

Presentation Title:

Protecting Habitats through Land Use Planning in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

Presenter:

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Abstract:

The Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC) exists to protect and enhance the scenic, natural, cultural, recreational and economic resources of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA). The Columbia River Gorge NSA is unique in that it is the only Scenic Area in the country that contains both private and public lands. CRGC works with the U.S. Forest Service to establish, implement and enforce land use policy and programs for protecting non-federal lands in the NSA. The NSA is home to 292,500 acres of diverse landscapes and habitats including farms and forests, wetlands and rivers, grasslands and talus slopes. This unparalleled combination of scenery, geology, plants, wildlife, cultural history and economy is conserved through CRGC working collaboratively with treaty tribes, counties, cities, and various local, state, and federal resource management agencies.

Much of CRGC's work involves reviewing land use projects in the NSA to ensure that they are compliant with the National Scenic Area Act and aligned with the CRGC Management Plan. The Management Plan contains policies and provisions for protecting open space, water resources and aquatic habitats, and areas of known sensitive species and habitats. The Plan includes provisions for minimizing and mitigating adverse impacts, and for preventing cumulative adverse impacts to natural resources. CRGC addresses natural resource protection in development reviews through a process of reviewing known datasets from state agencies, consultation with the Forest Service, appropriate state agency, and the four treaty tribes of the NSA, and analyzing and reviewing this information for potential impacts.