

COLUMBIA GORGE
FUTURE FORUM



FINAL REPORT

ENVISIONING OUR FUTURE

BUILDING A VIBRANT,
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE
FOR THE GORGE

OCTOBER 2008

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THE WORKING GROUP

Jill Arens
 Peggy Bryan
 Mike Canon
 Laura Comini
 Lee Curtis
 Chuck Daughtry
 Jessica Davenport
 Bill Fashing
 Nicole Hollatz
 Virginia Kelly
 Andrea Klaas
 Brian Litt
 Jessica Metta
 Dean Myerson
 Amanda Remington
 Casey Roeder
 Diana Ross
 Dan Spatz
 Phyllis Thiemann
 Karen Witherspoon

A LETTER FROM THE FUTURE FORUM WORKING GROUP

Dear Residents and Visitors of the Columbia Gorge,

It is with great pleasure that we present the Final Report of the Columbia Gorge Future Forum. This is a gift back to our communities, residents and visitors who care about this treasured place. It represents months of effort and innumerable hours of thought and discussion by hundreds of citizens participating in venues across the region and online. Their messages are reflected in these pages – and they are uplifting and cautionary, visionary and specific, regional and local.

The Future Forum is a Gorge-wide, public process to develop a vision for the future of the Columbia Gorge. Opportunities for public participation spanned the period from October 2007 to May 2008. During this time, interest and enthusiasm grew as word spread about the meetings focused on listening to your concerns and ideas for a more vibrant, sustainable Gorge. All of your comments became part of this record, and our report summarizes what you told us.

The result is a citizen-inspired vision for the Columbia Gorge focused on six overarching themes, along with 75 strategies that could help put that vision into action – some of them familiar concepts that are already underway in the region, and others that are newer, perhaps bolder or more imaginative. The Final Report also details the Future Forum history and process, summarizes key trends and emerging challenges that will affect the Gorge, and presents a statement of shared values that truly spring from the soul of this place.

Throughout the Future Forum discussion, we heard numerous comments that the time has come for the people and communities of the Columbia Gorge to think and act as the interconnected region that we have become. There has never before been a forum for broad discussion about the future of the Gorge as a region. People are clearly interested in a future in which citizens and government are more strongly focused on regional collaboration. If we as a region can direct our energies towards a common vision, we can more effectively manage the change and growth that are certain to occur.

In that spirit, this report will be presented to the governments and communities of the Gorge, to state and federal legislators, to the Governors of both Oregon and Washington, to tribal leaders and other stakeholders. As broader participation is achieved, the initial visions and strategies may be reviewed and refined over time, echoing a greater ownership in the dialogue that will become an ongoing part of our future.

*We want to thank you for being part of this unprecedented project. We could not have accomplished this without all the participants and stakeholders who were involved in the Columbia Gorge Future Forum. Please send us feedback about the report, and let us know if you are interested in continued opportunities to help guide the future of our Gorge. **The Working Group***

COLUMBIA GORGE FUTURE FORUM FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Final Report of the Columbia Gorge Future Forum summarizes the efforts and results of the first region-wide, collaborative process to engage citizens in articulating their aspirations for the future of the Columbia River Gorge, to transmit this information to Gorge communities and local leaders, and to stimulate future discussion and action.

The concept for the Future Forum had its genesis as part of the retrospective/prospective 20th anniversary celebration of the National Scenic Area. Ultimately, as discussions among various stakeholders focused on the need for such a dialogue, this concept evolved into a comprehensive, region-wide visioning process sponsored by two states, six counties, Native American tribes, Chambers of Commerce, ports, inter-county entities, private and non-profit businesses, economic development agencies, the U.S. Forest Service and the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

The following report documents the planning and implementation of the Future Forum visioning process, summarizes the citizen-inspired values and vision statements derived from group discussions and individual comments, and details the corresponding strategies for action proposed as part of the process.

Although there have been other regional events and collaborative efforts in the Columbia Gorge in the past, the Future Forum is the first sustained effort with a broad base of support, exploring a comprehensive range



of topics to help inform and shape the future of Gorge communities, residents, visitors and resources.

While the Gorge Commission has provided a 'home-base' for the Future Forum project, guidance and direction for the process was provided by the Future Forum Working Group, a small working committee of committed individuals representing key stakeholders in the region.

Over the course of numerous Working Group meetings, the idea of a future forum developed into a one-day event for key stakeholders and others, followed by a series of community-based meetings throughout the region. In addition, a Web survey was proposed to encourage even wider participation in the process. Returning to local communities with results in the Final Report would complete the initial cycle of activities of this first ever visionary regional dialogue. Ultimately, the Working Group is planning regional events to report back to key stakeholders.

Launching the process, participants and sponsors of the Columbia Gorge Future Forum gathered at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles, Oregon, on October 29, 2007. The keynote speaker was an internationally known futurist, and a panel of experts from the Gorge and beyond spoke of possible future scenarios from the perspectives of environment and climate change, transportation, technology, energy, tourism, and community

and rural planning. Breakout sessions during the day elicited participant comments on the challenges facing the region and their own visions for the future. Participants were also asked to prioritize the ideas that they felt were most promising, significant or far-reaching, and the results of these informal polls were summarized by group facilitators at the end of the day.

Next steps included production of a Future Forum video summarizing the October event and distributed through local libraries, followed by the community meetings and Web survey. Sixteen community meetings in Oregon and Washington were conducted in the cities and unincorporated communities of the Gorge, including Native American and Latino groups. Questions similar to those at the Discovery Center event were posed in these open houses and public meetings as well as via the Web survey. All comments were recorded and fed into a growing database of responses. In the end, more than 500 individuals participated and 1,500 individual comments were received and recorded.

To ensure an impartial and unbiased analysis of the comments, Portland State University's Survey Research Lab (SRL), Office of Graduate Studies and Research, was engaged to evaluate the thousands of comments. SRL staff utilized qualitative data analysis methodologies to code, classify and rank participant input. The SRL report provides an overview of their work and the steps involved in identifying six major data 'families' from which six overarching vision focus areas were eventually developed: communities, economy, environment, land use and planning, transportation and infrastructure, and other. These topics, joined with the participant comments, formed the basis of the vision statements and strategies.

Visit us on the Web at GorgeFutureForum.org

This work does not purport to capture the visions of the entire resident and visitor populations of the Gorge, nor all of the perspectives and opinions of every process participant. Rather, it presents the broad themes that were stated repeatedly during the Future Forum process. As such, it is a place to begin a larger, ongoing dialogue by returning to the communities to share the results and to inform future Gorge discussions, decisions and actions. The report is the work of many individuals and introduces an opportunity for wider participation in shaping our future – just as was called for by many of the participants in the visioning process.

The report is available online at GorgeFutureForum.org and additional background data is available for viewing in hard copy at the Columbia River Gorge Commission office in White Salmon, Washington. ↑

A CITIZENS' DIALOGUE ON THE FUTURE OF THE GORGE

INTRODUCTION The Columbia River Gorge is an area of breathtaking scenery and natural beauty. The Gorge has been and continues to be a major transportation route from the Pacific Ocean inland. Settlements in the area date back 11,000 years or more. Today there are approximately 55,000 residents in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area as well as millions of annual visitors (US Decennial Census 2000, US Census Population Estimates Program 2007). Hundreds of fish and wildlife species, some of them endangered, make the Gorge their home during some point in their lifecycles. More than 1,000 native species of wildflowers have been identified in the Gorge, 16 of which are found nowhere else in the world.

To preserve our treasure of the Columbia Gorge we must ask:

- *How can this region remain a place of exceptional landscapes and vital economies?*
- *What are the interdependencies in this delicate balance between the land and its people?*
- *What is important to residents and visitors?*
- *What might be done to influence the future paths of communities and preserve the environment of the region?*

In the past, efforts to address Columbia Gorge and National Scenic Area issues were approached independently from state, tribal, regional and community perspectives. Several cities in the Gorge have completed visioning or community plans but have not fully implemented their visions.

In 2007, the Columbia Gorge Future Forum introduced the first cohesive process to integrate ideas across geographical, tribal, social and political borders to create a unified vision for the Gorge's future. Key themes identified included:

- **Strong, healthy communities**
- **Dynamic local economies**
- **Sustainable environment**
- **Vibrant, livable places**
- **Balanced, accessible transportation**
- **Thriving education and arts**

This report describes the evolution of the Future Forum and its widening circles of participation. From the first meeting of a small group of concerned citizens, through community gatherings and hundreds of comments, to the publication of this report, the Future Forum process continues to attract the attention of increasing numbers of people who are committed to being proactive at the local and regional level. These are the first chapters of an ongoing dialogue of residents, visitors and other stakeholders who are passionate about our region and actively involved in shaping the future of the area for generations to come.



CALL FOR A REGIONAL DIALOGUE The 20th anniversary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act inspired the initial idea for the Future Forum. The Columbia River Gorge Commissioners wanted to commemorate the anniversary of the Act, passed by Congress on November 17, 1986, by looking back over the last 20 years and looking forward to the next two decades. They suggested inviting the entire regional community to share its vision for the future of the area.

Because of the scope of the Act, this community crosses many borders and jurisdictions including:

- Four Treaty Tribes
 - > Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
 - > Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
 - > Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
 - > Nez Perce Tribe
- States of Oregon and Washington
- Clark, Skamania and Klickitat counties in Washington
- Multnomah, Hood River and Wasco counties in Oregon
- 13 urban areas, four in Oregon and nine in Washington
- Additional unincorporated communities in the area

During numerous meetings and discussions at the Commission and staff level, and with others in the area, the focus on the Gorge as a region emerged. The historical aspects went far beyond the Gorge Commission, and a broader perspective would portray the various constituents and their experiences and wishes for the future.

THE BIRTH OF THE VISIONING PROCESS On December 13, 2006, six people met in the conference room of the Columbia River Gorge Commission. This initial meeting introduced the idea of a regional ‘future forum’ and assessed the level of support for the project. The agenda included a description of what this future forum might be, the concept of a working group to implement the process if it went forward, a discussion of the merits of the idea and next steps.

The group identified a number of reasons for presenting this forum. They believed this process could be valuable as:

- a vehicle to **engage community members in discussion** of what is important to them in terms of living and working in the Columbia Gorge;
- an opportunity for local and county offices to **inform the regional community about future plans and challenges**;
- a tool to **create a common bond** because of the similarity of growth issues throughout the Gorge;
- a method to **develop ‘strength in numbers’** — meaning that the quality of a forum and its expert speakers would likely be improved through a collaborative effort; and
- an opportunity to **reinforce our shared issues and resources** — bi-state, six counties, four tribal nations, cities, businesses, community members and other stakeholders.

COLUMBIA GORGE FUTURE FORUM

The initial six organizers agreed to pursue the forum and recruit representatives from other Gorge organizations. The Working Group formed and tentatively named the regional event the Columbia Gorge Future Forum. Possible topics for presentations were narrowed by priority of the issue, relationship to other topics and overall impact to the area. The group would consider economic development, the environment, population/growth/poverty, agriculture, forestry, recreation/tourism, renewable energy, quality of life and cultural aspects of Native Americans.

Work on the Future Forum continued briskly in the early months of 2007. The Working Group expanded to 20 members, sponsors were solicited, the agenda was refined and a keynote speaker and panel of experts were selected. The organizers engaged a facilitator and selected the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles, Oregon for the location of the first event. (See Appendix F for a complete list of the many people and organizations that contributed in some way to the Future Forum.)

THE FUTURE FORUM KICKOFF On Monday, October 29, 2007, 150 Columbia Gorge stakeholders gathered for the day to discuss regional concerns and aspirations. Joyce Reinig, Vice Chair of the Gorge Commission, told the group in her welcoming remarks,

"The Columbia Gorge stakeholders have never been together to discuss a vision for the region as a whole. We are here to begin the process to correct that oversight."

The Governors of Oregon and Washington sent letters to inaugurate the Future Forum process.

Governor Ted Kulongoski wrote:

"We cannot rest on the achievements of the past. Our work is not finished and the future of the Columbia River Gorge depends on us. We must collectively plan for the future and work together to ensure that the scenic Columbia River Gorge and its unique communities are protected for our children and future generations to enjoy... I look to you to help shape the future of the Columbia River Gorge."

Governor Christine Gregoire stated:

"I firmly believe that our quality of life depends upon having both a strong economy and a strong environment with each supporting the other. To this end, we must provide economic opportunities for families to live and work in the Gorge with businesses that fit its character and sustain its environmental values. As long as this is the common ground from which our work springs, we will succeed."

The Honorable Tribal Chairwoman Lavina Washines of The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation said:

"I pray in my heart that, with God's blessing, that we will have a good ten-year future."

