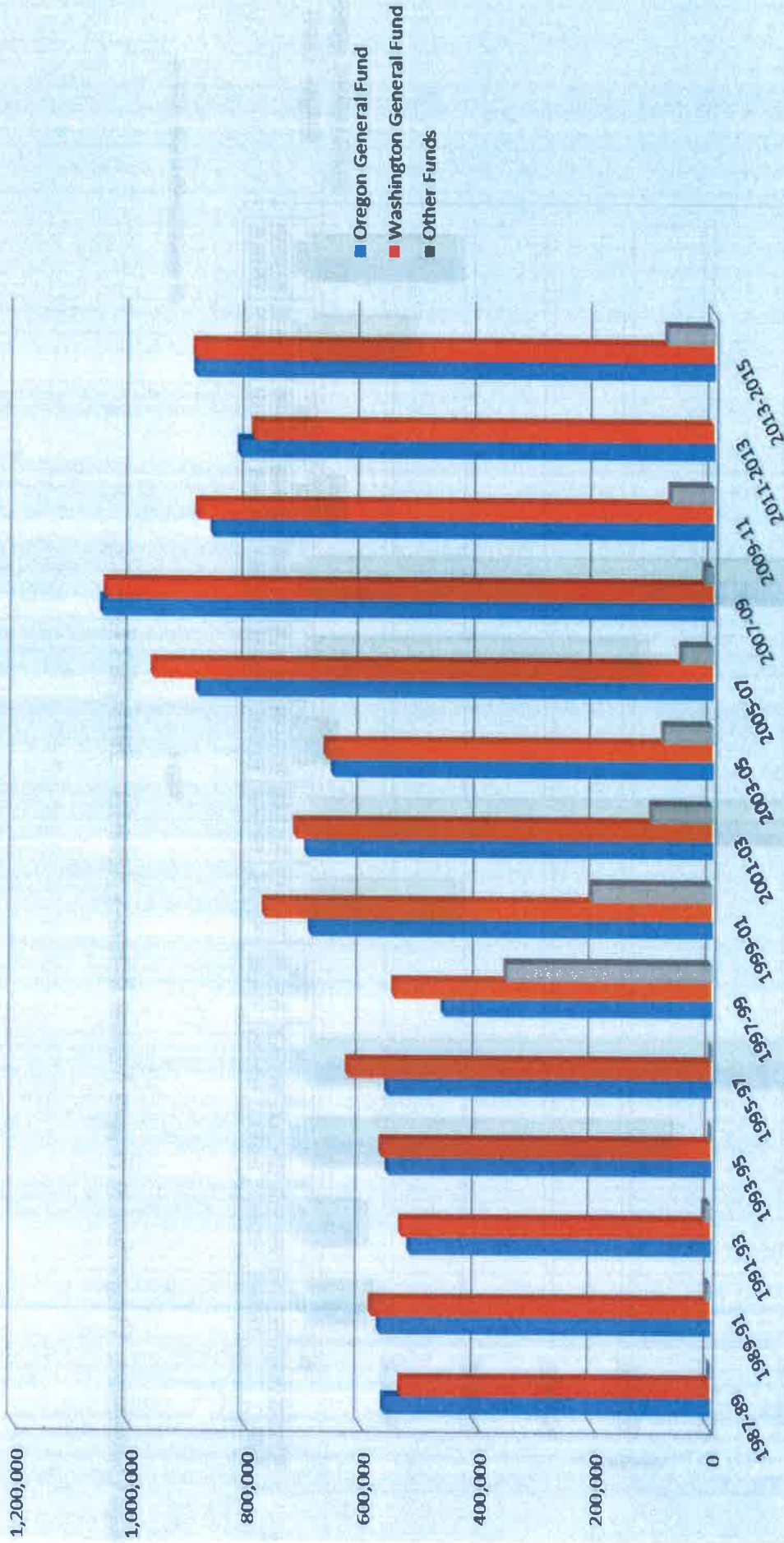


OSP Technical Adjustment from revenue to expenditure

**Gorge Commission: Comparison to Oregon Natural Resource Agencies – 2013-2015 LAB**



# Columbia River Gorge Commission Fund Sources





Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association  
PO Box 1037  
Stevenson, Washington 98648

June 30, 2014

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee:

We are writing to encourage your favorable consideration of the Gorge Commission's incoming funding request. The Commission's mission as detailed in its mission statement is "to establish, implement and enforce policies and programs that protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and to support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and allowing economic development consistent with resource protection." The Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association shares the mission of developing recreational resources, and has a great interest in bolstering the region's significant tourism and recreation economy.

In operation since 1990, CRGVA continues to work on regional marketing of the Columbia Gorge as a destination for tourists. The Gorge's tourism industry is adding jobs and infusing capital into the communities of the region. It is one of the top five industries in the Gorge, representing roughly 4,000 local jobs or 12% of total covered employment (*source: Mid Columbia Economic Development District report on Regional Industry Trends, 2010*). These indicators show that a coordinated effort to produce a high level, comprehensive tourism advocacy strategy would be an impactful investment in industry growth.

Acknowledging the shared goal of tourism economy development, CRGVA approached the Gorge Commission for help in this effort and received enthusiastic response. We hope that you lend full support to the Gorge Commission's funding request so that the Commission can participate fully in activities that forward their mission and bolster our economy.

