



# Managing Recreation on National Forest System Lands in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area



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# Presentation Overview

## Recreation Management 101

- Visitor use trends
- Ecological impacts
- Management approaches and tools

## Recent and Ongoing Projects

- Sandy River Delta
- Lower White Salmon River – Outfitter and Guide Use
- Klickitat River Mile One
- Coyote Wall / Burdoin Mountain / Catherine Creek Trail System
- Cascade Locks Trail System (proposal stage)

## Questions / Comments



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# Recreation Use and Trends

- Increasing population and demand for recreation
- Activities – hiking/walking & viewing natural features
- Emerging technology – further, farther, faster
- Apps and social media
- Climate factors



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# Ecological Impacts

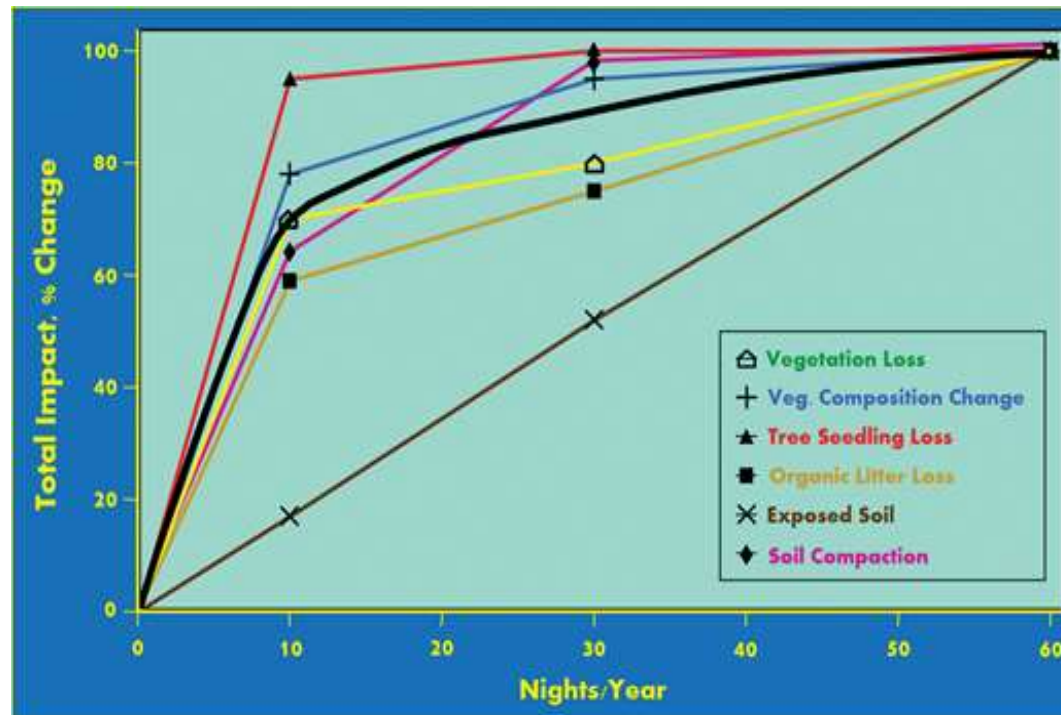
- Soil
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Water resources



# Factors Influencing Recreation Impacts

- Recreation intensity
- Activity and timing of use
- Resource sensitivity
- Design elements / engineering

Marion (1984)



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# Tools and Approaches

## National Environmental Policy Act

- Identify key issues / concerns
- Avoid / reduce impacts
- Interdisciplinary design process