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY RICK SMYRE, PRESIDENT OF COMMUNITIES OF THE FUTURE Rick Smyre, President of Communities of the Future, delivered the keynote address. Smyre’s work focuses on inspiring innovative thought and leadership in communities faced with economic and societal changes. He spoke about the need for change, both voluntary and involuntary, and the importance of long-term, flexible planning.

Smyre suggested ways that international issues such as global warming and the technological revolution could play out in the Gorge. Moreover, he encouraged attendees to think beyond ‘rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic’ — in other words, unless we transform our local institutions to be compatible with a constantly changing, interconnected and increasingly complex world, we will hit a barrier equivalent to the iceberg that sank the Titanic. Rearranging the deck chairs merely attempts to reform our local institutions by making their structure more efficient rather than transforming them with new approaches and solutions.

The keynote speaker identified the need for change and the importance of long-term, flexible planning.

PRESENTATION BY BRIAN LITT, GORGE COMMISSION PLANNING MANAGER Brian Litt focused on change at the local and regional level. He discussed several trends in the Gorge over the last 20 years including environmental issues, lack of affordable housing, increased population and a shifting economic base. He encouraged attendees to reflect on changes that they personally have noticed that are either positively or negatively affecting what they value about the Gorge.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS – COLUMBIA GORGE VALUES AND CHANGES After these two presentations on international and regional changes, attendees broke into small, facilitated groups to discuss:

- *What do you most value about the Columbia River Gorge? What would you like to remain the same in the future?*
- *How is the Columbia River Gorge changing? What key issues will it face in the future?*

The most common values and observed changes noted were:

Top Value Ideas

- scenic beauty and open spaces, including the connection to nature they provide
- access to recreation opportunities
- the cultural resources of the Gorge
- natural resources of the Gorge, including fisheries and managed forests but also the importance of the Columbia
- the communities of the Gorge, including their small town rural nature, the sense of community one gets, and how livable they are

Top Changes Noted

- economic shifts from natural resources to new businesses and tourism
- environmental degradation and pollution
- lack of affordable housing
- an increase in population
- renewable energy opportunities increasing

GUEST EXPERT PANEL – VOICES FROM FIVE DISCIPLINES Forum participants heard from a guest panel of experts in the fields of technology, climate change, renewable energy, tourism and planning. Panelists were:

- **Jeremy Littell**, research scientist, University of Washington CSES Climate Impacts Group, studying climate and climate change effects on ecosystems
- **Tim Stearns**, Senior Energy Policy Specialist, Washington Department of Trade
- **Todd Davidson**, CEO, Oregon Tourism Commission
- **Mark Flaming**, President, Frontier Adventures and development finance specialist
- **Steven Ames**, Principal, Steven Ames Planning, author of ‘A Guide to Community Visioning’ and an experienced national and international consultant

The panel discussed future issues for change in the region, identified trends that are likely to affect the Gorge in the future and outlined their vision for the Gorge from their areas of expertise.

Regarding climate change, **Jeremy Littell** noted that climate change will reduce the amount of water flow in the Columbia River and thus the Gorge can expect more conflicts over use of the river. The many Columbia River user groups will need to make trade-offs between demands placed by wildlife and salmon, barges and other river transportation, irrigation, recreationists and hydropower.

Tim Stearns pointed out that choices will have to be made as populations increase while being limited by resource availability and the inability to proportionately increase infrastructure due to space or funding constraints. He stressed the need to pivot from a ‘car culture’ to one that values greater diversity in transportation options to minimize single-person automobile use. He also offered a more foundational change of reevaluating the tax system to encourage people to ‘do the right thing.’

Todd Davidson forecasted the shift from ‘accidental’ tourism to tourism that is deliberate and strategic and thus better able to address resource use and local concerns. He also noted trends in tourism toward sustainability and environmental awareness, and tourism as a tool for regional identity development and business recruitment.

Mark Flaming noted that the high tech industry is driving economic development in the Gorge. The technology enterprises are shifting from businesses that make technology 'widgets' to technological advances in the companies that are already here for increased efficiency. There is an extraordinarily high percentage of self-employed people in the Gorge (24 percent), far more than found at the national level (6 percent). These people tend to create small businesses that pay living wages. Flaming highlighted the need to reevaluate the Gorge's commercial and industrial land patterns and support services in order to encourage these small businesses.

Steven Ames noted three important planning imperatives for the Gorge. The first is achieving a greater balance between jobs and housing so that more people can live and work in the same community. Second, echoing Tim Stearns' comment, is changing the reliance on personal cars for people living, working and visiting the Gorge to incorporate more public transportation. Finally, planning efforts must increasingly focus on creating 'complete communities,' in other words, places where people can find most or all of the amenities and services they would need in their own community for a good quality of life.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS – COLUMBIA GORGE VISIONS Attendees broke into small, facilitated groups once again after the Guest Expert Panel to discuss their own visions for the future of the Gorge, specifically:

- *Imagine the Columbia Gorge in 15–20 years time, and that it has changed in ways that meet your highest expectations for the future. What do you see?*

The most common vision ideas were:

Top Vision Ideas

- comprehensive regional mass-transit system
- Gorge communities as a 'necklace' of unique pearls
- affordable housing
- tribal prosperity and connection with the community
- local economic health

NEXT STEPS The day ended with general acknowledgement of the historic import of the gathering, and a plan to reach out to the communities in the area in order to broaden participation and listen to the concerns and hopes of individuals throughout the region. The event was videotaped for distribution to local libraries and to create a document for historical purposes. The comments and ideas of the group would be compiled and analyzed prior to the community meetings, which would begin in the winter of 2008. Having this information to share at the community meetings would spur conversations and elicit additional comments. (See Appendix B for the agenda of the Discovery Center event and Appendix C for a list of event attendees.)

COLUMBIA GORGE FUTURE FORUM

MORE DIALOGUE ON THE GORGE: COMMUNITY GATHERINGS, FOCUSED MEETINGS AND A WEB SURVEY

The October 2007 Future Forum event was just the beginning. Starting in early 2008, community meetings were held in 13 communities across the Gorge. Three additional meetings were held for Latino and Tribal communities. Facilitators ensured a consistent approach and product. The community meetings were scheduled in the afternoons and evenings to encourage the largest attendance possible. Additionally, a Web survey was posted for three months, posing the same questions asked at the community meetings and Discovery Center event. To reach out to as many people as possible, the survey and meetings were advertised through local Gorge newspapers, Portland metropolitan newspapers, flyers posted in local communities, email lists and online through the Future Forum's Web site.

The first community meeting was held in Stevenson, Washington on February 7, 2008. Subsequent meetings were held over the next two months in the Oregon communities of Corbett, Cascade Locks, Hood River, Mosier, The Dalles and Celilo; and the Washington communities of Washougal, North Bonneville, Carson, Underwood, White Salmon, Dallesport and Wishram.

Participants watched a video of highlights from the Discovery Center conference and a brief presentation about current trends affecting the Gorge. Discussions then focused on what participants value most about the Gorge, changes and issues they see currently affecting the region, their visions for the Gorge region in 15 to 20 years, and local actions that could achieve that vision. (See Appendix D for the agenda of the community meetings and Appendix A for a complete list of all Future Forum meetings and Web survey information.)

The Latino and Tribal meetings similarly focused discussion on the four topics covered in the other community meetings – values, changes, visions and actions. Twenty-five leaders from the Latino community were invited to the Latino meeting, which included a facilitator fluent in Spanish. Invitations were sent to the four Treaty Tribes (Warm Springs, Umatilla, Nez Perce and Yakama) for the Tribal meetings, one in Wishram and one hosted by Celilo Village at their Longhouse. These three meetings focused on the future of these Gorge communities.

The Web survey was launched online concurrently with the first community meeting in Stevenson and was available through May 1, 2008. The 144 respondents answered questions about values, changes and visions in addition to providing some demographic information. Similar to the community meetings and Discovery Center event, most participants were Gorge residents.

The 13 community meetings, three focused meetings and Web survey expanded the reach of the Future Forum conversation. Participants provided direct input for the creation of a Gorge vision, and the Future Forum as a whole benefited from the broad points of view represented by the many voices. Around 350 individuals participated in the community meetings and Web survey, contributing more than 1,200 individual statements.

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA Due to the quantity of data gathered and the need for an objective and credible interpretation of the results, the Survey Research Lab at Portland State University, Office of Graduate Studies and Research was retained to perform the qualitative analysis of the Future Forum data.

The Survey Research Lab coded the comments and categorized the themes into families of interest. Using a qualitative analysis approach, key issues and topics raised by the participants were summarized to use as a framework for the vision plan for the Gorge. The six families identified by the results of the one-day event, the community meetings and Web survey included:

- ☛ environment
- ☛ economy
- ☛ land use and development
- ☛ transportation and infrastructure
- ☛ communities
- ☛ other

Using PSU's analysis, vision statements and strategies were crafted to embody the comments that individuals felt were most important to them personally and to the Gorge area. These are presented later in this report. (See Appendix E for a more detailed description of PSU's methodology. The full PSU report and the underlying data sets are available for review at the Columbia River Gorge Commission office.)

Through the Future Forum process, the larger regional community experienced the benefit of coming together locally and as a region.

A COMMITMENT TO CONTINUED DIALOGUE The writing of this report has progressed over several months, with the intent of presenting a transparent process, with accuracy and neutrality in the text. The following sections describe the challenges facing the Gorge, visions and strategies voiced by the individuals who participated in the Future Forum and next steps for the Future Forum.

Many participants of the Discovery Center conference, Web survey and community meetings were eager to have their voice heard in discussions about the future of the Gorge region. Through the Future Forum process, the larger regional community experienced the benefit of coming together locally and as a region to discuss common values, concerns, desires and ways to work together. The Future Forum Working Group will reconnect with communities after completion of this report, to facilitate and foster greater collaboration and to keep the dialogue alive. ↑

WHERE ARE WE GOING? WHAT ISSUES DO WE FACE?

THE CHALLENGE OF GLOBAL CHANGE IN THE 21ST CENTURY Our communities and the world around us are changing at a rate never before experienced. As Rick Smyre pointed out at the Discovery Center event, this change is constant and makes for an increasingly complex society through which traditional institutions struggle to navigate. One reason why change has become so fast is because the world has become increasingly 'small.' No longer merely affected by regional, statewide or national trends, the smallest rural area can now be drastically changed by international forces.

While communities struggle with such forces, trends originating closer to home are still in play, making it seemingly impossible for a community to successfully adapt to all this change. Identifying and understanding the trends are the first steps in incorporating them into the community. An important component of the Future Forum therefore became the identification of global, national and regional trends. While the Columbia Gorge Future Forum is regional in focus, the impact of national and global trends will be reflected in the future of the Gorge.

GLOBAL TRENDS AND ISSUES IMPACTING THE GORGE In the global context, the world population will continue its rapid growth, and people will migrate to less populated regions in search of safety, affordability and quality of life.

Fossil fuels are being consumed at faster rates because of rising populations and continued dependence on these sources, and the situation is complicated by burgeoning industrial activities in less developed nations. Regions such as the Gorge with limited public transportation and reliance on personal, motorized vehicles are more vulnerable to this change.

The gap between the rich and poor is widening, most markedly in the United States more than any other developed nation. Income disparities can be seen in a shortage of family wage jobs, lack of affordable housing and related issues.

Worldwide environmental degradation is accelerating. Climatologic changes and decreasing biologic diversity demonstrate the significance of such trends.

Our lives will change dramatically because of continuing new advances and applications in communications and scientific areas, including new materials, biotechnology and nanotechnology. Unpredictable global market conditions, catastrophic weather events, terrorism or pandemics may alter the world as we know it. *[continued on page 16]*

A Statement of Shared Values

Throughout the Future Forum dialogue, participants were first asked to describe what they most value about the Gorge. Their answers reflect where the Gorge is today, what defines us as a region and what qualities we would like to retain for future generations. Knowing what we treasure about this place can help ensure that we collectively protect – or change, as the case may be – the right things. Based on participant input, the Statement of Shared Values below presents the most commonly shared Gorge values. This chapter and the next in this report focus on the changes facing the Gorge. By offering these shared values here, we hope to better identify which changes might threaten valued qualities of the Gorge – and which may contribute to a future more aligned with what we value.

We Value...

Our Columbia River The heart of the Columbia Gorge and a timeless icon of natural, scenic, economic, recreational, historical and cultural importance.

Our Natural Heritage The natural forces that have shaped the Gorge, and its natural resources – clean air and water, native vegetation, fish and wildlife – that sustain and enhance our lives.

Our History and Traditions The tribal peoples, explorers, pioneers and settlers, and other historical figures who have contributed to our rich history and sense of place.