Regards,

The Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association Board of Directors

**Casey Roeder**  
Skamania County Chamber of Commerce

**Tamara Kaufman**  
Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce

**Avery Pickard**  
Hood River County Chamber of Commerce

**Noni Hughes**  
Skamania Lodge

**Susan Buce**  
Columbia Gorge Discovery Center

**Carol Bausch**

**Renee Tkach**  
Friends of the Gorge

**Leroy Anderson**  
Timberlake Campground

**Kelly Blanchard**  
Morning Song Acres B&B

**Lisa Farquharson**  
The Dalles Area Chamber  
Of Commerce

**Earlene Sullivan**  
Greater Goldendale Area  
Chamber of Commerce

**Molly Olson**  
Portland Spirit / Columbia  
Gorge Sternwheeler

Cc: Columbia River Gorge Commission

Office of Governor John Kitzhaber



# MT ADAMS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*Proudly Serving All The Communities of Western Klickitat County*

PO Box 449 White Salmon, Washington 98672 (509)493-3630  
info@mtadamschamber.com • www.mtadamschamber.com

June 26, 2014

Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Inslee,

The Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce represents approximately 200 businesses in western Klickitat and eastern Skamania counties in Washington state, with membership extending throughout the five counties of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Our individual communities find tremendous value in working together to accomplish projects that benefit the entire region.

One such project is a comprehensive marketing and recreational infrastructure plan that is being proposed by the regional executive directors of the Chambers of Commerce in the Gorge. No single community in the region has the financial means to launch a plan of this magnitude, but by working together with regional agencies we believe we have a unique opportunity to promote the Columbia River Gorge throughout the US and internationally thus drawing visitors to the area to promote responsible and sustainable tourism. The directors have approached the Columbia River Gorge Commission to be a potential partner in this effort. To be an effective partner, the Gorge Commission will require enough operating funding to support this project.

The Gorge Commission is funded through equal distributions from Washington and Oregon as part of the bi-state compact of 1986, when the Columbia River Gorge was declared a National Scenic Area. At that time the Gorge Commission was charged with two responsibilities 1) 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 the existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph 1 (sections 544 and 544p of this title).

---

Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)(6) non-profit membership organization that supports business members of western Klickitat County and the surrounding Columbia River Gorge.

# MT ADAMS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*Proudly Serving All The Communities of Western Klickitat County*

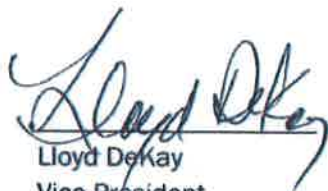
PO Box 449 White Salmon, Washington 98672 (509)493-3630  
info@mtadamschamber.com • www.mtadamschamber.com

This project is a natural fit with both responsibilities and we are writing today to ask you to support your communities in the Gorge regions of Washington and Oregon by granting sufficient operating budget for the Gorge Commission to participate in the development of this very important comprehensive regional marketing and recreational infrastructure plan.

Sincerely,



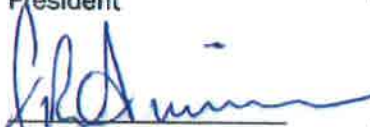
Cheryl Park  
President



Lloyd DeKay  
Vice-President



Craig Ferguson  
Treasurer



Fred Simonson  
Secretary



David Dierck  
Board Member



Jaco Klinkenberg  
Board Member



Christine Ellenberger  
Board Member



Maya Hooper  
Board Member



Jeanne Gallagher  
Board Member



Tamara Kaufman  
Executive Director

CC: John Kitzhaber, Governor of the State of Oregon  
Darren Nichols, Executive Director, Columbia River Gorge Commission  
Washington/Oregon Leaders of the House & Senate  
Washington/Oregon Local Gorge Area Legislators of the House & Senate

Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce is a 501(c)(6) non-profit membership organization that supports business members of western Klickitat County and the surrounding Columbia River Gorge.





July 1, 2014

Jim Middaugh, Chair  
Columbia River Gorge Commission  
PO Box 730  
White Salmon, WA 98672

Darren Nichols, Executive Director  
Columbia River Gorge Commission  
PO Box 730  
White Salmon, WA 98672

**Subject: Support for a regional natural resource specialist position at the Gorge Commission**

Greetings Chair Middaugh and Mr. Nichols,

On behalf of the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, I am writing to express support for the Columbia River Gorge Commission's budget to fund additional professional staff necessary to implement the National Scenic Area Act and the regional resource stewardship it mandates. In particular, there is a significant need for a regional natural resource specialist, a resource analyst and a skilled GIS technician to coordinate with natural resource protection agencies and others in response to forest health and wildfire risks in the Gorge. These positions are needed to provide a source of technical assistance for staff and provide clear, consistent and timely information to Gorge communities and the general public.

Increased wildfire concerns and recent damage from the California five-spined ips beetle infestations are just two examples of how changes in the regional landscape impact the people who live, work and recreate in the Gorge. These two issues alone have costly impacts and have triggered the need for agencies to work together proactively as a region. The Washington State Department of Natural Resources and the Oregon Department of Forestry have recently begun a regional forest health project in the Gorge and these additional staffing resources would allow the Gorge Commission to take a more active role coordinating stewardship activities in the Gorge.

