

The Columbia River Gorge Commission: An Assessment of Organizational Capacity

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Section 1: Executive Summary

Introduction

Congress authorized Oregon and Washington to establish the Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC or Commission) as an interstate compact agency through the *Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act* of 1986 (Scenic Area Act or the Act). Oregon and Washington enacted the Columbia River Gorge Compact (the Compact) in 1987. The Commission first convened shortly thereafter. The Act and Compact serve as the Commission's guiding authorities.

The Act states two purposes. The first is to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge. The second is to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner consistent with the first purpose.

Events and circumstances in recent years have led the Commission to believe that the CRGC is no longer positioned to do what the states and communities expect, the Act requires, or the related regional planning and coordination area local governments need. Issues include a trend of declining budgets, decreased staffing levels, and a resulting inability to carry out some of the Commission's most basic functions. Current resource challenges aside, the sitting Commission also questions whether the structure and processes used for the past twenty-six years are appropriate or adequate to meet the challenges and needs of the future.

In preparing to address these challenges, the Commission contracted the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government's Center for Public Service to complete an assessment of the Commission's organizational capacity to fulfill the mandates of the Act currently and into the future. This report provides the results of that assessment. It analyzes the Commission's organizational capacity and provides recommendations to improve organizational performance.

The authors focused on the Commission's structure, processes, and the fiscal and human resources needed to meet the purpose and functions mandated by the Act, Compact, and Commission bylaws. For purposes of this report, we divide Commission resource needs into two categories. The first category is comprised of the baseline staffing needs for what we term *mandated functions*. These are functions specifically called for in the Scenic Area Act, Compact, and bylaws. Mandated functions also include those not anticipated in the Act or Compact but required by the states' regulations for financial management, contracting, record retention, and accounting. The second category we term *essential additional functions*. These are the staffing needs and other resources for functions not specifically called for in the Act or Compact but that the Commission has determined essential to meeting the Act's intent and purposes.

Summary of Key Findings and Conclusions

- Although the Commission has accomplished much since its inception, it often fails to complete key requirements to the degree expected, suffers long delays in completing others, and fails to address some functions altogether.
- The CRGC staff is under-resourced and has been since its inception. This is the major factor in the Commission's inability to meet all of its responsibilities.
- The current staff is experienced, well trained, and strongly committed to the values and purposes of the Act and Commission. It is, however, overwhelmed by the amount of work before them.
- The effectiveness of previous Columbia River Gorge Commissions was hampered by differences between commissioners. In order to improve the functionality of the commission, the executive director and recent Commission chair began steps to build a sense of common purpose and direction among the commissioners.
- Despite these team-building efforts, the authors found significant divergences in opinion between the staff members and commissioners and among the commissioners as to the nature of the Commission and its assigned purpose. To a large degree, this divergence is a legitimate expression of the constituencies and values each commissioner is expected to represent. Regardless, these differences occasionally lead to conflicting guidance from commissioners to the staff and confusion as to Commission priorities, further exacerbating staff frustration.
- The increases in region-wide population and tourism over the past 20 years and those projected into the foreseeable future will greatly impact the workload of the Commission and the stresses on Gorge resources.
- Contextual events like climate change and increased fossil fuel movement through the Gorge will introduce planning challenges that the Commission has not had to address in the past.
- The Commission operates within a complex body of law unique to compacts, and law specific to the CRGC. Consequently, dedicated and sustained public engagement and education is needed to ensure Gorge residents, communities, and federal and state agencies are aware of the provisions of the Scenic Area Act and their role in carrying them out.
- The Commission faces a potential test of legitimacy within the Gorge. Lingering resentment from past conflicts and the growing frustration with permit process times is causing some residents to ignore permit requirements altogether. Other agencies do not understand or accept the Commission's role and responsibilities.