Our Scenic Beauty The diverse landscapes, mountains, waterfalls and grasslands, dramatic vistas, and natural and man-made attractions that distinguish the Gorge.

Our Recreational Opportunities The amazing access we have to a multitude of healthy outdoor recreational and sporting activities.

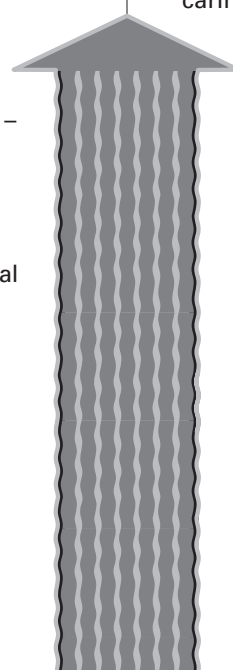
Our Diverse Populations The hard-working, friendly, caring, community-minded and environmentally aware people who call the Gorge home.

Our Local Communities The distinctive, small communities and towns that provide safe, friendly, affordable places to live, work and raise our families.

Our Economic Vitality The traditional industries – agriculture, forestry, energy, commerce, tourism – and many small businesses and entrepreneurs that support our livelihood.

Our Location and Accessibility The quick and easy access we have to a variety of urban amenities and essential services – or to open spaces, backcountry and solitude.

Our Learning and Creativity The local schools, community colleges, artistic and cultural resources that expand our educational and personal horizons.



[continued from page 14]

NATIONAL TRENDS AND ISSUES IMPACTING THE GORGE On a national level, there are additional forces affecting the social, economic and environmental aspects of our lives. Most Baby Boomers will reach the age of 65 between 2010 and 2025, with related changes in needs for housing, health care, transportation and social services.

Our economy is transforming from manufacturing-based jobs to more creative, knowledge- and service-based jobs. Sustainable businesses and practices are more common, especially in the Northwest.

The US continues to shift from social and institutional centralization to decentralization. Responsibility is becoming more local, with states and local governments needing to do more with less support.

The costs of war in Iraq and military operations in Afghanistan will be paid for by future generations. Beginning with the collapse of sub-prime loans, the mortgage crisis and restructuring of the financial system has rippled across the US economic landscape. Sharp increases in fuel prices affect many areas of the economy, from food prices to vehicle sales, to increased use of mass transit, and decreased disposable income.

THE IMPACT OF CHANGE ON THE COLUMBIA GORGE COMMUNITIES Similar to other areas around the country, the Gorge has experienced sweeping changes over the last 20 years in several key areas including demographics, housing, the economy, the environment, recreation and transportation.

Demographics

Between 1980 and 2000, Hood River County grew by 48 percent and the National Scenic Area grew by approximately 56 percent to 55,000 people. If this expanding growth rate continues the population could reach 85,000 by 2020.

The demographics of the Gorge mirror national trends in some ways, such as an increase in percentage of population 35 years and older (US Census data between 1990 and 2000). Even though most of the Scenic Area is less than 10 percent Latino, in Hood River County that figure is 22 percent. The Washington, Oregon and national averages are nine, 10 and 15 percent respectively. Generally, the Latinos living in the region are younger on average and have increasing success with entrepreneurial ventures.

Housing

Housing availability is an ongoing issue in the Columbia Gorge. While building permits in Hood River, Wasco, Skamania and Klickitat counties have increased almost every year, these are primarily for single-family dwellings. There is a much lower percentage of multi-family units, which tend to be more affordable, in Gorge counties than statewide in Oregon and Washington. Since 2004, home prices have appreciated much faster than personal income growth in both states. There is a widening gap between median home prices in Hood River, Wasco, Skamania and Klickitat counties and the median income of the same areas (August 2007 Market Action report published by RMLS, Dallas Fridley with Oregon Employment Department).

Economy

In 2005, the top five employers of the Mid-Columbia (Hood River, Wasco, Skamania and Klickitat counties) were government, agriculture/forestry, leisure/hospitality, retail trade, education and health services. When adjusted for inflation, wages in the Mid-Columbia area have fallen since 1976, while Oregon and Washington statewide averages have increased. Hood River County had the highest percentage of people in poverty in the Scenic Area at 14.5 percent. The next US Census data of 2010 will show how this issue is trending.

Environment

Air quality in the Gorge has been an issue of concern since the turn of the century, when a bi-state and multi-agency group began working on data monitoring and modeling for air visibility in the Gorge through 2018. The discussion continues today, with studies from numerous groups and agencies, including the US Forest Service, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Washington Department of Ecology, Southwest Clean Air Agency and The Sacred Breath Program of the four treaty tribes, among others.

The issues of air visibility and air pollution are closely related, and are extremely complex both geographically and at the molecular level. The geology of the Gorge and the climate conditions are contributing factors in poor air quality days. Pollution originating within the Gorge represents between nine percent and 13 percent of the total Gorge haze.

The metropolitan areas of Portland and Vancouver contribute to Gorge pollution in the summer due to the prevailing west winds. Winter haze originates mainly east of the Scenic Area from the Boardman power plant and vehicle emissions. Rail, highway and barge traffic along the Columbia River corridor are part of the visibility and pollution problems. Wildfires are a significant source of pollutants and haze, a trend predicted to rise with global warming and forest fuel management issues.

While there are many sources of pollution in the Gorge, the largest single point source is the PGE Boardman coal plant. In August 2008, Oregon DEQ announced recommendations for BART (Best Available Retrofit Technology) for the plant, which could reduce sulfur dioxide and nitrogen dioxide by more than 80 percent by 2018, if approved.

The Columbia Gorge is a region of abundant plant and animal diversity. Sixteen rare plants are located only in this area. Endangered animal species within the Gorge have mixed results in efforts to re-populate and thrive. Peregrine falcons, bald eagles, western pond turtles and sandhill cranes have increased in number in recent years. Their populations, however, are still far below a sustainable level and often require human intervention, such as an active captive breeding program for the western pond turtles. Unfortunately, the western grey squirrel, the Oregon spotted frog and the spotted owl have declining or stagnant populations (Keith Kohl, Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; David Anderson, Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife; Sandhill Crane and Western Pond Turtle Recovery Plans on the Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife Web site).

Recreation

Recreation activities in the Columbia Gorge have increased and changed during the last 20 years. Fishing, tent camping and windsurfing have decreased, while walking/hiking, golf, sightseeing, RV camping, mountain biking and kite-boarding have increased. The need to manage conflicts between recreation users is a concern as different user groups, such as hikers and mountain bikers, share limited spaces on the same trails. Theft and vandalism near parks and trailheads have increased.

Transportation

There is an increasing burden on transportation networks in and through the Columbia Gorge. Hawaii's garbage may be barged up the Columbia River to landfills in eastern Oregon and Washington. Metro recently completed a 10-year contract for garbage hauling to the Columbia Ridge Landfill near Arlington, Oregon. The contract includes specifications for 'clean diesel' engines on all of the trucks.

Rail traffic is expected to continue to increase through the Gorge. In 2000, Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) ran between 30 and 35 trains per day; in 2006, the average was more than 40 trains per day. On the Oregon side, Union Pacific is running approximately the same numbers. In a period of months, driving habits have changed as fuel costs have risen dramatically. Fuel costs will impact recreation activities, food costs, tourism and other segments of our lives.

LIVING IN AND PLANNING FOR A CHANGING WORLD These are the important global, national and regional trends impacting the Columbia Gorge. Without acknowledging and understanding these trends, we create visions and actions for the Gorge in a void. As important as it is to understand the larger trends affecting our communities, it is just as important to listen to the challenges identified by the communities themselves. In that spirit, the report next focuses on the changes and concerns specifically expressed by Future Forum participants. With an understanding of the world in which we live, we are prepared to plan for our future. In the words of Future Forum panelist, Todd Davidson, Oregon Tourism Commission CEO,

“The biggest choice is what will happen if you articulate a unified vision – and what will happen if you do not.”

PARTICIPANTS SHARE THEIR VALUES, CONCERNS, VISIONS & ACTIONS

PARTICIPANTS' PERSPECTIVES The Columbia Gorge Future Forum emerged within the context of change during the last two decades and in awareness of the future pressures on the Gorge in overlapping social, environmental and economic arenas. Beginning with the Discovery Center event, Future Forum participants expressed their views on the challenges they foresee and aspirations for their communities and region. The following section is a summary of the themes that were repeated at the Discovery Center event, the community meetings and through the Web survey. Individual experiences and stories were documented and the compilation of all of these reflects individuals' pride in their communities, an eagerness to come together to discuss the future of the region and a seriousness in recognizing what could happen to this land and its people if there isn't collaborative and proactive planning.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS Participants noted the growing need to consider the **diverse age groups** residing in the region. Youth and seniors share community life and changes are necessary to adapt to their differing needs. Programs, activities, housing and recreational opportunities need to be available for both younger and older residents. Seniors need more independent and assisted living facilities. Affordable housing for all age groups is rare, so multi-family housing and other innovative housing projects are needed. Participants also acknowledge the increasing **cultural diversity** in the area, and would like to find ways to encourage respect for this diversity.

A lack of **convenient and affordable medical care** for all age groups exists and also needs to be addressed in coming years. Future Forum participants stress a need for **quality, affordable health insurance** that is available for the entire region. Improved healthcare would increase the quality of life in the area and provide more local jobs. Healthcare professionals would be able to reside in the region, contributing to their own communities and decreasing turnover in the industry.

Cooperation within and among communities is also an ideal characteristic of the Gorge region. Participants desire **collaboration between and within local governments, communities and cultural groups**. An ideal Gorge town is a place where local residents can 'live, work and play,' and all groups of people are treated with respect.



WHAT WE LEARNED

Civic engagement among residents is important to participants. Communication should be open between residents and local governments. **Self-sufficient communities** will provide many necessities without depending on outlying population centers.

They also aspire to live in **safer communities**. Increased law enforcement is needed to achieve a lower crime rate and an increased sense of security among residents. Occasions during which residents gather in large groups, such as festivals or in areas of heavy traffic, would be patrolled more often, and emergency services would be upgraded to handle emergency situations efficiently. Working together to protect the overall wellness of the region will build a stronger community.

ECONOMIC CONCERNS The most pertinent economic concern listed by participants was the **future health of both local and regional economies**. Some participants desired unique local industries compatible with differing industries within the same region. Tourism and recreational activities should offer financial opportunities for local economies, but other industries are necessary to provide for year-round inhabitants.

They are concerned with the availability and sustainability of **local jobs**. Participants note that a shortage of local jobs exists, and especially local jobs that provide a sustainable income. Those who do have jobs in the region are often forced to commute to different areas and communities for work. Participants state that local jobs are a necessary component of an ideal lifestyle. They hope for local economies to provide jobs that allow all residents to afford and enjoy their communities without long commutes. Both small- and large-scale industries would offer more local jobs to residents and support economic diversity within the area. Participants want **self-sufficient communities**, with less reliance on outside economic input.

The Gorge has historically been identified as an agricultural community, and participants in the Future Forum envision a **thriving farming industry** in the future. The agricultural industry will continue to provide local jobs to residents in this vision, as well as nourishment to all members of the community. Some participants suggest that the agriculture and tourism industries merge in certain cases to allow tourists to visit local farms and vineyards and to attend educational programs to learn about the region's historical industry. Furthermore, if action is taken to protect farmland, both the natural beauty and unique identity of the region will be preserved.



Opinions of a **proposed casino** were mixed. The possible construction of a casino has been a topic of discussion for some time among Gorge residents and stakeholders. Participants who mentioned this possibility expressed both positive and negative opinions of a Gorge casino.

Several participants express great interest in encouraging **cutting edge technology within and between communities in the region**. This technology can provide connection between communities as well as offer jobs and boost local and regional economies. This innovative technology would aid in the establishment of lower-impact energy production and housing opportunities. Cutting edge technology used by local industries would identify the region as a thriving area and create better economic opportunities for local economies and residents working in those industries.



ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS Sustainability is the foremost environmental concern of participant responses. Participants want future development in the area to concentrate on sustainability and a reduction of dependence on fossil fuels and energy usage. They want gradual development with deliberate efforts to protect the natural environment, to make careful use of local resources and to reduce use of traditional energy sources.

The Gorge is an appreciated environment for residents as well as a natural attraction for visitors. In order to develop the region and protect the natural beauty of the Gorge, participants believe **development** must allow for new technologies and sustainable building practices. New construction projects should not detract from the natural landscape, and views should be protected. Participants in the Future Forum process understand the beauty of the Gorge can be respected by local residents and tourists for years to come if proper precautions are taken.