Sincerely,

Chuck Hersey  
Forest Health Specialist  
Washington State Department of Natural Resources  
1111 Washington St SE, MS 47037  
Olympia, WA 98534-7037  
360-902-1045 chuck.hersey@dnr.wa.gov





**ORCHARD**

**VIEW FARMS, INC.**

*Cherry Growers and Packers*

**Governor John Kitzhaber**

**900 Court Street NE, 160**

**Salem, OR 97301**

**Dear Governor,**

**Barbara and I encourage you to increase Oregon's financial support for the Columbia River Gorge Commission. Barbara served on the original Columbia River Gorge Commission. We have 800 acres of cherry orchards, a large cherry packing and cold storage facility, and extensive worker housing facilities within the Columbia Gorge National Scenic area. We have found the commission very amenable to work with as we upgraded and added to our fruit packing and working housing facilities.**

**The Columbia River Gorge commission has been vital the effort to conserve the natural wonders of the gorge; while maintaining our economic base and managing residential and business building outside the urban growth boundaries. The commission has supported the development of our recreation resources.**

**Working with various interest groups from environmental organizations to business and recreation interests, Native American Tribes, and natural resource interests such as forestry and agriculture is not an easy task. The gorge commission has taken a balanced and fair approach to working with all of these interests.**

**The gorge commission is an important player in maintaining the special place we call the Columbia River Gorge. Generations to come will be the beneficiaries of such work.**

**Sincerely**

*Bob Bailey Barbara Bailey*

**Bob and Barbara Bailey**

**Orchard View Farms Inc.**

**3325 Dry Hollow Lane**

**The Dalles, OR 97058**

P. O. Box 1398 ■ 4055 Skyline Road  
The Dalles, Oregon 97058  
(541) 298-4496 ■ Fax (541) 298-1808  
cherries@orchardviewfarms.com



**View Fresh**

\*Modified Atmosphere Packing Technology\*



**Keith A. Mobley**

*Law Office*

E-Mail: [mobley@ortelco.net](mailto:mobley@ortelco.net)

*By Appointment Only*

P.O. Box 537  
Dufur, OR 97021

Office (541) 993-2086

Fax (888) 467-7850

July 18, 2014

Governor John Kitzhaber  
160 State Capitol  
900 Court Street  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: Columbia River Gorge Commission Funding

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

I write in support of the funding proposal being made by the Gorge Commission.

The Commission has been sufficiently tested and has proven its worth in the preservation and management of one of Oregon, Washington, and the nation's greatest natural and scenic resources.

Budget reductions have been the pattern for too long. The Commission has urgent work to do that can only be done with people, and the number of people who are available to do the work has been following the budget down.

Political resistance to the work of the Commission is, in my estimation, low. If you can find an hour, please take a look at the story told by OPB's Oregon Field Guide: <http://www.opb.org/television/programs/ofg/segment/columbia-gorge-the-fight-for-paradise/>

In that hour, you will see some of the strongest and most vocal protagonists in the "fight for paradise." It has been awhile since I viewed it, but my impression was that something close to peace has come to this great area, along with the appreciation for the paradise we are privileged to share.

Others will provide the detail regarding tasks that must soon be undertaken and completed; my purpose is to support their efforts and urge you to do likewise.

Sincerely,



Keith A. Mobley





# FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

## **Columbia River Gorge Commission budget request FY 2015-2017**

**By Michael Lang, Conservation Director**

**July 8, 2014**

**Budget Purpose:** To provide funding necessary for the Columbia River Gorge Commission to carry out its duties to ensure the protection and enhancement of scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources and to encourage growth to occur within the existing boundaries of the thirteen urban areas within the National Scenic Area.

### **Base Budget Priorities**

1. Providing good customer service, including reviewing land use applications and issuing decisions on a timely basis.
2. Technical assistance to the counties on implementing scenic area land use ordinances.
3. Monitoring land uses, development patterns, resource impacts, county land use decisions state and federal agency permitting to ensure consistency with the Management Plan and the NSA Act. This includes projects that would result in the transportation of coal or oil through the Columbia River Gorge or increased pollution within the Gorge.
4. Enforcement: Pursuing and resolving violations in Klickitat County and assisting counties with enforcement. Enforce resource protection standards and open space protections.
5. Encouraging public involvement and participation in all commission matters.
6. Implement Oregon Court of Appeals order requiring the Commission to ensure protection of natural and cultural resources from adverse effects.

### **Additional Funding**

**Management Plan Review:** Funding for the Gorge Commission to update resource inventories, land use patterns and resume work on vital sign indicators. This provides the factual basis for the Commission to review the Management Plan to see if it should be revised. Funding should also be provided for public involvement.

**Administration:** Additional funding for the Commission to meet its administrative duties.

**Recreation:** The Gorge Commission should support implementation of the Act and Management Plan and encourage, not impede, efforts to fulfill Management Plan directives to enhance recreation resources, support more dispersed recreation opportunities, support linking recreation sites and urban areas with trails, support a trail system around the Gorge, support public transportation to recreation sites, and additional access sites to the Columbia River. The Commission should partner with recreation groups and other agencies to implement the Management Plan, carry out the recreation development plan and enhance recreation opportunities.

**Urban areas:** Funding to develop policies and rules that lead to maximum efficiencies of land uses within and on the boundary of existing urban areas. Facilitate smart growth and livable communities with reduced carbon emissions within the existing boundaries of Gorge urban areas. Facilitate joint planning between communities.





