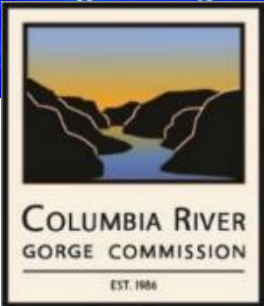
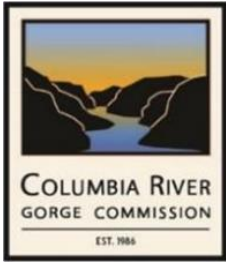


# Accelerating Our Digital Transformation

## Replacing ACCESS Database



**Krystyna U. Wolniakowski**  
Executive Director, Columbia River Gorge Commission



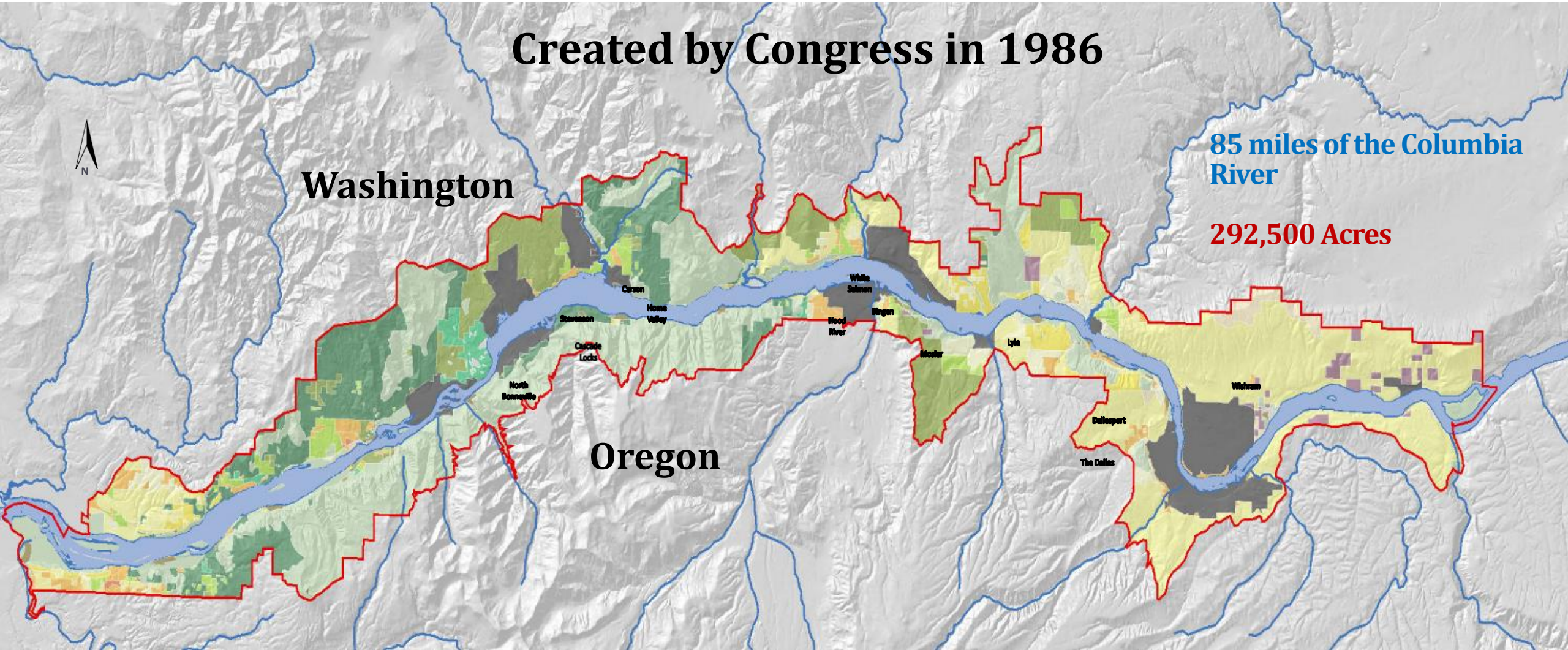
# Budget Request to Joint Ways and Means Committee

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- The Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC) requests funding to digitize and index 34 years of paper records and data by replacing the ACCESS database with a new electronic information management system.
- WA State has reserved \$212,500 for Phase 1, which needs to be equally matched by Oregon for a total of \$425,000 through June 30, 2021.
- CRGC has been working closely with WA CIO and Office of Financial Management, and OR Information Enterprise Services and LFO to sync up “stage-gate” process.
- New Information Management System will improve CRGC workflow, transparency, accountability, and public access to critical past and present information in the National Scenic Area.