Recreational use of the land, particularly by the rising number and diversity of users, is a major concern of many Gorge stakeholders. Many Future Forum participants said to protect certain areas from all human activity including recreation. Area outdoor recreational opportunities should educate residents and visitors about our area and unique landscape.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Resource and land management are also on the minds of Future Forum participants. It is important for them to see Gorge natural resources and land preserved, protected and well managed. Forests will be well maintained and dangers like dead trees, which contribute to wildfires, will be better controlled. While most participants want to protect forests in the region, some participants suggest setting aside more forestland for logging to boost local economies.

According to participants, Gorge stakeholders want **air and water quality** at least maintained at current levels in years to come. Rivers in the area should be safe for swimming and consuming. Both small- and large-scale causes of air pollution, such as dependence on individual vehicle usage and coal plants, will decrease in this vision for the future of the Gorge. Ideally, walking trails and local jobs should be more readily available in the future so automobile pollution decreases over time. **Water conservation and protection** are also important to residents, who would like to see overall conservation of all aspects of the region's natural resources.

Participants also expressed general concern over **environmental degradation** within the area. Protecting wildlife and natural landscapes is part of this vision to maintain the beauty of the area. As global warming continues, more discussion is needed to protect the Gorge's unique environmental assets. Participants want to create a balance between allowing residents to contribute to the local economy and conserving valuable resources and natural beauty. Future development must be organized with careful consideration of the local environment.

Finding **alternative energy sources** is a natural step to be taken for the Gorge to become energy independent. Participants want to decrease energy usage and pollution and employ alternative energy sources. They prefer using alternative and inventive practices to power the region, and possibly produce enough energy to export. Implementing these ideas must not cause environmental degradation. Wind and solar power were popular ideas mentioned by participants, but any alternative and environmentally-sound method of energy is welcome for consideration to encourage localized, carbon-free energy production. Participants express interest in small steps to provide mass amounts of energy, such as solar panels on every building in a community.



PLACE-BASED CONCERNS One of the five main changes in the Gorge and National Scenic Area identified by the participants in the Future Forum Discovery Center event was a **lack of affordable housing**. While the differential between median income levels and median home prices grows, the number of single-family dwellings is rising and multi-family and senior housing in Gorge counties is less common. Stakeholders want more **diverse housing options** in the region, so people with varying incomes can reside and own property in the same community. Affordable housing would ideally be made available long-term. In keeping with the ideal of protecting the region's natural resources, energy-efficient housing would also allow for more affordable living expenses in the area. If local jobs and affordable housing were made more available, residents would be financially able to contribute more to their own communities.



Participants also acknowledge the **rising population** in the area, and some would like to consider controlling or halting population growth so current residents' needs may be addressed properly. The population increase in the area also contributes to concerns about **housing and future land use and development**. Future Forum participants prefer development projects to be well-planned, slow processes that concentrate on urban areas. Development outside of urban areas would be restricted. Urban development would result in more densely populated cities and would promote development of walking trails so residents could easily and energy-efficiently commute to their local jobs. Most importantly, development will proceed with respect for the region and residents' quality of life.

The **beauty and natural resources** of the area would be protected while cities are transformed to self-sufficient, environmentally-conscious communities. Existing parks contribute to the preservation and enhancement of the Gorge region's natural assets. **Parks and open spaces** may be enhanced to offer more access to the natural beauty of the Gorge. Park access within urban communities can also contribute to shared spaces residents can use to enjoy the Gorge together. **Trails** may be incorporated to link protected parks and open spaces in the region. Expansion of **federally-protected areas** can ensure more preserved natural areas outside of city limits.

WHAT WE LEARNED

Development in the area would also preferably draw people to the Columbia River. Increased **access to the river** for recreational use would be balanced with efforts to preserve the cleanliness of the river and its shoreline. The river can benefit the region both economically and culturally, by being a focal point for the region. Participants would like to see little to no shoreline development. If necessary, they would like to see low-impact expansion. Some even want to consider the possibility of removing the dams along the river or otherwise creating more fish-friendly routes to restore salmon runs. The river can offer transportation between communities, economic opportunities for recreation and a clean enhancement to the natural views of the region.

Stakeholders want **development of local food systems** in coming years in the Gorge region. With available local food systems, residents would have options to consume food grown and prepared within their own communities. Suggestions include planting of local and organic gardens and expanding local farmers markets. These local markets may include local tribal fish markets, which would allow tribal groups to contribute to the local economy by providing an important source of local food and culture to residents.

TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS Participants express deep interest in establishing plans for **regional mass transit and alternative transportation options**. Commuter trains are a popular suggestion to allow residents and visitors to travel within the region while decreasing the use of automobiles. Additional mass and alternative transportation suggestions include streetcars and trams, boats, buses and light rail. The focus of this development is to decrease pollution and offer residents and visitors convenient, fuel-efficient and cost-effective modes of transportation in the region.

Walking and biking can be encouraged with the creation of **a network of trails**. Trail networks can be used in tandem with commuter trains or other mass transit options to increase access to scenic areas and tourist attractions while decreasing the use of personal vehicles. Trails can also offer environmentally-sound transportation for residents on daily commutes. Trail safety and accessibility are of utmost importance for residents interested in creating alternative transportation options in their communities. In conjunction with trails and bikeways, some participants would like to see **motor vehicle usage** in the region restricted and possibly barred in certain Gorge areas.

With these new transportation options may come a **regional transportation network between Gorge communities**. Gorge residents wish to live in self-sufficient, independent communities that remain cooperative as parts that make up the region as a whole. Transportation and cooperation between communities are critical to achieve this ideal. Mass and alternative transportation options discussed above would help connect communities to each other as well as the Gorge to the Portland/Vancouver metro area. Any transportation used for these purposes would need to be environmentally-conscious, safe to use, cost-effective and accessible for residents. Transportation within, to and from the region would connect local communities, increase mobility within and access to the region and promote local economies.

EDUCATION & ARTS CONCERNS Future Forum participants were greatly concerned about the **K-12 schools and higher education opportunities** in the region. There has been a recent decrease in children learning outdoor recreational and survival skills, and participants want K-12 education incorporating the natural environment of the region and practical outdoor skills into the learning curriculum. Participants want to see inventive education opportunities focusing on the region's unique natural landscape introduced to K-12 education. Participants also suggest that more practical skill education, internships and mentorships are offered to provide training and preparation for students to obtain local jobs.

Participants also believe higher education opportunities would benefit the area by allowing residents to obtain higher degrees within their own communities as well as drawing in students from outside the region. Currently, the region does not offer a four-year college degree program, although Columbia Gorge Community College maintains partnership agreements with several Oregon universities so students can work toward their four-year degrees. Participants want **local adult education opportunities** to obtain four-year and advanced degrees from a local college or university. A university setting would also offer opportunities for research programs to study concerns specific to the region, such as environmental preservation and intercultural interaction.

The growing diversity of the region highlights the need for cultural recognition in the Gorge. Cultural heritage is an integral piece in the history of the region. Participants want **regional cultural heritage education** offered for tourists and residents. Equally important, local tribes should be permitted to protect **tribal traditions and cultural sites**. Archaeological and historic locations and structures should be protected, in turn preserving the local heritage of the Gorge.

Participants in the Future Forum events and survey also desire more **arts and entertainment** in the region. Art and music activities and festivals could spread and maintain the deep cultural traditions of the area's native residents. Markets and festivals bring art into the public sphere, allowing local artists to reach both local residents and visitors.

Columbia Gorge stakeholders are passionate about the region and know where they want the Gorge to be in 20 years.

FROM CHALLENGES TO VISIONS AND STRATEGIES Columbia Gorge stakeholders are passionate about the region. Not only are they aware of the challenges facing the Gorge as it grows and changes, they also know where they want the Gorge to be in 20 years and possible strategies for getting it there. To illustrate those ideas, the following section summarizes the visions and strategies that were expressed by Future Forum participants. ↑



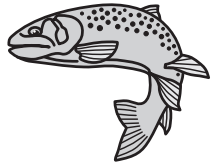
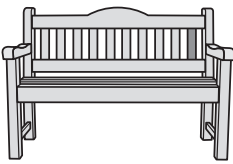


WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? HOW DO WE GET THERE?

As the previous section made clear, we live in a time of enormous global changes that sweep across the planet with dramatic consequences. Yet, no matter how vast or sweeping such changes may be, ultimately they all come down to affect people in the communities where they live – in the places they call home.

The challenge is that few communities take the opportunity to think about such larger forces of change – let alone plan to respond to them in a meaningful or proactive way. In a few words, communities lack strategic vision. This challenge is even more pronounced in a place as far-flung and geographically unique as the Columbia River Gorge, where 13 local communities inhabit a region encompassing two states, six counties, numerous state and federal governmental agencies, and four sovereign Native American tribes.

The Columbia Gorge Future Forum represents the first time the diverse peoples and communities of the Columbia Gorge have come together to consider their common future – to assess the trends and issues that are transforming our region and articulate their aspirations for the future. This dialogue has resulted in the first ever citizen-driven vision and strategies for the future of the region. And it is a bold vision, indeed.

This chapter presents the results of the Future Forum visioning process. It includes a vision statement for the region encompassing six thematic visions accompanied by 75 specific strategies intended to help make these visions a reality over time. The Columbia Gorge Vision and Strategies are driven by six themes that, in and of themselves, stand as high-level goals for the region:

| | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p>STRONG, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES</p>  | <p>DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMIES</p>  | <p>SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT</p>  | <p>VIBRANT, LIVABLE PLACES</p>  | <p>BALANCED, ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION</p>  | <p>THRIVING EDUCATION & ARTS</p>  |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|

The Gorge Vision and Strategies are the result of a rigorous process and a valid expression of the diverse individuals and organizations from different backgrounds, locales and perspectives who came together to dialogue and dream about the future of this region. They are filled with lofty aspirations as well as scores of potential initiatives that are, at once, familiar and forward-thinking, mainstream and alternative, practical and visionary.

There is no specific plan of action attached to the Gorge Vision and Strategies. That is because the Future Forum is a regional process and, in and of itself, has no authority to create or to implement a plan for achieving the vision – especially at the local level. That responsibility rests with the local governments and other agencies, institutions and citizens groups that are partners in this process, and, ultimately, with the people of the Gorge themselves.

Still, the Gorge Vision and Strategies are an important start. They stand ready to inform, motivate and guide our communities and leaders in undertaking any number of initiatives that will bring our vision closer to reality. And the process that resulted in them will continue to seek the input of citizens in future conversations to assist in monitoring and measuring the region’s success in achieving them over time.

For now, we offer a Vision and Strategies by and for the people of the Columbia Gorge...

Our Vision for the Columbia Gorge

WE ENVISION...

STRONG, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Each distinct in its people, places and local identity, yet sharing common qualities and values that unite our region and its hopes for the future.

DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMIES

Building on our traditional strengths and resources to create new opportunities for year-round, sustainable, locally based employment.

A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT

Where people prize our region’s beauty, steward and protect its natural resources, and strive to minimize their impact on its natural systems.

VIBRANT, LIVABLE PLACES

Where growth is well-managed, urban development is concentrated, and local communities enjoy a rewarding quality of life.

BALANCED, ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION

Connecting our region and allowing people and goods to move safely, efficiently and conveniently with minimal environmental impacts.

THRIVING EDUCATION & ARTS

Where learning and creative expression nurture our youth, prepare us for employment, broaden our cultural horizons and enrich our daily lives.

OUR VISION FOR STRONG, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



WE ENVISION a network of strong, healthy communities across the Columbia Gorge – each distinct in its people, places and local identity, yet sharing common values that unite our region and its hopes for the future. In our vision, we work to ensure that our communities protect and enhance their identity and quality of life through good governance, sound planning and sustainable development. Gorge communities remain safe, secure, welcoming places in which to grow, thrive and age. We support our families, youth and elders through affordable housing and health care, accessible transportation and diverse recreational opportunities. Our communities are built on cooperation and mutual respect and are inclusive of our varied cultures, ethnicities and indigenous tribes. Our citizens are actively engaged in local government and work together to create solutions to the challenges of the future. Our governments and leaders listen carefully to the needs and aspirations of their citizens and work across boundaries to cooperate in achieving our shared regional vision and goals.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OUR VISION

COMMUNITY IDENTITY

- **Local Community-Building.** Support local community-building efforts in the Gorge through community visioning projects, enhanced accessibility to local government and community leadership development programs.
- **Community Improvement & Celebrations.** Increase local volunteerism, community-based improvement projects and local festivals and celebrations.