Summary of Recommendations

The authors recommend that:

- A baseline staffing level of 16.9 FTE and a funding level of \$2.5 million per year (\$5 million per biennium) be provided to meet the Commission's mandated functions. We further recommend this baseline funding level be indexed for inflation.
- An additional 8.5 FTE and \$1 million be provided to meet the current needs of essential additional functions. These figures will likely fluctuate in future years as projects are completed and new requirements identified.
- Any staff increases be phased in gradually over time. Although the need for additional staff resources is acute and immediate, attempting to hire all at once will likely cause more problems than it will solve. New staff to any organization need to be trained and assimilated with minimum disruption to ongoing activities. Hiring should therefore be at a rate the current staff can absorb without serious loss of efficiency to ongoing operations.
- That the Commission Chair and executive director continue team building activities initiated in 2013 to improve functionality of the Commission, foster a common understanding of the Commission's authorities and responsibilities and maintain camaraderie.
- That the commissioners and executive director participate in a facilitated meeting to come to agreement on a governance model and have that model written into the Commission's bylaws or other organizational policy documents. The governance model needs to clarify and formalize the role of the executive director, the relationship of the executive director to the commissioners, and the relationship of the commissioners with the staff.

Section 2: Background and Introduction

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act

Despite his strong opposition to federal regulation of private land use, and against the advice of many of his closest advisors, President Ronald Reagan signed *The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act* (Act or Scenic Area Act) into law on November 17, 1986.¹ President Reagan, who once famously stated that “government is not the solution to our problem; government is the problem” (Reagan 1981) acquiesced under bipartisan pressure from powerful members of both houses of Congress. The president’s signing marked a significant milestone in a bitter political fight that had been building since Portland-based recreational excursions began encroaching on the Gorge’s farming, ranching, timber, mining, and industrial communities in the 1880s. This long-standing friction came to a head in the early 1980s. Preservation and recreation-oriented Portlanders, organized primarily as “Friends of the Columbia Gorge,” but including others, had advocated for several years to enact federal law to protect the Gorge’s scenic and natural resources from what they viewed as environmentally damaging land use decisions being made on the Washington side of the Columbia River. Specifically, they claimed that planned subdivisions and the increase in second-home development would damage the Gorge’s natural environment and destroy its spectacular scenery. Meanwhile, Gorge residents organized to defend against this unwanted intrusion by outsiders in what they viewed as local decision prerogatives and their way of life (Blair 1986; Abbott, Adler, and Abbott 1997; Durbin 2013). What started as a local dispute escalated to a national debate over federal regulation versus local land use prerogatives; urban versus rural worldviews and values; and natural resource protection versus economic growth. It may even have touched the national defense policies of the Cold War.²

The area regulated by the Act encompasses over 292,000 acres of public and privately-owned property surrounding a uniquely picturesque series of sheer, basalt-faced cliffs up to 2,400 feet in elevation intermittently laced with waterfalls up to 620 feet in height. The tremendous flows of the Columbia River essentially split the Scenic Area in half with Washington State to the north and Oregon to the south. The aesthetic quality of the Gorge is equally matched with its historic economic prowess as a driver of timber production, agriculture, recreation, tourism, heavy industry, hydropower production, and fisheries. Additionally, the Columbia River, adjacent railroad lines, and Interstate 84 are major transportation corridors to and from the Pacific Northwest.

The Act sought to protect the Gorge’s natural resources - in particular its spectacular scenery - while encouraging but controlling economic development. The Act called on Oregon and Washington to establish through a bi-state compact a commission to carry out its purposes and provisions. Both states ratified the Columbia River Gorge Compact

¹ Public law 99-663, formerly bill HR 5705.

² Senator Mark Hatfield (R-OR) strongly supported the Scenic Area Act and met routinely with President Reagan to lobby for its enactment. At the time, Senator Hatfield served as Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Although undocumented, it is widely believed that the Senator conditioned his support for the president’s strategic defense initiative on the president’s support for the Scenic Area Act, thus preventing a likely veto (Interviews. See also Durbin (2013), *Bridging a Great Divide: The Battle for the Columbia River Gorge*, p. 71).

(Compact) in 1987, thus establishing the Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC, or Commission).