*Largest NSA in the United States*

# Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area



# Purposes of National Scenic Area Act

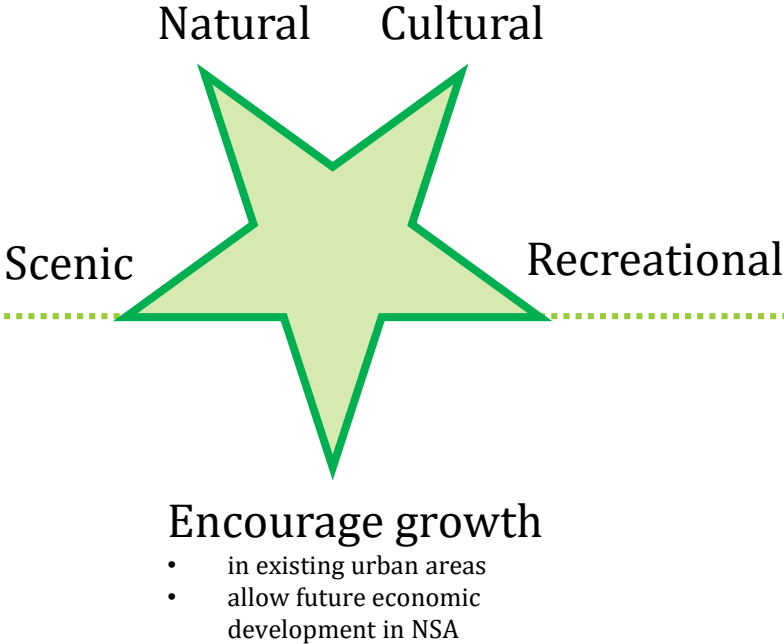
(Sec. 3)

### Our goals

Protect & enhance NSA resources

Support the NSA economy

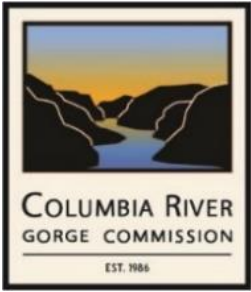
### How we think about our mandate



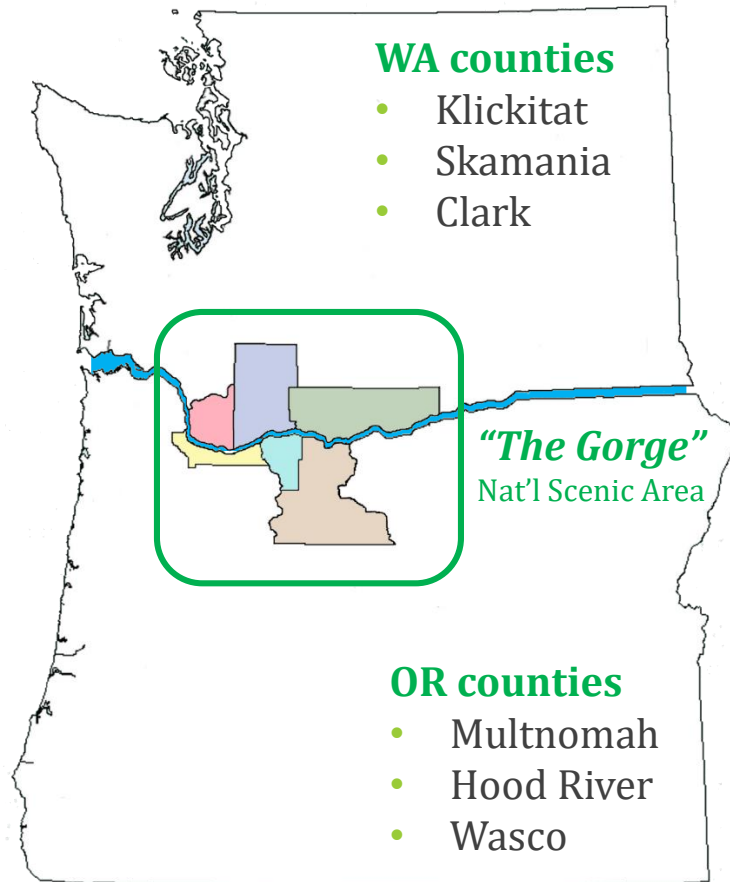
### Language of NSA Act Sec. 3

(1) to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the **scenic, natural, cultural,** and **recreational** 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).