COOPERATION, RESPECT & DIVERSITY

- **Regional Cooperation.** Promote opportunities for citizens from across the region and both sides of the Columbia River to cooperate in sharing information, ideas and resources.
- **Respect for Diversity.** Promote greater understanding and respect for social and cultural diversity in Gorge communities, including Native American and Hispanic populations.
- **Improved Native Americans Lives.** Explore ways to improve the lives of Native Americans in the Gorge, including recognition and respect for tribal rights and ceremonies, better coordination between governments on laws affecting tribes and improved housing and tribal business development.

HEALTH & SAFETY

- **Law Enforcement Funding.** Increase funding and support for local and regional law enforcement programs to better protect Gorge residents and tourists, reduce vandalism in parks and recreational areas and enforce safe driving practices.
- **Police & Fire Protection.** Improve and enhance local police and fire departments through formation of inter-agency partnerships, expanded financial support and training for citizen volunteers.
- **Preventive Health Care.** Promote a more holistic, preventive health care model in the Gorge, involving health care institutions, medical providers, insurers, and wellness and alternative health care professionals.
- **Youth Opportunities.** Provide safe, healthy activities and opportunities for youth to connect with one another, increase their knowledge, skills and experience, contribute to the civic life of their communities and find support and assistance when they need it.
- **Services for Elders.** Expand and improve essential services for elderly populations in the Gorge, including housing, transportation, health care and recreational opportunities.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

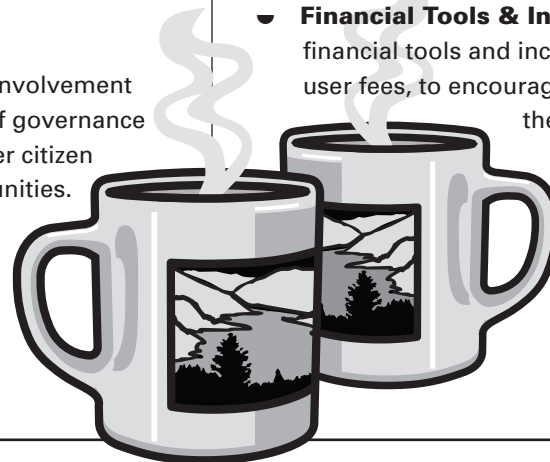
- **Public Involvement.** Increase public involvement programs and activities in all aspects of governance in the Gorge in order to promote greater citizen engagement and stronger local communities.
- **Regional Citizen Forum.** Strengthen civic engagement through establishment of a permanent regional forum for on-going citizen dialogue and involvement in the Gorge.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT [continued]

- **Volunteer Opportunities.** Support and expand opportunities for community volunteers, as appropriate, in local schools, parks, fire departments, economic development efforts and state and federal government programs.

GOVERNANCE

- **Regional Planning & Coordination.** Strengthen regional planning, inter-agency coordination and program implementation in the Gorge to better address regional issues and challenges.
- **Regional Partnerships & Coalitions.** Encourage and promote regional partnerships and coalitions in such areas as law enforcement, small business development and job creation, schools and libraries, affordable housing, parks and recreation.
- **Local Government Role.** Increase local government involvement in the management of urban growth, provision of public transportation, protection of natural resources, promotion of air and water quality and the development of renewable energy sources through new ordinances, programs and standards.
- **Financial Tools & Incentives.** Institute new financial tools and incentives such as tax breaks or user fees, to encourage public actions that support the region's vision and goals.



OUR VISION FOR DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMIES



WE ENVISION dynamic local economies for Columbia Gorge communities – building on our traditional strengths and resources to create new opportunities for year-round, sustainable, locally based employment. In our vision, we see increased economic diversity in the Gorge, including new business and industry based on the Internet, high technology, alternative energy and sustainable development. While agriculture remains a major force in our economy, we have increased our emphasis on sustainable farming practices and food production for local markets. Tourism in the Gorge is sustainably managed and demonstrates a profound respect for our environment, communities and native cultures. Visitors enjoy ecological, agricultural and cultural tourism opportunities that highlight our natural environment, orchards and vineyards and local communities. Small, local and home-based businesses, niche technology companies and cottage industries have expanded their role in the Gorge. Advances in telecommunications support our local entrepreneurs, allowing more people to earn a living wage in the communities where they live.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OUR VISION

LOCAL & REGIONAL ECONOMIES

- Gorge-Based Networks.** Build regional awareness that supports and promotes Gorge-based networks and professional organizations, and their activities, products and services.
- New Business Recruitment.** Recruit new businesses to the Gorge that sustain communities and local economies, including Gorge grown or made products, manufacturers that add value to local resources, locally owned alternative energy producers and low-impact ‘niche’ technology companies.
- Resident Discounts & Incentives.** Encourage local businesses, retailers and banks in the Gorge to offer special discounts and financial incentives for customers who are residents of Gorge communities.
- Complimentary Currency System.** Promote use of a ‘complimentary currency system’ in the Gorge – a formalized barter and trade program – as a way to strengthen local economic activity and build community.

EMPLOYMENT & SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

- ▼ **Living Wage Jobs.** Create new local, living wage job opportunities for Gorge residents in the areas of sustainable industry, renewable energy production, home-based businesses and cottage industries.
- ▼ **Small Business Development.** Support the development of small, locally owned businesses that serve community needs in the Gorge, through small business loans, tax rebates, partnerships with regulatory agencies, business mentorships and small business incubator spaces.

TECHNOLOGY

- ▼ **Improved Telecommunications Infrastructure.** Improve and enhance telecommunications infrastructure and services in the Gorge, fostering the creation of low-impact, high technology businesses, home-based businesses and telecommuter-based employment.

AGRICULTURE

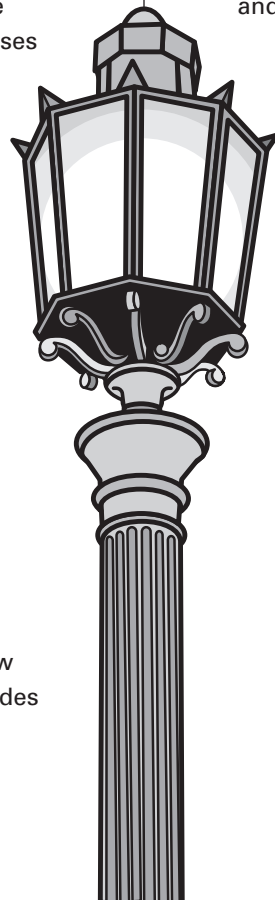
- ▼ **Small-Scale Agricultural Planning.** Review and refine local land use plans and zoning codes in Gorge communities to encourage, where appropriate, more local, organic, small-scale farms that produce food for local markets and consumers.

AGRICULTURE [continued]

- ▼ **Local Food Production.** Promote increased local food production to meet the needs of Gorge communities, including greater crop diversity, financial incentives and technical support for local food networks, small-scale and organic farms, and local farmers markets in Gorge communities.

TOURISM

- ▼ **Enhanced Gorge Tourism.** Enhance the tourism experience for Gorge visitors by providing more visitor amenities, including kiosks with information, restrooms and campgrounds.
- ▼ **Eco-Tourism & Agritourism.** Promote 'eco-tourism' and 'agritourism' programs in the Gorge in which tourists visit local ecological and cultural heritage attractions, orchards, vineyards and farms to study, learn and engage in beneficial volunteer activities.
- ▼ **Gorge Grown and Made.** Develop a Gorge-based retail center for Gorge grown or made goods and products that supports local farms, craftspeople and artisans, provides jobs, and caters to tourists.



OUR VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT



WE ENVISION a sustainable environment in the Columbia Gorge – where people prize our region’s beauty, steward and protect its natural resources and minimize their impact on its natural systems. In our vision, we see a growing ‘green ethic’ in which people tread lightly on the land. Our National Scenic Area regulations are respected and enforced, development is restricted from protected areas, forests are sustainably managed and classic Gorge vistas have been preserved. We enjoy unmatched access to outdoor recreational opportunities – even as we protect some natural areas from human activity entirely. Our preservation of natural habitat helps native plants and animals thrive, while promoting recovery of endangered species. Once again, healthy salmon runs populate the Columbia River and its tributaries. We have improved our water and air quality. Our communities have greatly increased their use of small-scale alternative energy such as solar and wind. Larger alternative energy installations support our region’s energy self-reliance – without compromising its scenic beauty, character or ecological integrity.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OUR VISION

NATIONAL SCENIC AREA & RESOURCE LANDS

- National Scenic Area Management.** Continuously improve National Scenic Area administration and management through periodic review and refinement of the National Scenic Area Management Plan, addressing such issues as boundary adjustments, allowable uses, review of applications and voluntary enhancement programs.
- Forest Management Strategy.** Develop a comprehensive regional strategy to promote sound management of the region’s forest resources, fostering sustainable timber harvests, minimizing fire hazards and protecting old growth forests and other significant natural, scenic, cultural and recreational values.

OUTDOOR RECREATION

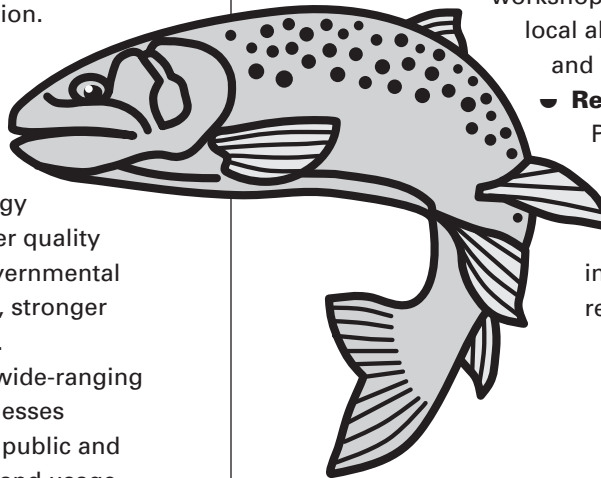
- Recreational Planning & Funding.** Improve planning and funding for outdoor recreational facilities, programs and activities in the Gorge.
- Recreational Trails.** Develop new recreational trails throughout the Gorge, including hiking and biking trails, horse trails, waterfront trails, interpretive trails, ‘heritage trails’ that celebrate the Gorge’s cultural heritage and trails linking Gorge towns to wilderness and recreational areas.

NATIVE SPECIES

- ▼ **Wildlife Habitat.** Protect and enhance native wildlife habitat in the Gorge through community-based asset inventories, eradication of invasive plants and animal species, tree-planting projects, preservation of wildlife corridors and funding for land acquisition programs.
- ▼ **Salmon Recovery.** Foster the continued recovery of historical salmon runs in the Columbia River and its Gorge tributaries through policy and regulatory reforms, federal and state fish restoration programs, public-private-tribal partnerships, scientific research, public advocacy and education.

AIR & WATER QUALITY

- ▼ **Regional Air & Water Quality Strategy.** Develop and implement a regional air and water quality strategy for the Gorge to promote air and water quality improvements through enhanced governmental cooperation, strengthened regulation, stronger enforcement and citizen participation.
- ▼ **Clean Skies Campaign.** Develop a wide-ranging clean skies campaign for Gorge businesses and residents, promoting a variety of public and private actions, such as bicycle lanes and usage, clean energy sources, and cleaner transport options including alternative fuels for trains.



AIR & WATER QUALITY [continued]

- ▼ **Night Skies Ordinances.** Encourage adoption of local 'night skies' ordinances that help reduce unnecessary light pollution and promote the return of starry nighttime vistas to the Gorge.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

- ▼ **Small-Scale Energy Applications.** Support increased use of small-scale, alternative energy applications in the Gorge through incentives, workshops, classes and subsidies for local alternative energy producers and organizations.
- ▼ **Renewable Energy Development.** Promote development of renewable energy sources in the Gorge, ensuring that such development does not negatively impact National Scenic Area resources and values.

OUR VISION FOR VIBRANT, LIVABLE PLACES



WE ENVISION vibrant, livable places in the Columbia Gorge – where growth is well managed, urban development is concentrated, and local communities enjoy a rewarding quality of life. In our vision, Gorge towns are ‘complete communities’ that enable residents to meet most of their needs locally. We have achieved greater densities through walkable downtowns and ‘mixed-use’ development that blends housing and commercial buildings with shops, restaurants, and well-used public spaces. We support this density with parks, trails and access to open spaces and recreational opportunities. Many of our residents walk, bike or use local shuttles or transit for everyday needs. We have a greater diversity of affordable housing, creating opportunities for people of all incomes, backgrounds and generations to own or rent their home. Our housing is smaller, more efficient and utilizes new technologies to reduce consumption of energy and resources. Much of our food is grown, marketed and consumed locally, through a system of small farms, farmers markets, ‘community supported agriculture’, and community gardens.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OUR VISION

URBAN GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT

- **Regional Dialogue on Growth.** Promote a region-wide dialogue on the challenges of an increasing population, new growth and urban development in the Gorge.
- **Urban Growth Management.** Guide future urban growth in the Gorge through careful management of existing urban areas, maintenance of community feel, and protection of the surrounding natural and scenic assets of the region.
- **Community Character.** Enhance and protect the character of Gorge communities through preservation of downtown areas and historic elements, design standards and guidelines, and careful mixed-use development.