---

July 7, 2014

To: Columbia Gorge Commissioners

From: Port of Cascade Locks

Dear Commissioners:

Since the inception of the National Scenic Area in the late 1980's, many of the people and communities in the Scenic Area have begun to understand and appreciate the potential benefits of the National Scenic Area designation and the unique governance structure in the Gorge region. Based on the work we have all done over the past few years, it is time for the Gorge Commission, and all of its local and state partners, to seek significantly enhanced funding and programmatic improvements so we can realize the full potential of the Scenic Area Act. **The Gorge Commissions cooperation, understanding and willingness to assist have been noticed, and are greatly appreciated by all of us.** It is now time for us all to work together to take everyone to the next level in the Gorge.

As a direct result of this new found cooperation and partnership, we have seen work begin on pressing waste water, public safety and education issues in our communities through the Three Cities Initiative. Just this past year, we called upon the Gorge Commission and its staff to assist the Port with the highly successful effort to return the BOG to 80,000 pounds. We know that were it not for the Commission and its staff, we would not have been successful and more importantly, the local economy would have been permanently injured. Thanks to the Gorge Commission and its staff we were able to secure \$1.4 million to repair the BOG and the project "fast tracked" and completed within 6 months and not four years. This partnership brought great relief to people and local economies as far away as the Yakima Valley.

Although there were not any safety issues with the BOG, the short lived weight limitation annual impact would have affected 390 full time and part time jobs and \$72.3 million in sales if the limitation would have lasted a full year. Even the short lived weight limitation affected 5-10% of the Skamania County economy alone during the six months of the limitation. Annually the BOG carries over 1.5 million vehicles and about \$37 million in goods. By comparison, the Hood River Bridge carries over 3 million vehicles and almost \$75 million in goods. These two publicly owned bridges are absolutely vital to people and communities in this region. (Source: Bridge of the Gods 8 Ton Weight Restriction Economic Analysis by Bruce Sorte, OSU Community Economist.)

region. Wood products and tourism being two immediate examples. The efficient movement of many of these goods, services and people rely heavily on the two Port owned bridges in the Scenic Area. The ability to recruit businesses that can further strengthen those clusters also relies on the bridges. Cascade Locks is now one of the top 5 sailing communities in the nation and is host to over 50 sailing events annually. People come from all over the world to sail at Cascade Locks and also stop to enjoy Hood River, Stevenson, WA. As well as the rest of the Gorge.

The regional economy has transitioned over the last 30 years from a natural resources based manufacturing economy to one that has strong manufacturing sectors yet relies to an ever increasing extent on tourism, which has only partially offset the losses experienced by the wood products and construction industry. To this day Cascade Locks has a 16% unemployment rate.

**We feel it is time to fully recognize that the people (some 70,000) who live in the Gorge and the communities who are struggling to survive, need the Gorge Commission staff and services provided at a new level that would help everyone to enjoy the benefits of living in the National Scenic Area, while helping us fulfill the responsibilities of living in the area. It is our opinion that now is the time for the Gorge Commission to stand up, with our support, and seek the level of funding that will help us all. We need full implementation of the Act.**

Unlike past years, where many of us stood opposed to the Act and the limitations we felt were imposed, we now see a real value and want the Gorge Commission to be fully functional so that the people and communities in the Gorge can fully feel the benefits. We have yet to enjoy that status, but see, by your actions, a much brighter future for all as we work together.

The National Scenic Area is a wonderful place to live, play and enjoy. We have yet to fully experience the benefits of helping to host the Scenic Area, but now is the time to seek full support so that we may all enjoy our future.

There are a number of issues that the people and communities in the Gorge need the Gorge Commission to do for us:

1. Reach a point where **all planning requests are administered and handled within a reasonable time frame** so as to not stall necessary improvements and job enhancement.
2. **Gorge communities and the states need the Gorge Commission to help focus on the entire Gorge in creating a National Scenic Area transportation plan and strategy.** In Cascade Locks alone, while working hard to create 110 new jobs over the next 2 years, we know there are major transportation issues that transcend our community and impact other communities and indeed the entire Gorge. For the region to be successful requires the Gorge Commission to step up and lead the effort with all of us as partners. **We think the Commission can be invaluable in getting both States to help enhance transportation within the Gorge. A partnership Tiger Grant, getting the states to set**

**aside a portion of federal transportation dollars for the Gorge and other ideas can be more effectively pursued with Gorge Commission leadership and action. .** (Currently the federal government allocates millions of transportation dollars to the states with 15% identified for "other".)

3. The Pacific Crest Trail brings hikers to Cascade Locks. A comprehensive transportation plan within the Scenic Area could assist many small communities deal with this issue. **And, as we see ODOT moving forward to bring more bicyclers and tourists to the region, we all need to be planning how this works, fits together and enhances the local economy and livability of the Gorge and the local communities.**
4. **Modify your management plan to include the Bridge of the Gods.** This historic Gorge resource should be a part of the Gorge Management Plan and fully recognized as an interstate regional transportation resource. Annually, the Bridge of the Gods carries more than 1.5 million vehicles and \$37 million in goods and services to support the local and regional economy. The economic impacts of the bridge are felt all the way to the Yakima Valley. Plus, the BOG and the Hood River Bridge along with the bridge in The Dalles, serve as major access and enjoyment resources to millions of tourists enjoying the Scenic Area.
5. We need the assistance of the Gorge Commission to work with the local communities to make sure we do not end up with a strictly tourist economy. **We must work for a multi-faceted economy that provides for manufacturing, tourism, and other economic and job creating enhancements.** A singular tourism economy will mean that the Gorge and its citizens have limited economic health while limiting our ability to steward Gorge resources. We need the Gorge Commission to take the lead working with us on this issue.