# What is the Gorge Commission?



**Created in 1987 by a Bi-State Compact:** serves as a regional planning agency together with the Forest Service

Requires that WA/OR fund the Commission equally

**Mission** is to fulfill the two purposes of National Scenic Area Act

- **Establish rules, policies and guidelines for development**
- **Implement**
- **Enforce**

# Scenic protections

Scenic



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Assure that new developments do not diminish the quality of landscapes from key viewing areas

# Natural protections

Natural



Includes protections for native plants, wildlife, wetlands and diverse habitats.



# Cultural protections

Cultural



Includes archaeological and historic resources, and protecting tribal treaty rights



# Recreational protections



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



# Economic Development

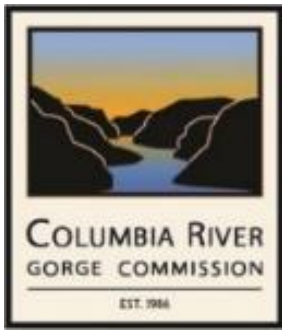


## Encourage growth

- in existing urban areas
- allow future economic development

Encourage growth in Urban Areas and allow development outside urban areas that is consistent with resource protections

And assures that Agricultural and Forest uses are protected, wineries and commercial recreation allowed



# Bi-State Inter-Agency Collaboration

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



- Implement our Long-term Management Plan**
- Publish and update our regulatory guidelines**
  - Monitor vital signs/trends
  - Research
- Collaborate with counties on permit applications**
  - Receive & review
  - Assure consistency of applying the plan
- Monitor developments to assure compliance**
- Respond to Public Records Requests & complaints**

# Gathering Input

Scoping: Over 70 Meetings with Experts, Public, Counties, Cities and Four Treaty Tribes over 3 Years