LIVABILITY

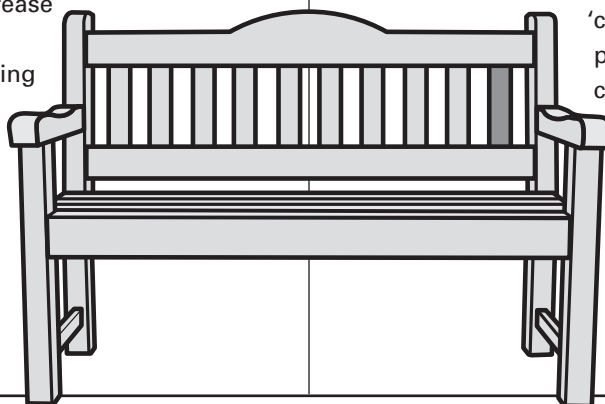
- **Mixed-Use Development.** Promote increased mixed-use development in Gorge downtown districts, where residential, office and small retail uses are blended in denser developments that accommodate new housing options, create small business opportunities, increase pedestrian activity and encourage the use of public spaces.

LIVABILITY [continued]

- ▼ **Town Squares & Public Spaces.** Support the development of town squares or similar public spaces in Gorge communities, where local residents and visitors alike can gather, connect and participate in civic life, including community events and farmers markets.
- ▼ **Pedestrian & Bicycle Activity.** Facilitate increased pedestrian and bicycle activity in Gorge towns through improved sidewalks, safer pedestrian crossings, dedicated bicycle lanes and other pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly amenities.
- ▼ **Affordable Housing Strategy.** Develop a comprehensive regional strategy to promote affordable housing in all Gorge communities, emphasizing intergovernmental cooperation, public/private partnerships, refinement of local land use plans and zoning codes, and new affordable housing programs.

PARKS & OPEN SPACES

- ▼ **Columbia River Access.** Increase public access to the Columbia River and its tributaries, including boat ramps, marinas, sailing facilities, ferry landings and new waterfront development where appropriate.



PARKS & OPEN SPACES [continued]

- ▼ **Community Parks & Open Space.** Improve and expand community parks and access to open space in Gorge communities through public-private partnerships, formation of new park and recreation districts, upgraded park maintenance programs and system development charges.

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING

- ▼ **Green Building Standards & Practices.** Promote green building standards and practices in Gorge communities, including review of local building codes to remove barriers and provide incentives, and use of recycled building materials, grey water recycling and renewable energy systems.

FOOD AND WATER

- ▼ **Local Food Systems.** Develop and promote local food systems that connect small farms in the Gorge to local communities, including farmers markets, 'community supported agriculture' programs, food co-ops and community gardens.
- ▼ **Water Resources Strategy.** Develop a comprehensive regional strategy to plan for and promote sustainable usage of current and future water resources available in the Gorge.

OUR VISION FOR BALANCED, ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION



WE ENVISION a balanced, accessible transportation system in the Columbia Gorge – connecting our region and allowing people and goods to move safely, efficiently and conveniently with minimal environmental impacts. In our vision, we balance traditional and alternative modes of travel – lessening our dependence on cars, reducing our ‘carbon footprint,’ and protecting our environment. We carefully maintain and improve our highways, utilizing new tools to manage, facilitate and, in some cases, restrict the flow of traffic. We have enhanced our bridges to ensure better connections across the Columbia River, safely accommodating public transit, bicycles and pedestrians. Once again, we travel by train, with regular service for residents, commuters and tourists between Gorge communities and the Portland/Vancouver area. Intraregional buses and ferries also serve our communities, reducing the number of private automobiles on our roads. An interconnected system of bicycle and pedestrian trails links all Gorge communities, allowing residents and tourists to travel throughout the region – entirely free of motorized vehicles.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OUR VISION

ALTERNATIVE MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

- **Alternative Transportation Modes.** Promote adoption of alternative modes of transportation in the Gorge that provide new options to Gorge residents for local travel and daily trips, as well as alternatives to the private automobile.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

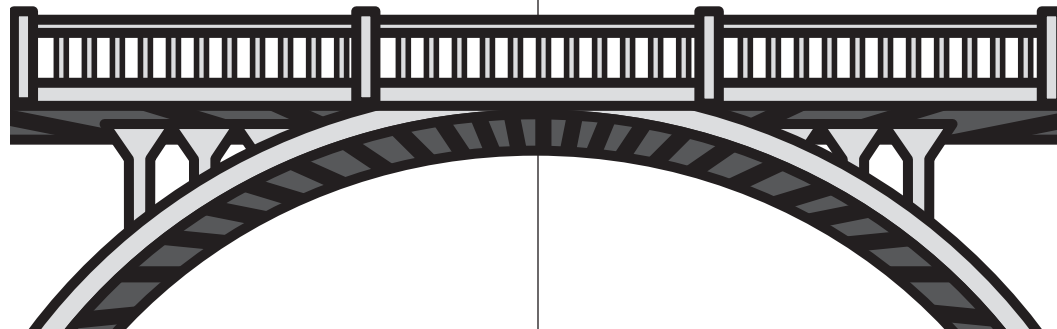
- **Mass Transit System.** Promote the long-term development of a comprehensive mass transit system to serve the unique geography and population centers of the Gorge, utilizing rail, bus, shuttle and other modes to link communities on both sides of the River.
- **Gorge Rail Service.** Establish new rail service linking Gorge communities with the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area, serving local residents, commuters and tourists in the region.
- **River Ferry System.** Explore the establishment of a regular river ferry service on the Columbia River, linking Gorge communities and serving local residents and tourists.

HIGHWAYS, ROADS & BRIDGES

- ▼ **Highways, Roads & Bridge Maintenance.** Support ongoing maintenance and improvement of existing Gorge highways, roads and bridges as an integral part of the region's transportation system, a vital component of its economy and an essential element in the mobility of its residents and visitors.
- ▼ **Traffic Restrictions.** Establish selective restrictions on through-travel by long haul trucks on parts of the Historic Columbia River Highway (Highway 30) and Washington State Route 14 to enhance public safety, reduce pollution and promote local tourism and recreation benefits.
- ▼ **Cross-River Connections.** Explore options for development of major new (or redeveloped) connections across the Columbia River to safely and efficiently accommodate commercial and private vehicular traffic, as well as mass transit, bicycles and pedestrians.

BICYCLES & PEDESTRIANS

- ▼ **Incentives for Bicycle Use.** Develop new financial incentives to encourage and promote bicycle use as an alternative mode of transportation in Gorge communities, including grants, tax rebates and employer participation programs.
- ▼ **Bicycle Lanes & Bicycle/Pedestrian Paths.** Promote the development of new bicycle lanes and bicycle/pedestrian trails in Gorge towns, making it safe, convenient and accessible for residents to walk or ride bicycles in meeting their daily travel needs.
- ▼ **Regional Pedestrian & Bicycle Trail.** Develop a regional, interconnected pedestrian and bicycle trail linking all Gorge communities on both sides of the Columbia River.



OUR VISION FOR THRIVING EDUCATION & ARTS



WE ENVISION a Columbia Gorge that places a high value on thriving education and arts – where learning and creative expression nurture our youth, prepare us for employment, broaden our cultural horizons, and enrich our daily lives. In our vision, knowledge and creativity enable Gorge communities to adapt to a changing world, while respecting our core values, natural environment and cultural heritage. Our schools and community colleges have expanded educational offerings and access to advanced degrees that prepare students for the workforce and a changing economy. New scientific programs, research facilities and interpretive centers offer innovative learning opportunities based on our region’s unique environmental and cultural assets. We honor our cultural heritage as an integral part of the Gorge. Tribal traditions and cultures are deeply respected, while ceremonial sites and livelihoods are protected. Arts, music and cultural programs help our communities celebrate their local identity and sense of place. Flourishing arts organizations, artist communities, events and festivals bring full creative expression into the public sphere.

STRATEGIES FOR ACHIEVING OUR VISION

TEACHING SUSTAINABILITY

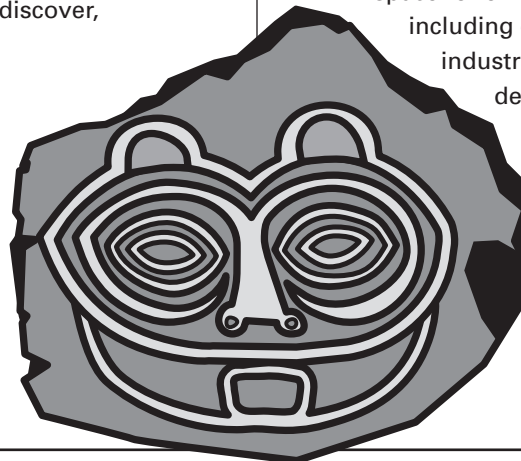
- **Sustainable Living Education & Awareness.** Develop public education and awareness programs promoting sustainable living in the Gorge through local schools, community colleges and federal and state agencies and local governments in the region.
- **Vocational Training for Sustainable Industries.** Enhance high school and community college vocational training in such emerging sustainable industries as green building, alternative energy, environment protection and agriculture for local food systems.
- **Adult Education in Sustainability.** Expand adult education programs and classes focused on sustainable living practices, including residential renewable energy production, natural resource protection, preventive health care, small business development and more.

SCHOOLS & EDUCATION

- **Support for Local Schools.** Foster stronger support for local schools in the Gorge, including development of new funding sources, improved programs and classes, and increased involvement of parents and volunteers.
- **Programs for Minority Youth.** Develop and improve programs in local schools and community colleges to reach out, engage and meet the special needs of Gorge minority youth, including Native American and Hispanic children.
- **College Preparatory Programs.** Expand college preparatory programs through high school partnerships at Columbia Gorge Community College and Mt. Hood Community College in order to increase the number of Gorge students who complete associate degrees and go on to receive baccalaureate and advanced degrees.
- **Scientific, Research & Interpretive Programs.** Promote the development of new scientific programs, research facilities and interpretive centers based on the unique environmental and cultural assets of the Gorge, providing opportunities for scientists, educators, students and visitors to discover, learn and explore.

CULTURAL HERITAGE

- **Native American History & Culture.** Sustain the history, culture and traditions of the Gorge's indigenous peoples and tribes, including protection of significant Native American ancestral and ceremonial sites.



CULTURAL HERITAGE [continued]

- **Native American Museum & Interpretive Center.** Establish a permanent museum and interpretive center for Native American history, culture and stories in the Columbia Gorge.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

- **Arts Education.** Expand arts education in Gorge schools and community colleges through new arts programs and facilities, fundraising campaigns and events.
- **Arts Organizations.** Support the continued development and expansion of arts organizations in the Gorge, fostering increased opportunities for local artists, musicians, performers and others to share their creative expression.
- **Events & Festivals.** Promote the development of new seasonal artistic events and festivals in the Gorge that celebrate the region's cultural heritage and sense of place, showcase its artists, performers and craftspeople, and contribute to its economic vitality.
- **Artist Spaces.** Foster the creation of new studio space for existing and emerging Gorge artists, including conversion of unused or underutilized industrial or commercial buildings for development of 'live-work' spaces for local artists.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE FUTURE FORUM

CONTINUING THE DIALOGUE

Change is a constant in any region and while it cannot be stopped, it can be directed in ways chosen by the community. The identification of shared values and creation of a common vision outlining what a community wants for its future can thus become a guide for directing changes to create the future desired by the community. While it is easy for communities to focus solely on day-to-day challenges, a guiding vision is necessary to ensure those daily actions create a unified picture.

The Future Forum sought to begin the creation of that guiding vision. Meetings and surveys encouraged thought and discussion about the future of the Gorge. The many responses distilled into the above values, visions and strategies represent the combined voices of hundreds of Gorge residents and visitors. The information was gathered into this report so that it may be used in a number of ways:



- This report is a baseline from which to gauge and measure progress and/or change in community values.
- The values, vision and strategies can be viewed independently to show what Future Forum participants want the Gorge to be like in the future.
- Information about the trends affecting our communities and region has value in depicting the historical background of this vision and recording present concerns.
- The report and underlying data can serve as a foundation for continuing public and private discussions on the future of the Gorge itself, individuals and communities within the region.
- The data collected can be used by policy makers, agency directors, businesses, community organizations and individuals to help prioritize actions that are aligned with the values of the Gorge region as a whole.
- Community and county planning actions can be informed by this process and can work with residents to refine the visions and strategies.
- Future comprehensive plans may use this approach and incorporate the results to reflect the unique identity of a community.