In summary, **we need the Gorge Commission to be fully funded to be able to deliver the full implementation of the Act so that we may all enjoy the benefits of this wonderful place.** We hope the Gorge Commission will become a full partner with the National Scenic Area community to fully implement the Act and to create the kind of future we all wanted!! Anything short of full funding and commitment by the states should make us want to discuss whether or not we even want to continue the Scenic Area. If we are going to be successful, we will need more than we have experienced.

We thank you for your past assistance and look forward to a stronger working relationship geared and focused on full implementation of the Scenic Area Act. **We stand ready to assist you and need your leadership and assistance.**

Sincerely,

Jess Groves  
President  
Cascade Locks Board of Port Commissioners





**CITY of THE DALLES**

**313 COURT STREET  
THE DALLES, OREGON 97058**

(541) 296-5481  
FAX (541) 296-6906

August 22, 2014

Office of the Governor  
John Kitzhaber, Governor  
State Capitol Bldg.  
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254  
Salem, OR 97301-4047

RE: Columbia River Gorge Commission Budget Request

Honorable Governor Kitzhaber,

The Dalles City Council at the July 28, 2014 meeting voted unanimously in support of the Gorge Commissions budget request and directed staff to prepare a letter of support to be sent to you.

The City of The Dalles is located in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. This location is a great blessing to the quality of life of our residents. It also brings with it some unique challenges related to our local economy and area residents ability to utilize their property.

The two purposes of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Act are; 1) preserving its unique natural resources and beauty, and 2) strengthen the economy of the communities located in the National Scenic Area.

An essential partner in meeting these tasks and their related opportunities and goals is the Columbia River Gorge Commission. This bi-state commission relies on the States of Oregon and Washington for their funding. In recent years, as the economy has struggled funds have been limited to allow the Gorge Commission to meet its tasks. This in turn has a negative impact on residents and cities located within the scenic area boundaries.

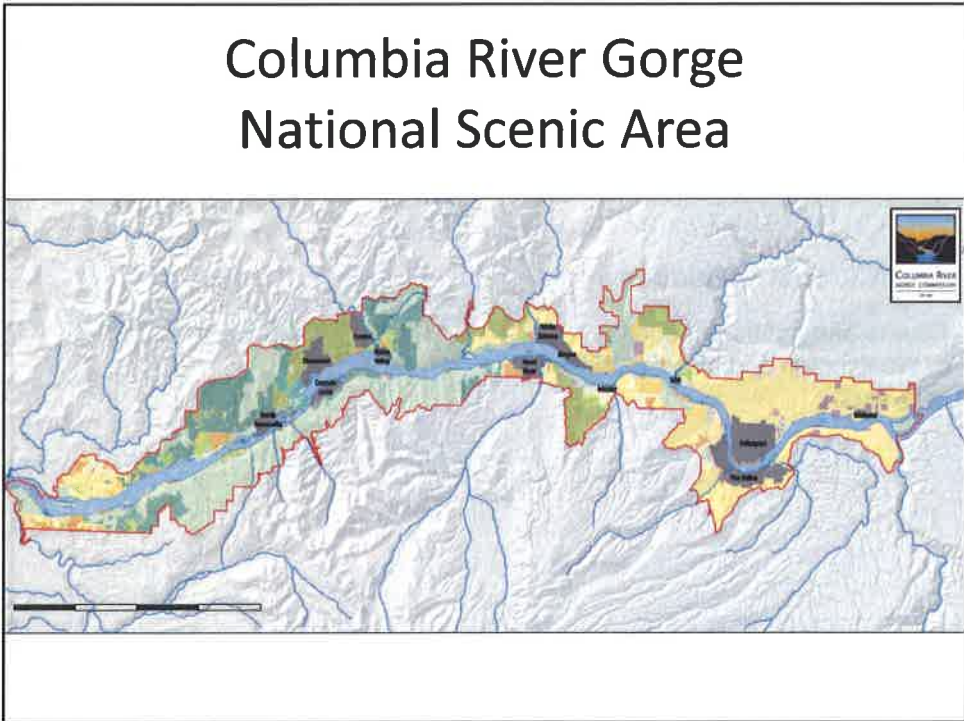
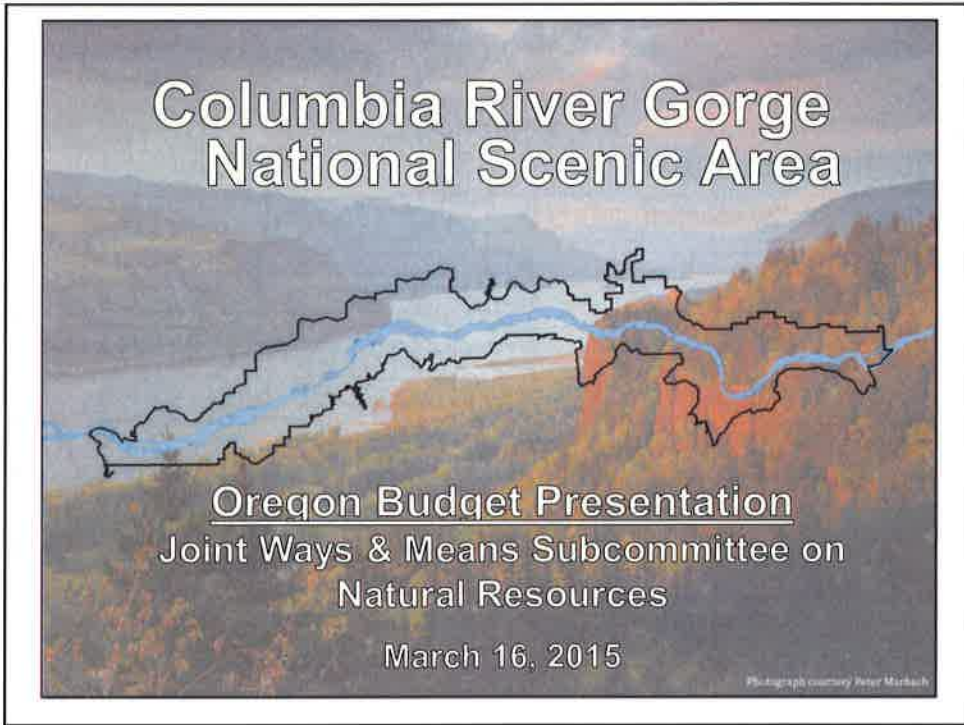
We respectfully request that in your budget recommendation to the state legislature you include the funding level requested by the Gorge Commission. Funding at this level is necessary to continue to protect our quality of life, including the economic vitality of our community and the other communities within the gorge.