**GORGE 2020**

# The Problem: Our systems are very outdated

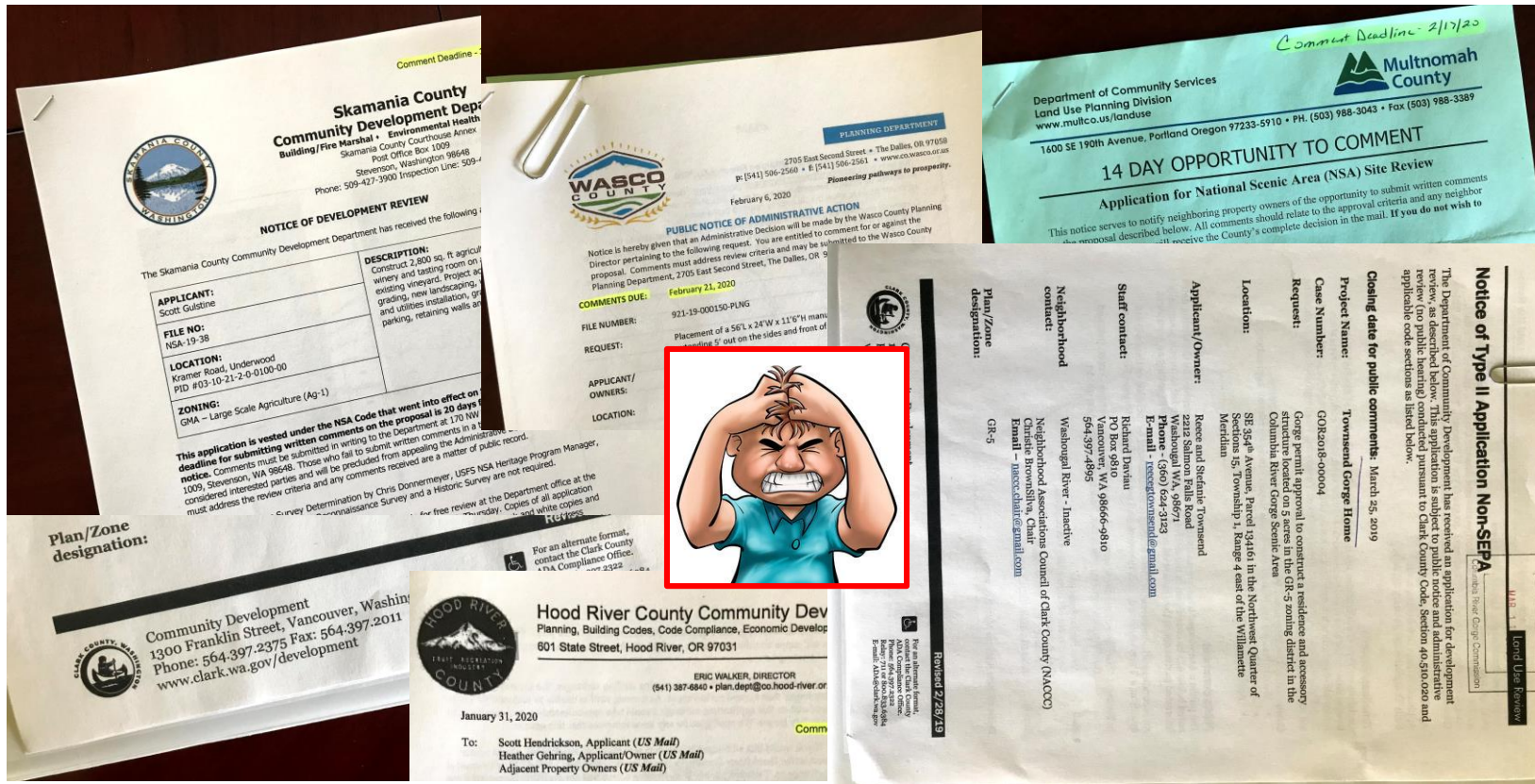


Our outdated information management systems & workflow cause 3 categories of problems

1. Drowning in **paperwork**
2. System-of-record is **cumbersome**, and needs *data harmonization*
3. Specialized skills and critical information are **bottlenecked**—governance decisions are not easily accessible

# 1. We are drowning in paperwork

We are losing valuable staff time in repetitive manual data entry & physical case retrieval