The hope is that this document will be an important tool for all who are interested in what the region thinks about its future and who want to move the region closer to that future. Beginning in October 2008, the Working Group will meet with local governments, leaders, tribes, community groups and others to share the information that has been painstakingly collected and analyzed since the Discovery Center event in October 2007. The group is strongly committed to returning to the communities with this report documenting the process and conveying participants' comments and suggested strategies for the future. The strength of the findings rests in the common themes and goals elicited throughout the region. As stated previously, because there is no action plan attached to the vision and strategies, the task of creating or implementing plans to achieve the vision lies with local agencies, institutions and other groups that are partners in this process, and with the people of the Gorge themselves.

The second Columbia Gorge Future Forum is planned for 2010. It is intended to be a larger event followed by broader regional participation. The next Future Forum agenda could be much more locally driven because of the work that has already been accomplished in stimulating conversation in the region. We hope to come together to assess how we are implementing the Gorge Vision and Strategies, to encourage even greater participation and support, to adjust the vision as needed and to celebrate our accomplishments. Where this first Future Forum was intended to start and inspire the dialogue, the second one will seek to continue and supplement it.

As we move forward into the future, the Future Forum can act as an ongoing process to inspire the Gorge toward greater regional collaboration. By periodically coming together to collectively ask what we value, what changes we are concerned about, what we want the future to look like and how we can make it so, we will strengthen the Gorge and its communities.

A collaborative attitude and regional commitment will help the Gorge create a future that is all its own.

AFTERWORD

In closing, several creative-thinking Gorge community members contribute their heart-felt vision of the Gorge 20 years from today. These glimpses describe several possibilities for the Gorge; by implementing a region-wide vision, residents and visitors can have a significant role in shaping the future of this unique place.

"I'm standing on Sevenmile Hill west of The Dalles on a summer evening, watching the sun go down. The air is so clear that looking east and west along the river, there is no haze, and I can see the clear outline of Mount Hood to the southwest."

Julie Reynolds

"When I first came to the Gorge, I was awestruck at the incredible beauty time had left us. As an artist, I draw my inspiration from my love of wildlife and the natural environment. Thoughtful policy will preserve this influence on generations to come."

Michael Stewart

"Looking through the glass brightly I see flowing waters clean, clear and cold where those who have depended on the richness of the river for generations and those who are discovering its new possibilities enjoy harmonious coexistence."

Mary Dodds Schlick

"The Columbia River Gorge is not just a place, it is an idea. It is an example of how conflicting visions can find common ground. Recreation, economy, sustainability blend here to create community."

Michael Friend

"As it has been for thousands of years, the Columbia Gorge is a land where natural beauty is enhanced by a creative human presence: a place of balance, where environment and economy coincide in harmony."

Dan Spatz

"Celilo was our fishing capital of the world and we traded, bartered and sold our salmon with all peoples of the United States. It was a gathering of natives and we respected mother earth's treasure."

"The salmon people of the region still pray to the Creator for the protection of our salmon for ceremonial and commercial use. Salmon is our main food and we seek to protect the Columbia River Gorge for our unborn and future generations."

Simon Sampson

"The Gorge is a string of small, unique communities where rich and poor work and live together. Living in the Gorge, you are equally likely to know your check-out clerk as city leadership because the heart of the Gorge is friendship. Throughout all of the changes the Gorge has experienced, it has never lost its core value: Community."

John Metta

"The Columbia Gorge is ruggedly beautiful beyond comparison. What I would like to see is limited future development within the Gorge itself. Hold on to what we have. Limit change! Keep it a nice place for animals and humans to enjoy in harmony."

Les Vaughn

APPENDIX A

MEETINGS AND WEB SURVEY FOR THE COLUMBIA GORGE FUTURE FORUM

DISCOVERY CENTER EVENT

October 29, 2007 Columbia Gorge Discovery Center : The Dalles, OR

COMMUNITY MEETINGS 2008

February 7 Rock Creek Center : Stevenson, WA

February 13 Corbett School : Corbett, OR

February 19 Skamania PUD Community Room : Carson, WA

February 27 North Bonneville City Hall : North Bonneville, WA

February 28 Mosier Grange : Mosier, OR

March 4 Underwood Community Center : Underwood, WA

March 6 Dallesport Community Center : Dallesport, WA

March 10 Wishram Fire Department : Wishram, WA

March 19 Hood River Inn : Hood River, OR

March 25 Pioneer Center : White Salmon, WA

March 26 Jemtegaard Middle School : Washougal, WA

April 1 The Dalles Civic Auditorium : The Dalles, OR

April 8 Gorge Pavilion : Cascade Locks, OR

FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS 2008

March 10 Native American Focus Group, Wishram School : Wishram, WA

March 12 Latino Focus Group, St. Mary's Catholic Church : Hood River, OR

March 20 Native American Focus Group, Celilo Longhouse : Celilo, OR

WEB SURVEY

Available from February 7, 2008 to May 1, 2008

APPENDIX B

DISCOVERY CENTER EVENT AGENDA

Columbia Gorge Discovery Center

October 29, 2007 8:00 am–4:00 pm

- 8:00 am REGISTRATION, DISPLAYS, COFFEE
- 8:30 Welcoming Remarks and Introductions
- 8:50 Forum Keynote
- 9:40 Columbia Gorge Profile
- 10:30 Small Group Discussions: Values, Trends & Issues
- 11:45 LUNCH
- 12:30 pm Guest Panel: Perspectives on Change in the Gorge
- 2:15 Small Group Discussions: Visionary Ideas for the Gorge
- 3:40 Closing and Next Steps
- 4:00 ADJOURN

ATTENDEES AT THE DISCOVERY CENTER EVENT, OCTOBER 29, 2007

APPENDIX C

- › Harold Abbe, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Jose Alvarez, Planner, Clark County
- › Steven Ames, Steven Ames Planning
- › Steven Andersen, Principal, Cascade Planning Associates
- › Jill Arens, Executive Director, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › John Arens, Director, Mid-Columbia Council of Governments
- › Julia Babcock, RARE volunteer, Port of Cascade Locks
- › Hillary Barbour, Office of Congressman Blumenauer
- › Kelley Beamer, Conservation Organizer, Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- › Larry Bellamy, City Administrator, City of Goldendale
- › Len Bergstein, President, Northwest Strategies, Inc.
- › Bruce Bolme, Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce
- › Ken Born, Planner, Multnomah County Land Use Planning
- › Tom Brazille, Councilor, City of Cascade Locks
- › Barbara Briggs, County Commissioner, Hood River County
- › Peggy Bryan, Executive Director, Skamania County Economic Development Council
- › Mike Canon, Director, Klickitat County Economic Development
- › Dee Caputo, Senior Planner, Washington Dept. of Community, Trade and Economic Development
- › Ron Carroll, Friends of Mosier
- › Dale Connell, Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce
- › Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- › Todd Cornett, Planning Director, Wasco County
- › Ed Cox, Reporter, The Dalles Chronicle
- › Tom Cramblett, Councilor, City of Cascade Locks
- › Doug Crow, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Sam Crummett, Planning Consultant, Mackay & Sposito, Inc.
- › Kristin Currin, Friends of Mosier
- › Lee Curtis, Director, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
- › Chuck Daughtry, General Manager, Port of Cascade Locks
- › Todd Davidson, Director, Oregon Tourism Commission (dba Travel Oregon)
- › Judy Davis, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Ernest Drapela, Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee
- › Jason Dumont, Portland Area Preserves Steward, The Nature Conservancy
- › Kathie Durbin, Reporter, The Columbian
- › Daniel Durow, Planning Director, City of The Dalles
- › Mark A. Ellsworth, Oregon Governor's Office
- › George Erdenberger, Landscape Architect
- › Dan Ericksen, County Judge, Wasco County
- › Gordy Euler, Long-Range Planning, Clark County
- › Chris Foster, Commissioner, Multnomah County Land Use Planning
- › Anne Goranson-Salas, Washington State University Horizons Program
- › Kevin Gorman, Executive Director, Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- › Rob Greene, Tribal Attorney, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- › Bill Fashing, Economic Development Coordinator, Hood River County
- › Kathy Fitzpatrick, City Council, City of Mosier
- › Mark Flaming, Secretary/Treasurer, Columbia River Gorge Technology Alliance
- › Daniel Harkenrider, Area Manager, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Forest Service Office
- › Dian Hilliard, Conference Solutions Inc.
- › Ray Hendricks, Portland General Electric
- › Jim Hoffman, General Manager, Cousins Country Inn
- › Sherry Holliday, County Commissioner, Wasco County
- › Jim Jacks, Office of Governor Gregoire
- › Johnny Jackson, Chief, Cascade Tribe
- › Ron Karten, Reporter, Smoke Signals
- › Cheryl A. Kennedy, Tribal Council Chairwoman, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- › Angie Kenney, Planner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Jeanette Kloos, President, Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway
- › William Knight, Air Quality Division, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- › Richard Krikava, Office of Senator Gordon Smith
- › Michael Lang, Conservation Director, Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- › Tim Lee, President, Port of Cascade Locks Commission
- › Robert Leipper, citizen
- › Bill Lennox, County Commissioner, Wasco County
- › Kevin Liburdy, Senior Planner, City of Hood River
- › Brian Litt, Planning Manager, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Jeremy Littell, Researcher, University of Washington Climate Impacts Group
- › Walt Loehrke, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Katharina Lorenz, Commissioner, Multnomah County Land Use Planning
- › Tom Mack, Chief of Staff for Multnomah County Commissioner Lonnie Roberts
- › Lonny Macy, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Michael McElwee, Executive Director, Port of Hood River
- › Ken McKune, Washington State University Horizons Program
- › Jay McLaughlin, Mt. Adams Resource Stewards / Horizons Program

- › Carl McNew, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › John McSherry, Business Development Manager, Port Of Skamania
- › Lloyd Meeks, citizen
- › Patricia Meeks, citizen
- › David Meriwether, County Administrator, Hood River County
- › Jessica Metta, Planner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Jim Middaugh, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Antone Minthorn, Chairman, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- › Bobbie Miller, Member, Gorge Land Use Equity
- › Rachel Nolin, State of Oregon, Budget and Management Division
- › Gary Nychyk, Senior Planner, Wasco County
- › Colonel Thomas E. O'Donovan, Commander, US Army Corp of Engineers
- › Paul Pearce, County Commissioner, Skamania County
- › Louie Pitt, Director of Governmental Affairs and Planning, The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- › John Potter, Assistant Director of Operations, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- › Jim Price, student, Lyle High School
- › Kevin Price, Columbia River Gorge Area Manager, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- › Claire A. Puchy, Endangered Species Program, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
- › Joyce Reinig, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Dan Rendine, Portland General Electric
- › Julie Reynolds, citizen
- › Ron Rivers, County Commissioner, Hood River County
- › Lonnie Roberts, District 4 County Commissioner, Multnomah County
- › Dave Robertson, Portland General Electric
- › Hector Roche, Community Liaison for Multnomah County Chair Ted Wheeler
- › Ryan Rodruck, Office of Congressman Doc Hastings
- › Casey Roeder, Executive Director, Skamania County Chamber of Commerce
- › Diana Ross, Planner, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Forest Service Office
- › Sue Ryan, Reporter, The Hood River News
- › Carolyn Sanco, Business Development Officer, Oregon Economic & Community Development Department
- › David Sauter, County Commissioner, Klickitat County
- › Brad Schmidt, Reporter, The Oregonian
- › Bernard Seeger, City Administrator, City of Cascade Locks
- › Honna Sheffield, Commissioner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Michelle Singer, Oregon Health Sciences University, One Sky Center
- › David Skakel, Director, Columbia Gorge Earth Center
- › Katie Skakel, Mosier Community School
- › Susie Slockish, Member, Cascade/ Klickitat Tribe
- › Wilbur Slockish, Chief, Klickitat Tribe
- › Rick Smyre, President, Communities of the Future
- › Dan Spatz, Executive Director of Resource Development, Columbia Gorge Community College
- › Andrea Spencer, Natural Resources, The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- › Anne Squier, President, Westwind Stewardship Group
- › Kristen Stallman, Scenic Area Coordinator, Oregon Department of Transportation
- › Tim Stearns, Senior Energy Policy Specialist, Washington Dept. of Community, Trade and Economic Development
- › Cheryl Steindorf, Washington State University Horizons Program
- › Mark Stevenson, Columbia River Gorge Area Staff, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
- › Mary Stocks, Public Relations, The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce
- › Erin Stone, Director, The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce
- › Aurolyn Stwyer, Council Member, The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- › Ron Suppah, Council Chairman, The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- › Siobhan Taylor, Public Affairs Director, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- › Phyllis Thiemann, Board Member, West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce
- › Ray Thygesen, Washington State University Horizons Program
- › Frank Toda, President, Columbia Gorge Community College
- › Derrick Tokos, Principal Planner, Multnomah County Land Use Planning
- › Jamie Tolfree, County Commissioner, Skamania County
- › Kathleen Tom, Tribal Council Member, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- › Ava VanVelsor, Washington State University Horizons Program
- › Cindy Walbridge, Planning Director, City of Hood River
- › Lavina Washines, Tribal Council Chairwoman, The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- › Bill Weiler, Habitat Biologist, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- › Jeanne Williams, Biologist, Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- › Linda Williams, Washington State University Horizons Program
- › Karen Witherspoon, Director, Skamania County Planning & Community Development
- › Susan Wolff, Dean of Instruction, Columbia Gorge Community College
- › Al Wright, Principal, Al Wright Consulting