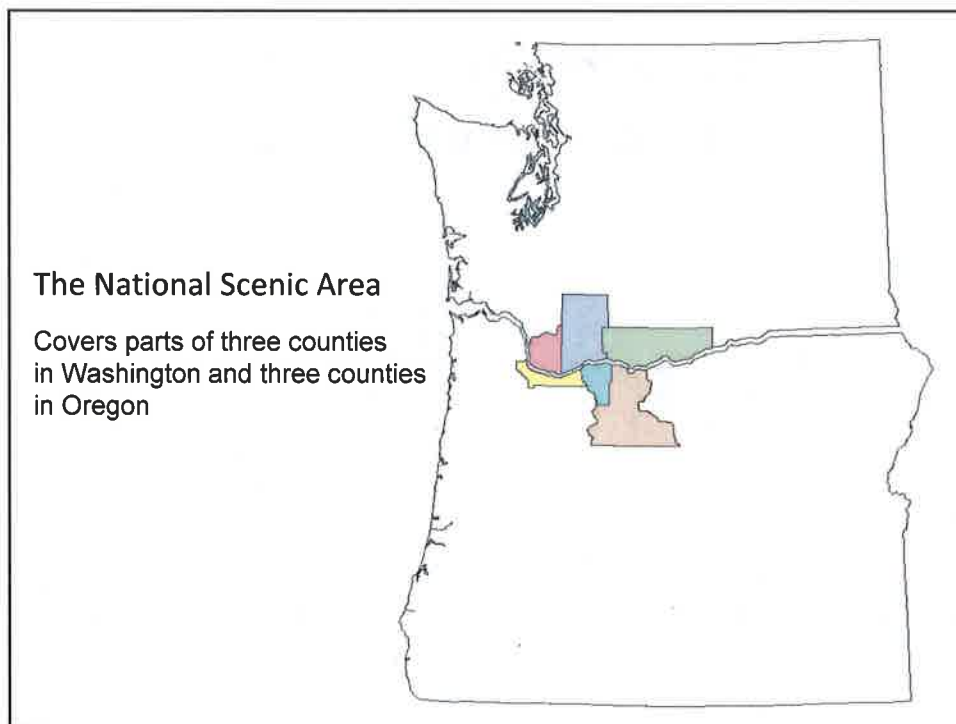
If we can provide any additional information or support for our request please let us know.

Regards,

Nolan K. Young  
City Manager







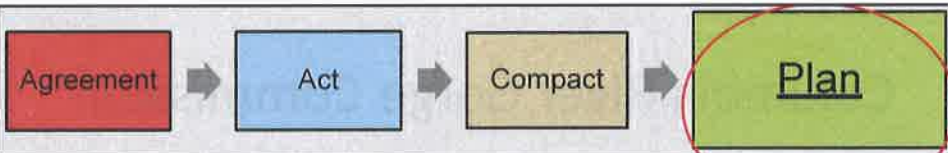
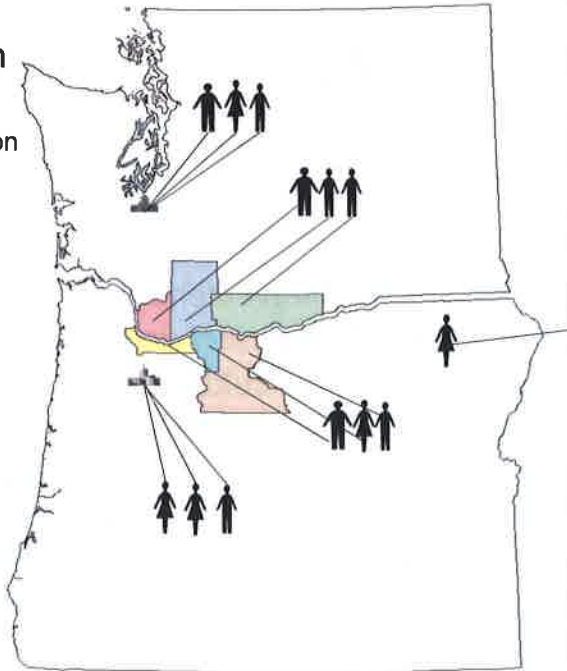


### The Gorge Commission

Each county selects one person to be a member of the Gorge Commission.