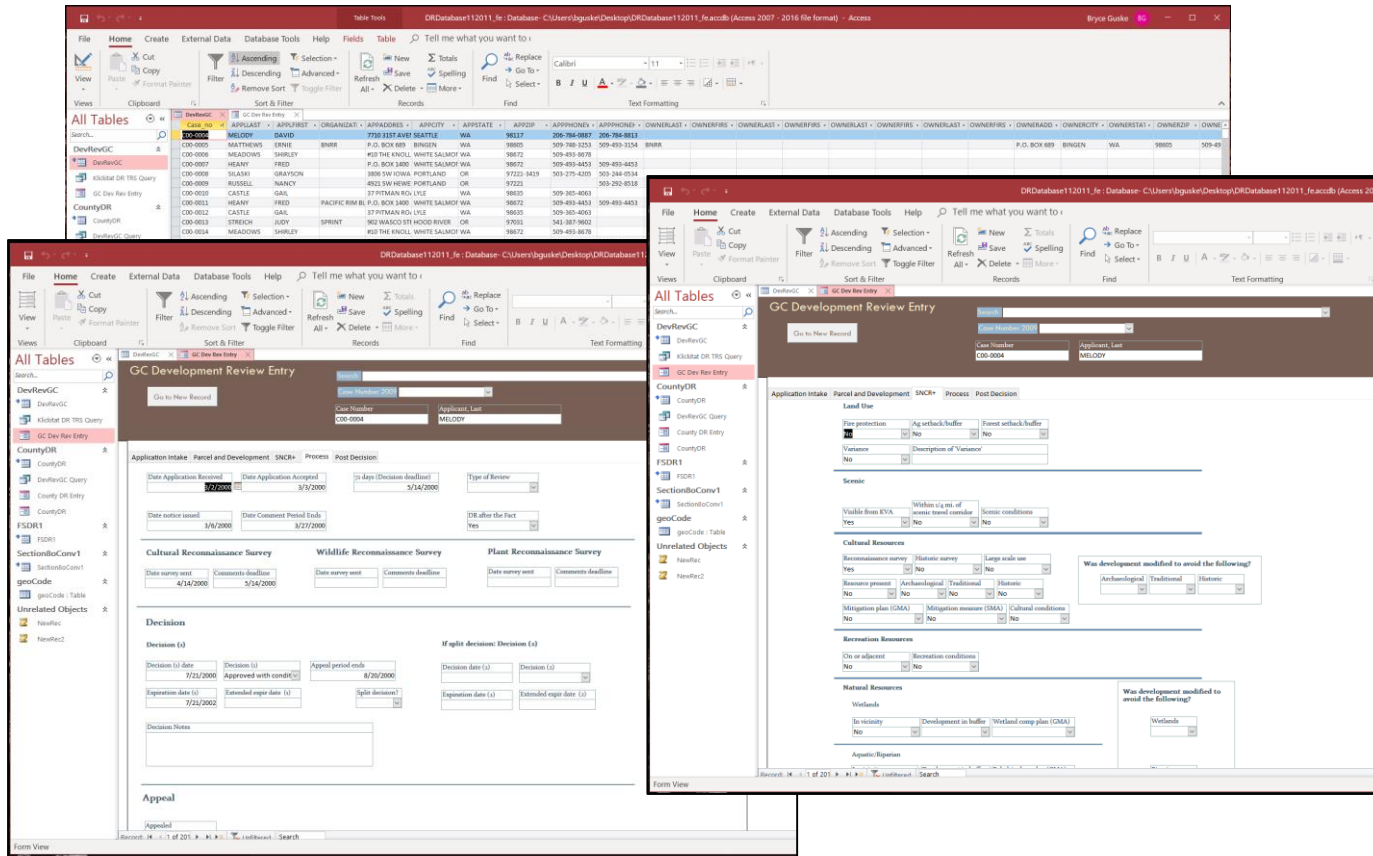


- Manual data entry is **inefficient**
  - Error prone
  - Wastes time
  - Retrieval hard
- **34 years** of paper files
  - Not indexed
  - Not searchable
  - Not all linked to digital georeferenced information
- County **formats vary**
  - Duplicate data entry/paperwork

**NOTE:** Comparable NW legal/quasi-judicial agencies have digitized some/all of these caseload aspects (e.g., Wasco county uses an off-the-shelf system called Accela, WA OCIO is working with ELOHU to start replacing an Access database similar to ours)

# 2. Our system-of-record is old & **cumbersome**

We are losing staff time coping with complexity of database queries



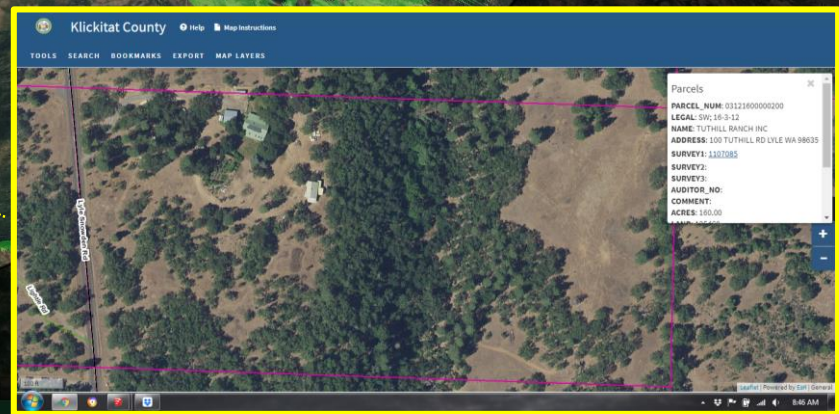
- ❑ system-of-record
  - Cannot easily query statistics for trends
  - Adds omission risk to PRR responses
- ❑ Case history **data needs harmonization**
  - Logged inconsistently over time (e.g., taxlots, parcels, deeds, lat-longs)
  - Need to stabilize future data structure
  - Queries & referencing are laborious
- ❑ User interface is **not georeference-able**
  - Lacks linkage with GIS
- ❑ Imminent **deprecation risk**
  - Phase out of upgrades or support for ACCESS