APPENDIX D

COMMUNITY MEETINGS AGENDA

February–April 2008 5:30–8:30 pm

- 5:30 pm Open House, Refreshments, Information
- 5:50 Official Welcome, Introductions and Meeting Purpose
 - Presentation: Future Forum Video and “Fast Facts”
 - Discussion: Gorge Values, Trends and Issues
 - Discussion: Gorge Visions and Local Actions
 - Presentation: Vital Signs Indicators Project
 - Next Steps for Future Forum and How to Stay Involved
- 8:20 Group Polling on Visions and Actions
- 8:30 Meeting Adjourned

APPENDIX E

METHODOLOGY FOR ANALYZING COLLECTED RESPONDENT DATA

Note: Much of this appendix is summarized from the *Methodology and Qualitative Analysis Report for the Columbia River Gorge Commission* prepared by Portland State University’s Survey Research Lab in the Office of Graduate Studies and Research. The full text of this report may be viewed at the Columbia River Gorge Commission office.

Data Collection

The Columbia Gorge Future Forum gathered data using paper surveys at the Discovery Center event in October 2007 and the 16 community meetings conducted from February to April 2008. Using Survey Monkey software, a Web survey was available from February through April 2008. The surveys included either three or four of the following open-ended questions:

- 1] *What do you value most about the Columbia Gorge (and your own community)? What would you like to remain the same in the future?*
- 2] *How is the Columbia Gorge (and your own community) changing? What issues will it face in the future?*
- 3] *Imagine the Columbia Gorge (and your own community) in 15–20 years time, and that it meets your highest expectations for the future. What do you see?*
- 4] *What is one or more local action in your own community that would help bring your vision closer to reality? Be specific.*

The surveys for the Discovery Center event and the Web survey included only questions 1–3 and did not include the parenthetical statement “and your own community.” The community meetings included all four questions and the parenthetical references to their own communities.

The Columbia River Gorge Commission contracted with Portland State University's Survey Research Lab to conduct the qualitative analysis of the data gathered. To most efficiently use the resources available, PSU and the Commission agreed that the data from all three sources (Discovery Center event, community meetings, Web survey) would be coded for the vision (#3) and action (#4) questions. PSU also analyzed and summarized the codes for the vision question (#3) while Commission staff analyzed and summarized the codes for the action question (#4). Answers for the values (#1) and changes (#2) questions were sorted by Commission staff and Visioning Consultant Steven Ames into broad, general themes for use in the final report. The following summary describes the qualitative analysis completed by Portland State University.

Qualitative Data Analysis Approach

Qualitative analysis of the text from the vision and action questions was used to systematically code and summarize the data. These summaries can be used to identify key themes and issues and then to develop a vision plan. The following steps itemize the qualitative analysis approach implemented.

Step 1: Create the Coding Tree

A coding tree is an outline of themes that are expected in the data and/or identified during an initial review of the data. It is important to identify a sufficient number of themes to be useful for the analysis process without going into so much detail that the coding process would be too difficult or the specificity of codes would not support later uses of the data. The themes identified for this dataset resulted in a coding tree of 43 codes grouped into five "families." A family is a general label into which a group of codes can be organized. TABLE 1 presents alphabetical listings of the families and the codes within each family. One additional family named "Other" with two codes is also included. The code "other" was used for any text that did not logically fit into any of the other 43 codes and "didn't answer" was used for those responses that neglected to directly answer a given question.

METHODOLOGY [CONTINUED]

| TABLE 1 Coding Tree Developed by Portland State University for the Columbia Gorge Future Forum Data | | |
|--|--|-------------------------------|
| COMMUNITIES (15 codes) | ECONOMY (9 codes) | LAND USE (5 codes) |
| Arts and Entertainment | Agriculture | Dams and Waterways |
| Civic Engagement | Casino | Parks and Open Spaces |
| Community Identities and Culture | Housing | Resources and Land Management |
| Cooperation and Respect | Jobs and Wages | Trails |
| Crime and Safety | Local Food Systems | Urban Growth and Development |
| Cultural Heritage | Local and Regional Economy | ENVIRONMENT (7 codes) |
| Diversity | Small and Local Businesses | Air and Water Quality |
| Education and Schools | Technology | Alternative Energy |
| Government | Tourism | Outdoor Recreation |
| Health and Healthcare | TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE (5 codes) | Pollution |
| Indigenous Tribes | Biking and Walking | Scenic Beauty and NSA |
| Livability and Quality of Life | Bridge | Sustainability |
| Population | Highways and Roads | Wildlife |
| Self-Sufficient Communities | Mass Transit and Alternative Transportation | OTHER (2 codes) |
| Youth and Elderly | Regional Transportation Network | Didn't Answer |
| | | Other |

Step 2: Import All Text Data into Analysis Software

To analyze the qualitative data, ATLAS.ti 5.0 (Scientific Software Development, 2004; www.atlasti.com) was selected as the most appropriate software. As data files with the individual responses by question were received, text data was formatted and imported into ATLAS.ti, where the appropriate codes were created and applied.

Step 3: Code All Text Data

In order to analyze qualitative data, the size of the “text unit” (an individual piece of text data) must be decided. Text units can be words, lines, sentences or paragraphs. For the Future Forum data, paragraphs were chosen as the text unit for coding. This resulted in all of the information in one respondent’s answer to one question equaling one text unit. This allowed for the text related to a given code to remain in the entire answer when it is printed in a code report to provide sufficient context. For example, if one answer to the vision question included information about civic engagement, wildlife and housing, the whole response was printed in the three separate code reports run for final analysis.

Coding qualitative text is a detailed process of reading, reflecting and interpreting. Coders read each text unit, often multiple times in order to fully grasp the content. The reader reflects on the content of the text, considering the multiple issues included. The reader interprets the content based on the codes available. Finally, the coder applies as many codes as the text unit references. Coders are not allowed to make assumptions about respondents’ answers (*i.e.*, assuming an underlying meaning or inference beyond the written words), but to code the responses at face value in order to prevent bias.

Step 4: Edit, Refine and Expand The Coding Tree While Coding

While the text is coded, new codes may become apparent. If that occurred, a new code was created and added to the existing coding tree. When new codes were created, previously coded data was reviewed and recoded as needed. Codes were also periodically checked for redundancy when two similar codes occurred. In this case, the two redundant codes were merged to create one single new code.

METHODOLOGY [CONTINUED]

Step 5: Run Coded Text Reports

After all of the data was coded, using the qualitative analysis software, the large text file was sorted by code and reports were run for each of the 43 codes (excluding “other” and “didn’t answer”) for the vision and action questions. Each of the reports produced included all of the text units (i.e., complete answers to each question) that received a given code. With each text unit, the data source (either “Community and October Data” or “Web Data”) and all of the codes applied to that text are printed (in alphabetical order, not the order in which the themes appear in the text unit) so that the reader knows all of the thematic areas in which that text will be considered in the analysis. Any given text unit will appear in as many reports as it received codes. It is important to note that the text is reprinted as it was received, without any editing for spelling, grammar or clarity. Each text unit is preceded by a unique identifier assigned to each respondent.

It is important to keep in mind that the questions posed to the respondents were broad, open-ended topics. Using this qualitative approach, it is assumed that the themes raised are the most important or prominent issues on the minds of the respondents. However, if asked more directly about all of the issues using different survey approaches, the same respondents might rate some of the low incidence themes quite high on scales of importance or relevance for the Columbia Gorge.

Step 6: Analyze and Synthesize the Coded Data

Once the data was organized in thematic reports, each code was summarized to depict the key issues and topics raised by the respondents. Portland State University summarized the vision question while Gorge Commission staff summarized the action question. These summaries were then used to frame the vision and strategies for the Columbia Gorge Future Forum. This may involve moving beyond the specific codes of the data to develop higher-order themes, and finally drawing conclusions based on the analyzed data. However, the value of the individual responses and the detailed, coded data is never lost and can be used as a reference for other purposes in the future. ↑

FUTURE FORUM CONTRIBUTORS

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

- › Jill Arens, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Peggy Bryan, Skamania County Economic Development Council
- › Mike Canon, Klickitat County Economic Development
- › Laura Comini, The Dalles Chamber of Commerce
- › Lee Curtis, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
- › Chuck Daughtry, Port of Cascade Locks
- › Jessica Davenport, Skamania County Planning & Community Development
- › Bill Fashing, Hood River County Economic Development
- › Nicole Hollatz, Skamania County Planning & Community Development
- › Virginia Kelly, US Forest Service
- › Andrea Klaas, Port of The Dalles
- › Brian Litt, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Jessica Metta, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Dean Meyerson, volunteer
- › Amanda Remington, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
- › Casey Roeder, Skamania County Chamber of Commerce
- › Diana Ross, US Forest Service
- › Dan Spatz, Columbia Gorge Community College
- › Phyllis Thiemann, Cascade Locks Event Coordinator
- › Karen Witherspoon, Skamania County Planning & Community Development

FINANCIAL AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTORS

- › Avis Rent-A-Car
- › Bohn's Printing, Inc.
- › Bonneville Hot Springs Resort
- › Clark County
- › Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
- › Gorge Local Currency Cooperative
- › Hood River County
- › Klickitat County Economic Development
- › Metro
- › Multnomah County
- › Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- › Oregon Parks & Recreation Department
- › Portland General Electric
- › Safeway
- › Skamania County
- › Skamania Lodge
- › Southwest Clean Air Agency
- › US Forest Service Scenic Area office
- › Wasco County
- › Washington Department of Ecology

FUTURE FORUM CONTRIBUTORS [continued]

VISIONING CONSULTANT

- › Steven Ames, Principal, Steven Ames Planning

BRAND + DESIGN CONSULTANT

- › Pamela Trow-Johnson, 501 DRIVE LLC

PROJECT CONSULTANTS

- › Deanna Busdieker, db design
- › John Hardham, Light Wave Communications
- › Dian Hilliard, Conference Solutions Inc.
- › Dayna Reed, SignArt
- › Katlin Smith, UrbanWords Group
- › Greg Weiss, Columbia River Music
- › Helen Woods, qualitative analyst

FACILITATORS AT THE DISCOVERY CENTER EVENT

- › Barbara Briggs
- › George Erdenberger
- › Dan Ericksen
- › Angie Kenney
- › Claire Puchy
- › Dave Robertson
- › Katie Skakel
- › Anne Squier

KEYNOTE AND PANEL SPEAKERS AT THE DISCOVERY CENTER EVENT

- › Steven Ames, Steven Ames Planning
- › Todd Davidson, Oregon Tourism Commission (dba Travel Oregon)
- › Mark Flaming, Columbia River Gorge Technology Alliance
- › Brian Litt, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- › Jeremy Littell, University of Washington Climate Impacts Group
- › Rick Smyre, Communities of the Future
- › Tim Stearns, Washington Dept. of Community, Trade and Economic Development

FACILITATORS AT THE COMMUNITY MEETINGS

- › Barbara Briggs
- › Marti Kantola
- › Katie Skakel

ATTENDEES

- › More than 500 individual participants: see Appendix C for a complete list of Discovery Center Event attendees

DATA ANALYSIS

- › Survey Research Lab, Portland State University

PHOTOGRAPHY

- › John Hardham, Light Wave Communications
- › Darryl Lloyd, Long Shadow Photography
- › Peter Marbach, Peter Marbach Photography



For more information, visit the Future Forum on the Web at

www.GorgeFutureForum.org

or contact Jessica Metta at 509-493-3323 ext. 228 or metta@gorgecommission.org



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