The Columbia River Gorge Commission

The Act specifies that the Commission consist of thirteen appointed members. Each of the six counties with land within the Scenic Area appoints one commissioner while the two state governors appoint three each. The US Forest Service appoints the thirteenth commissioner who serves as an ex-officio, nonvoting member (Scenic Area Act, §544c(a)(1)(C)). Each commissioner is appointed to serve 4 years, with terms staggered to maintain a level of Commission stability. No voting member of the Commission may be an elected or appointed official of any governing body. While not stipulated in the Act or Compact, the Governor of Oregon has traditionally allocated one of his three appointments to a tribal member to help represent tribal interests in the Gorge. Commissioners serve on a volunteer basis and have typically been individuals with great interest and dedication to the Act and Gorge community. The Commission is supported in its day-to-day responsibilities by a paid staff, numbering six at the time of this writing. Historically, the staff executive director has been an individual with a high degree of professional expertise in land-use planning and law. Appendix 1 lists the current commissioners and staff members. Since its inception in 1987, 58 commissioners and 34 employees have served the Columbia River Gorge Commission. The shortest term served by a commissioner is 5 months while the longest tenure is 25 years. The shortest term employee was employed for 8 months and the longest tenured employee presently has 26 years on staff.

The Act calls on Oregon and Washington to provide the Commission with the authority to carry out its functions under state law (§544c(a)(1)(B)) and authorizes the Commission to adopt regulations to carry out its administrative functions in a manner consistent across both states in the lands comprising the Scenic Area (§544c(b)).

The Act provides the Commission with the authority to plan, enact, implement, monitor and enforce land-use policy within the boundaries of the Scenic Area with the intent of achieving the Act's two stated purposes:

1. to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and
2. to protect and support the economy of the Columbia River Gorge area by encouraging growth in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with the first purpose (Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, §544a).

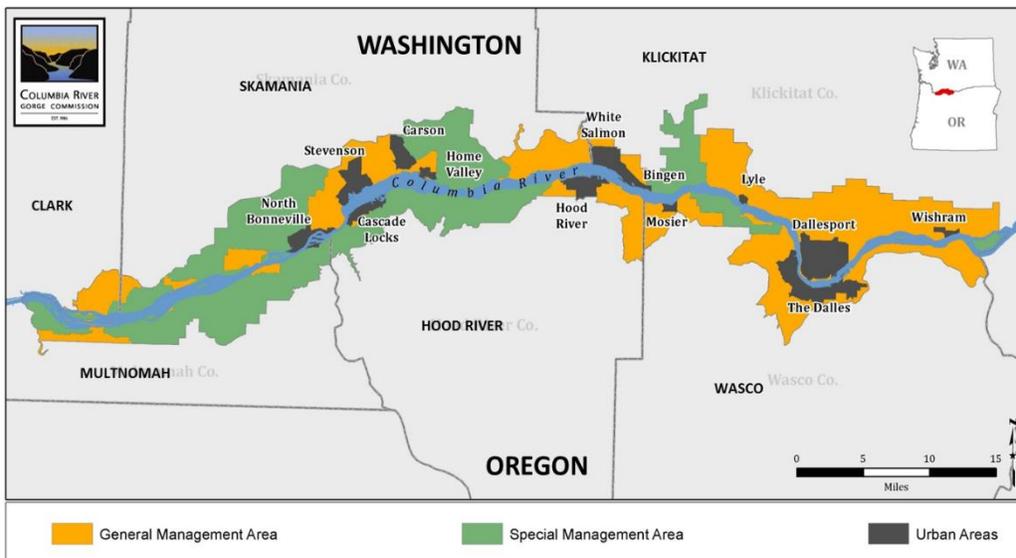
The Commission is primarily funded through appropriations from the state legislatures of Oregon and Washington under the Compact's Article IV, paragraph a. The Commission's budget and expenditures "shall be apportioned equally between the states," (Article IV, paragraph d.) effectively limiting expenditures to the lowest of the two resource levels appropriated by the state legislatures.