The governor of each state selects three people to be members of the Commission.

The United States Forest Service selects one person to be a member of the Gorge Commission, but they do not have a vote.



**Mission**

**Goals**

**Budget Drivers**

**Environmental Factors**

**Budget Issues & Needs**

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Agency Mission

*“to establish, implement and enforce policies and programs that protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and to support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and allowing economic development consistent with resource protection.”*

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Agency Mission

*“to establish, implement and enforce policies and programs that **(1) protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge**, and to support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and allowing economic development consistent with resource protection.”*

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Agency Mission

*“to establish, implement and enforce policies and programs that [1] protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and [2] support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and allowing economic development consistent with resource protection.”*

*- 1986 Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act*

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Agency

- Bi-state regional planning agency
  - Created by an interstate compact between Oregon and Washington under the authority of a federal National Scenic Area Act (Act).
- Develops and implements long-range comprehensive management plan for the bi-state Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
- Fulfills the purposes of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act



## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Goals

- Increased investment in planning for the future of the National Scenic Area
- Monitor the health of the Gorge
- Reduce permit backlog
- Resolve boundary disputes
- Collaborative governance
- Relations with Columbia River Treaty Tribes
- Skilled expertise on staff
- Improve Commission functions

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Budget Drivers

- Long Range Regional Planning
- Rapidly growing regional recreation demands
  - States' agencies
  - Local governments
  - Private organizations
- Regional convening and coordination needs
- Growing backlog of development applications
  - Klickitat County, WA
  - Other Oregon and Washington counties

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Environmental Factors

- Recession = 30% bi-state cuts, 50% staff reduction
- Development applications up 300% since 2012
- Coal and Oil Transport
- Drought → Forest health → invasive species → wildfire risks → scenic qualities
- Collaborative governance
- 2014 Administrative Assessment Reports
  - Organizational, Legal, National Comparison, Synthesis

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Budget Issues – 2014 Assessment Reports

First-ever Agency Assessment . . . since 1986 → 28 years

Center for Public Service – *Portland State University*

Evans School of Public Affairs – *Univ. of Washington*

#### Findings:

Uniquely complex mission

Insufficient agency resources since creation

Current staff = 5.25    Minimum = 25.5    → @ 20%

Bi-state cooperation challenges

Administrative redundancy with both states

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### 2014 Assessment Reports

First-ever assessment since 1986

Center for Public Service – Portland State University

Evans School of Public Affairs – Univ. of Washington

#### Findings:

Uniquely complex mission

**Insufficient agency resources since creation**

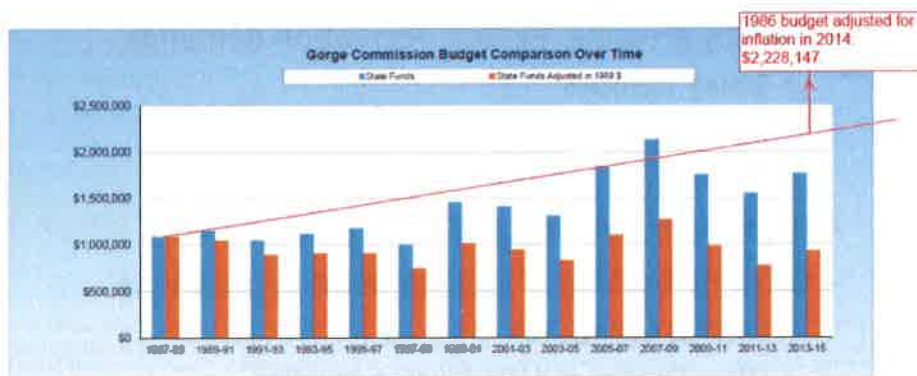
Current staff = 5.25    Minimum = 25.5    → @ 20%

Bi-state cooperation challenges

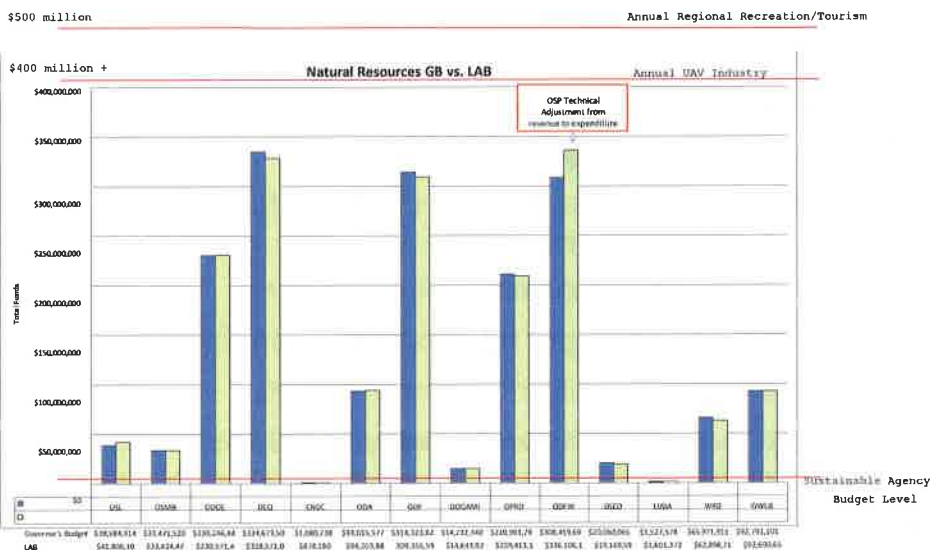
Administrative redundancy with both states