## Best Management Practices (BMPs)

- Clean Water Act
- Core and Site-Specific BMPs
- Monitoring

## Best Behavioral Practices

## Trail Planning and Design

## Wildlife Closure Areas / Seasonal Use Restrictions

## Restoration

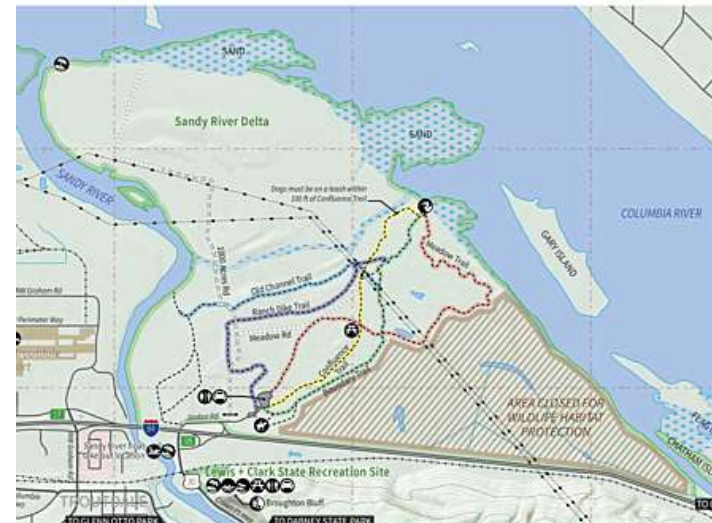
## Partnerships & Education



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# Sandy River Delta

- “Thousand Acres dog park”
- Five mile, multi-use trail system
- Sensitive wetland and riparian habitat
- Federally-listed and Forest Sensitive species
- Restoration and closure areas
- Information and education
- Friends of the Sandy River Delta, Sandy River Watershed Council, and Lower Columbia Estuary



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# Lower White Salmon River

- Increasing use (30K guided in 2017)
- Shoreline largely in private ownership
- Lower White Salmon River Management Plan (1991)
- Removal of Condit Dam in 2011
- Concerns about boating impacts on spawning salmon and redds
- Best Behavioral Practices
- Partnerships with National Marine Fisheries Service, Friends of the White Salmon River, and Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group (SHARE the White Salmon River)



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# Klickitat Mile One

- Proliferation of user-created roads
- Overnight use without facilities and services
- No established river access
- Substantial impacts to soils and vegetation
- Surface and streambank erosion
- Emphasis on providing visitor amenities, containing impacts from vehicles, and restoration of river bank
- Surveys completed by Yakama Cultural Resource Department



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# Coyote Wall / Burdoin Mountain / Catherine Creek Trail System (2009)

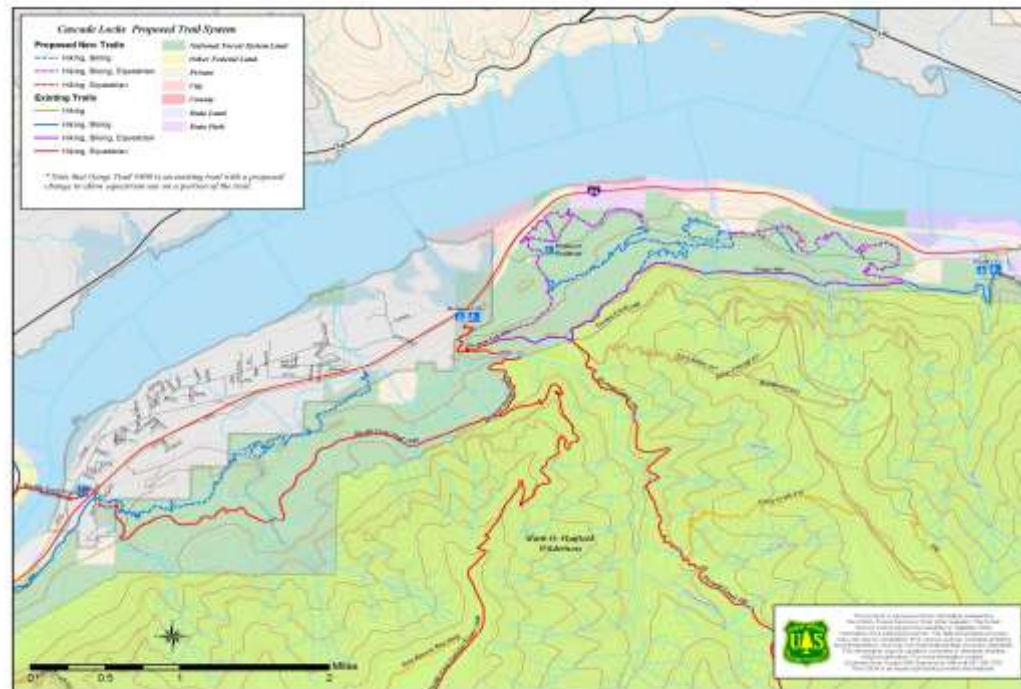
- User-created, multi-use trail system
- Sensitive riparian areas
- Decommissioning to meet trail density guidelines
- Leash requirements
- Seasonal use restrictions
- Closure area around Catherine Creek arch
- Enforcement challenges
- Washington Trails Association



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# Cascade Locks Trail System

- 15-mile, multiple use trail system
- Professional trail design incorporating resource considerations
- Repurpose existing roadbeds to minimize disturbance
- Port of Cascade Locks, International Mountain Bicycling Association, and Northwest Trails Alliance



# Some Lessons Learned...

- Demand for additional trails is growing
- Early engagement is critical for reducing impacts
- Greater resource integration needed during project development phase
- Need to raise awareness around the ecological impacts related to trails and wildlife, vegetation, and water resources





# Questions / Discussion



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