The Act specifies the Commission's authorities regarding land use planning and provides land designations for purposes of planning and management. *Special Management Areas* (SMA) and *Urban Areas* (UA) are defined in the Act. SMA consists of four specifically

designated land areas and all islands within the NSA. SMA total 111,200 acres, or about 38 percent of the NSA's total area. The US Forest Service owns and manages about 84,000 of the SMA area; the remainder is under the jurisdiction of the Commission. Section 544f of the Act charges the Secretary of Agriculture to administer those lands under federal ownership in accordance with the Act and other laws, rules, and regulations as may apply to management of the national forest system. Urban Areas are lands within the boundaries of thirteen cities and towns specified by name within the Act. Administrative jurisdiction for planning in the urban areas is reserved to their respective city or town governments (Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, §544e and §544f). The Act encourages most commercial development to occur in the Urban Areas by limiting new such uses outside of those areas. 28,500 acres lie within the UAs, comprising about 10 percent of the NSA's total area. The remaining 152,800 acres (or about 52 percent of the NSA) are under the planning jurisdiction of the CRGC and designated by the Commission as General Management Areas (GMA). Exhibit 1 provides a map of the National Scenic Area and the locations of the land designations.

Exhibit 1: Map

CRG NATIONAL SCENIC AREA



Map source: Columbia River Gorge Commission

The Operating Environment

The CRGC carries out its work within a context of complexity, conflict, and frequent turmoil. The reasons include the diverse geography of the area, the number of jurisdictional stakeholders, the political and cultural diversity of the region, the differing nature of Gorge community economies, and recent changes in demographic trends within the Scenic Area

and wider region. While a number of these factors have been somewhat consistent others have been very dynamic over the history of the Act. This report will later touch on a few of the more dynamic factors such as population changes and tourism in the Gorge that may have the greatest influence on the Commission's future work and priorities.

The governance structure within the Scenic Area is multi-jurisdictional. The Scenic Area spans jurisdictions among parts or all of thirteen urban areas, six counties, two states, lands held in trust for four Indian tribes, thousands of acres of federal forest, a major federal hydropower facility, five ports with associated port authorities, and a number of special districts. Culturally, the population within the area is diverse in interests and political disposition, ranging from the relatively liberal and cosmopolitan Portland metro area in the West to the more rural and conservative ranching, farming, and resource-extraction communities to the East. Constituencies within the Scenic Area include homeowners, recreationalists, fishermen, farmers, family forest landowners, naturalists, environmental advocates, retirees, property-rights proponents, and hydropower plant employees. The Act greatly affects each.

Depending on whose estimates one uses, the population in the Scenic Area has remained relatively constant since the Act's passage or increased modestly. The population of the Scenic Area in the mid-1980's was estimated to be between 41,000 (Blair 1986; Durbin 2013) and 52,000 (Abbot, Adler, and Abbott 1997). CRGC staff estimates place it at 49,800 in 2010 (staff communications). The degree to which the Gorge population has increased or decreased since the mid 1980's is unclear based on these reports. As of 2010, most (38,000 or 76 percent) of the population lives within the urban areas of the Gorge (staff communications).

Regardless of the population trend in the Scenic Area, Gorge population levels are dwarfed in comparison to the growth of population in the region in general and Portland metro area in particular. 1990 census data indicated a region-wide population of approximately 1.46 million (US Census Bureau, undated) encompassing Multnomah, Clark, Washington, Clackamas, Klickitat, Skamania, Wasco, and Hood River Counties. By 2010 the regional population had increased 53% to 2.23 million (US Census Bureau, undated). The vast majority of this increase is within the Portland metro area outside of the Scenic Area boundaries. The growing population in the metro area directly affects Gorge resources as ever-greater numbers of people visit the Gorge for purposes of recreation.

Despite the relatively small population, residents in the two states and six counties are diverse with respect to their economic bases, perspectives on land-use planning, political dispositions, and values. Commissioners are expected to represent their specific constituency and, concurrently, act as part of the Commission to create policy for the entire Gorge community. Therefore, the appointed commissioners often find themselves straddling the boundary between organizational mandates and constituency expectations. Although intentionally designed into the composition of the Commission, this factor adds to the complexity of achieving the Act's purposes within the political context of the Gorge.