# Columbia River Gorge Commission

Budget History: 1987 → 2015



# Oregon Natural Resource Agency Budgets 2011



## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Budget Issues

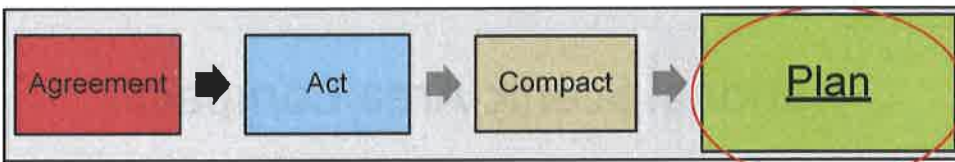
- Long Range Regional Planning
- Rapidly growing regional recreation demands
  - States' agencies
  - Local governments
  - Private organizations
- Regional convening and coordination needs
- Growing backlog of development applications
  - Klickitat County, WA
  - Other Oregon and Washington counties

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### Budget Needs

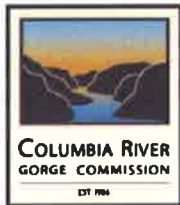
- Long Range Regional Planning and Coordination
  - 1.0 FTE Principal Planner
  - 1.0 FTE Resource Specialist (Scenic, Natural, Cultural, Recreation, Economic)
  - Funding for long-range planning updates
- Growing backlog of development applications
  - 2.0 FTE Development Review Specialists
- Improve Commission's agency functions
  - Funding for Administrative staff





**Looking ahead**

- Regional Planning
  - Regional Recreation
  - Vision for urban areas and the National Scenic Area
  - Monitoring & Evaluation Framework
  - Improve development permitting systems
- Tribal Relations
- Regional & Interstate Coordination
- Agency Effectiveness
- Other emerging issues . . .



## Columbia River Gorge Commission

Thank you.  
Questions?

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

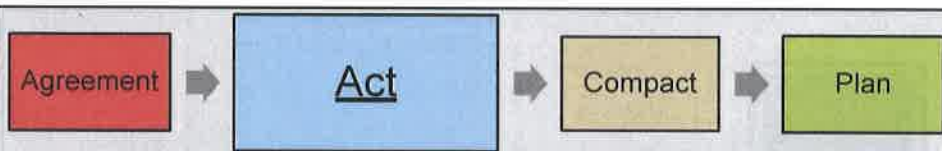
## National Scenic Area Compact

### Additional Background

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act

Columbia River Gorge Interstate Compact


Management Plan for the National Scenic Area



### **Overview of Scenic Area Act**

(16 U.S.C. §§ 544-544p)


- Sec. 2 - "Definitions"
- Sec. 4 - "Establishment of scenic area"
- Sec. 5 - "Columbia River Gorge Commission"
- Sec. 6 - "Scenic area management plan"
- Sec. 7 - "Administration of scenic area"



A horizontal flowchart with four colored boxes: a red box labeled 'Agreement', a blue box labeled 'Act', a tan box labeled 'Compact', and a green box labeled 'Plan'. Grey arrows point from left to right between each box.

**Columbia River Gorge Compact**  
ORS 196.150 and RCW 43.97.015

Art. I - establishes Commission  
Art. I - incorporates Scenic Area Act  
Art. IV - specifies funding




A horizontal flowchart with four colored boxes: a red box labeled 'Agreement', a blue box labeled 'Act', a tan box labeled 'Compact', and a green box labeled 'Plan'. Grey arrows point from left to right between each box.

**Related State Statutes**  
ORS 196.155 and RCW 43.97.025(1)

directs and provides authority for the governor, state agencies and counties to carry out their respective functions and responsibilities in accordance with the compact and the Act.

Agreement → Act → Compact → Plan


### A statute and a contract



a legislatively enacted, binding, and enforceable agreement between two or more states

Agreement → Act → Compact → Plan


### Constitutional law



“No state shall, without the Consent of Congress . . . enter into any Agreement or Compact with another state . . . .”  
U.S. Const. art. I, § 10, cl. 3.

Agreement → 
 Act → 
 Compact → 
 Plan

## Constitutional law, cont'd




Consent transforms a compact into federal law.  
*Cuyler v. Adams*, 449 U.S. 433, 442 (1981).

- Interpret compact as federal law
- Non-supremacy of other federal law
- Status of compact agency regulations
- Supremacy (state statutes and constitutions)

Agreement → 
 Act → 
 Compact → 
 Plan

## Non-constitutional law



State law applies only when preserved in the compact.  
*Seattle Master Builders v. Pacific N.W. Power and Cons. Planning Council*, 786 F.2d 1359, 1371 (9th Cir. 1986).

- Pre-compact state law
- Post-compact state law