# 3. Our specialized skills are **bottlenecked**

	<u>Problem identified*</u>	<u>How this eats away our time</u>	<u>Implications for our IT</u>
<b>Tacit knowledge risk</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our institutional knowledge is <b>inside the minds</b> of tenured staff</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Disruption with staff turnover and <b>retirements</b></li><li>• Compounded if/when our new planners move on</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Embody this within digital workflow</li><li>• Clean up legacy data and digitize archives</li></ul>
<b>Steep learning curves</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Our new hires take <b>6-9 months to learn</b> our archaic systems &amp; processes</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Delays caseload</b> processing</li><li>• Hurts PRR/complaint work</li><li>• <b>Saps time away</b> from pursuing compliance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simplify workflow</li><li>• Harmonize info across 6 counties (cross-skill)</li><li>• Online apps for landowners</li></ul>
<b>Impedes growth</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Monitor</b> vital signs, to evolve our plan</li><li>• <b>Educate</b> (with data) our stakeholders</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Much <b>data to be procured</b> from FS collaboration</li><li>• We <b>cannot overlay</b> this on our prior case history</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Adopt visual &amp; GIS linked data interfaces</li><li>• Import external data</li></ul>



# Planners are now moving to visual tools (and the public too)...



- Most intuitive
- Best-practice in most land use and urban planning work
- Easiest approach to cross reference multiple types of data (also from other agencies like USGS, USDA FS, EPA etc.)



*Current (early)  
version of our  
georeferenced  
user experience*

- We have already begun this transition
- Hired an intern over summer 2017 to move portions of our ACCESS data records into GIS
- Need to evolve this to represent our entire case history

# ... for rapid drilldown on case history

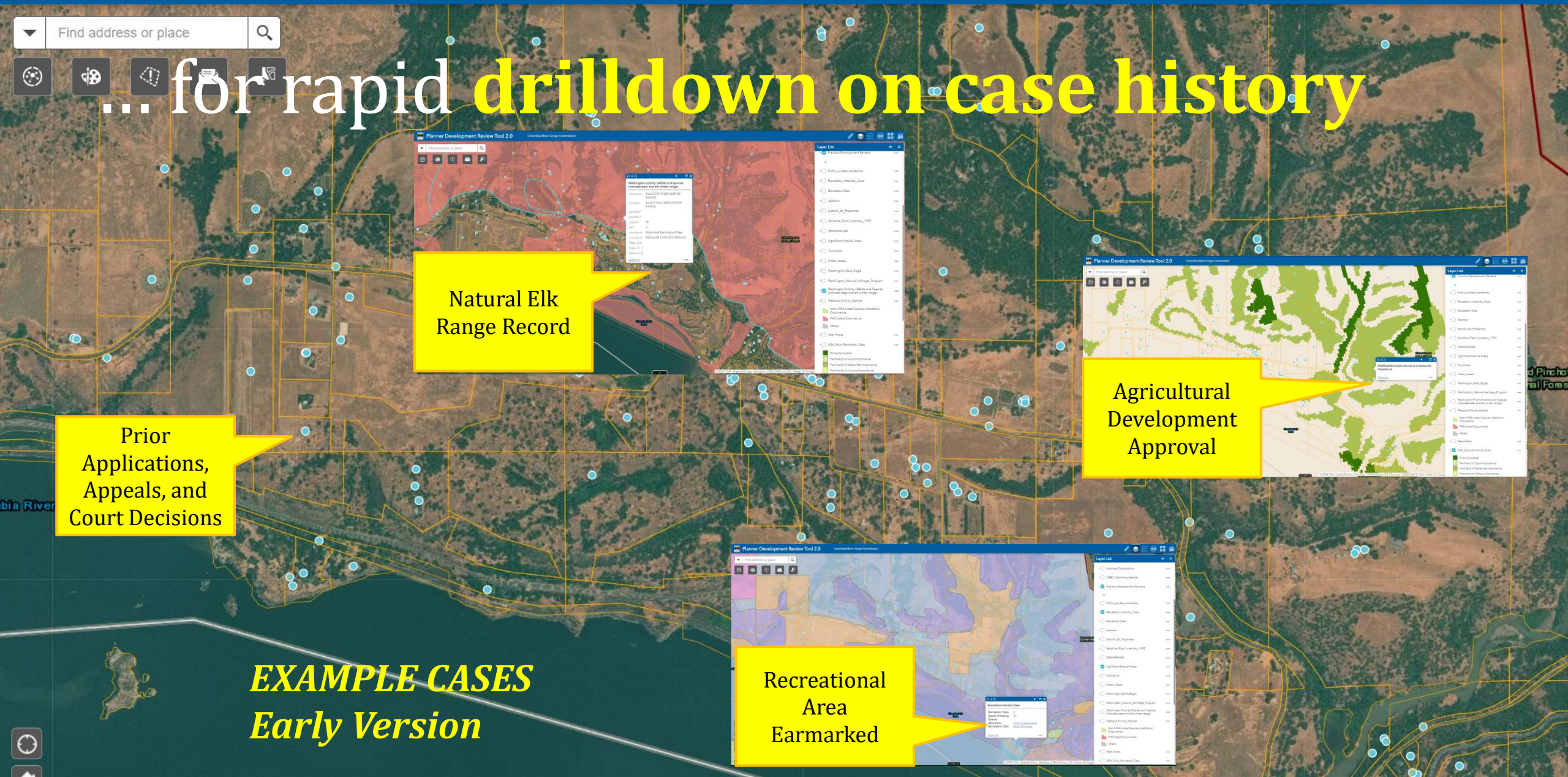
Prior Applications, Appeals, and Court Decisions