The acrimony surrounding the Act's creation would haunt the Commission's effectiveness through its early years and for many of the years to follow (Blair 1986; Abbott, Adler, and Abbott, 1997; Durbin 2013). Litigation from various interests groups began immediately after the Act's passage. Concurrently, the Commission filed court cases of its own to enforce compliance with the Act's requirements. Although largely successful in court or upon appeal, the potential for litigation shadows every decision the Commission makes.

Although the open hostility from many that first greeted the Commission have subsided, and despite a growing acceptance of central land planning among Gorge residents, pockets of resistance linger. Often, conflicts within the Commission result from the dramatic differences in values held by Scenic Area constituencies. The Commission as a governing body has membership rules ensuring representation from competing values within the Gorge population. To summarize, the structure, rules, operating practices, and resourcing of today's Gorge Commission are a legacy of the scenic area's fractious political history; the purposes, authorities, and functions defined in the Act and Compact; and the resources allocated to the Commission by the state legislatures.

Report Purpose and Scope

This report analyzes the CRGC's organizational capacity to meet its mandated and essential additional work requirements as found in the Scenic Area Act, the Compact, and the CRGC's bylaws. Organizational capacity is a function of internal and external components. Internal components include the quality of leadership, the level of staff training, allocation of personnel, development and use of technology, methods for the collection and processing of relevant data, and rule-making processes, among others (for examples, see Weiss 2005 and Ting 2009). External components include the policies the organization is expected to accomplish, the expectations of those overseeing those policies (to include executive, legislative, and judicial institutions and the interested public), and the resources provided (for example, see Derthick 1990).

For the purposes of this report, we focus on the level of resourcing available to the Commission and the Commission's internal processes, leaving the role and influences of external institutions on capacity for another time. We therefore define organizational capacity as *the organization's ability to obtain resources and manage available resources and internal processes to effectively carry out the functions for which it was established*. The ability to generate financial and human resources is the most tangible element of capacity. Less tangible, but no less important, are organizational elements such as common purpose, good leadership, formal authority, efficiency, trust, and public support essential to an effective organization. While more difficult to measure, understanding and accounting for these non-tangible elements is essential to measuring organizational capacity. This is especially true for organizations such as the Commission whose mission requires coordination among diverse constituencies and communities and multiple jurisdictions at multiple levels of government.

The objective is to analyze trends in resourcing and workload and provide recommendations for improvement. We focus primarily on the resourcing provided, structure, and internal operations of the Commission with respect to its ability to fulfill its mission. This assessment is limited in that we do not explore the Commission's relationships with institutions external to the Commission or the political nature of the Commission's work other than to the degree those relationships impact Commission effectiveness. Nor did we collect information from those outside of the CRGC structure. This review of primarily internal aspects of organizational functionality using data collected from interviews of internal staff does limit the scope of this project. The authors are fully aware of this limitation and have used an organizational design model that explicitly calls for such external and contextual analysis. This research and analysis provided by this report is a logical first step of a more complete assessment when resources allow for such study. We are confident that this report can contribute to the Commission's understanding of its organizational capacity and believe that further examination of those institutional

relationships and external insights would further enhance the Commission's approach to Gorge-related governance.

We divide Commission staffing needs into two categories. The first category is comprised of the baseline staffing needs for what we term *mandated functions*. These are functions we found specifically called for in the Scenic Area Act, Compact, and bylaws as presented in Appendix 4. In this we include the work required for review and processing of Klickitat County development requests, since the Act requires this for any county that fails to adopt and implement Act-compliant planning ordinances (see §544e(c)). Mandated functions also include periodic plan reviews and revisions and those functions not anticipated in the Act or Compact but required by the states' regulations for financial management, contracting, record retention, and accounting.

The second category we term *essential additional functions*. These are the staffing needed for functions not specifically called for in the Act or Compact but that the Commission has determined essential to meeting the intent and purposes of the Act. These functions include improved coordination with federal and state agencies, public outreach and education, improved coordination with Indian tribal governments, establishment of criteria for monitoring (such as outlined in the Vital Signs Indicators report), and completion of other reports, studies, and special projects. Despite the importance attached by the Commission to these necessary additional functions, many have been only partially addressed or not addressed at all due to resource limitations.