Natural Elk Range Record

Agricultural Development Approval

Recreational Area Earmarked

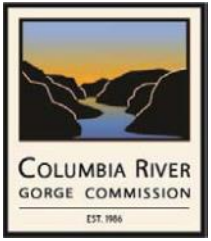
**EXAMPLE CASES**  
*Early Version*



# OR EIS and WA OCIO Goals

The background of the slide features a photograph of the Oregon State Capitol building. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent dome. Atop the dome is a golden statue of a woman, likely representing Justice or Liberty. The building is set against a clear blue sky. The bottom portion of the slide is a solid blue horizontal band.

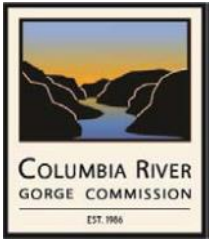
- Information/Data Stewardship
- Accountability & Transparency
- Track key performance indicators and trends
- Cross-jurisdiction harmony & collaboration
- Benefits to multiple stakeholders
- Information sharing to inform all our stakeholders/agencies more effectively and continuously
- Similar Stage-Gate Processes to assure agency benchmarks met



# What will \$425,000 for Phase 1 accomplish?

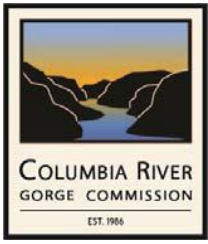
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- ❑ Hire a Contractor to:
  - ✓ review the current CRGC workflow
  - ✓ document data needs and improvements for efficient workflow
  - ✓ identify gaps in the current ACCESS database
  - ✓ Recommend options for new workflow design suited to CRGC needs
- ❑ Quality Assurance Oversight
- ❑ Project Management Contractor
- ❑ Convene a Governance Board/ Coordinate with OR and WA Stage-Gates
- ❑ RFP for Contractor to develop “Phase 2 Program Design for New Information Management System”
- ❑ Develop Policy Option Package for FY 2021-2023 Phase 2 Implementation Budget



# Expected Benefits

- ✓ Improved service levels to **Landowners**, provide easy electronic **online applications**
- ✓ 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**
  - mitigate impact of long-term staff turnover and retirements
  - onboard our new planners more effectively
- ✓ **Digitize and index archives** to speed up queries & searches
  - **Data-mine** our case history effectively
  - Overlay new **inter-agency datasets**
  - Enable **visual georeferenced** interfaces
- ✓ **Link** prior applications, appeals and court decisions to track all decisions and promote transparency



# Columbia River Gorge Commission

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



**Thank You!**