Finally, we offer our recommendations with an eye to the future. Demographic trends, increasing demands for recreation, climate change, and recent initiatives to increase the rail movement of coal and gas through the Gorge to the coast portend as yet unknown challenges to the Commission. Our recommendations are intended to be flexible enough to allow for adaptation as the realities of these changes become apparent.

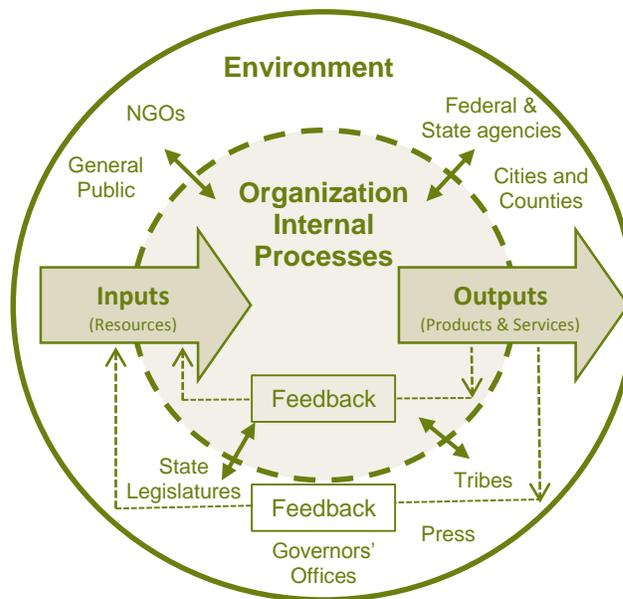
Section 3: Methodology

The Columbia River Gorge Commission operates in an extremely complex political, legal, and organizational environment.³ The complexity of requirements and legacy of conflict both influence the way in which the CRGC is structured, resourced and operates. The authors integrated several organizational analysis techniques to best understand all of the factors influencing Commission operations and what might be done to improve them.

Analytic Framework

Drawing from organizational theory, we conceptualize the CRGC as an open system model of an organization, following Morgan (2006), Scott (2002), and Harrison (2005). The premise of the open system model is that the organization and its operating environment are mutually dependent and that “an organization’s effectiveness and success depend heavily on its ability to adapt to its environment, shape that environment, or find a favorable environment in which to operate” (Harrison, 2005, 30).⁴ Exhibit 2 illustrates the open system model.

Exhibit 2: Open System Model of Organizations and the CRGC



Adapted from Harrison (2005), p. 28.

³ See Cooper (2014) for discussion of the CRGC’s legal complexities.

⁴ In contrast, “closed system” organizations are whose internal processes are relatively isolated from external events and influences (Scott 1998).

Organizations are established for utilitarian purposes, intended to transform some array of resource inputs (labor, capital, raw material, ideas, etc.) into outputs of products and/or services. But organizations also exist as social collectivities (Scott 2001). They evolve through time. We therefore looked to the Commission's history for insights into its current structure, practices, and culture following Schein (2010), Scott (2001), and Neustadt and May (1986). Furthermore, organizations are comprised of individuals with their own interests, objectives, values, levels of trust, relationships, etc. who interact with the people and institutions around them. Consequently, while an organization's products and services may be processed through the organization's authorities, decision making, structure, operating protocols, and other transactional procedures, they are also influenced by human-based factors of leadership, training, commitment to the organization's mission, and morale and value-based influences of history, culture, and identity.

Good management routinely monitors the effect of these transactional and social factors against outputs. The results of that monitoring are fed back to adjust production processes, training, motivation, etc. as may be appropriate for improved performance (Scott 2002; Harrison 2005). Managers are rightly expected to optimize available resources and organizational procedures. But even well-managed organizations may face situations where the resources available are insufficient to meet requirements. The degree to which incoming resources and internal processing are sufficient to meet the outputs expected delineates organizational capacity.

In open systems, external influences also affect capacity. For example, in publicly funded organizations, public support for or opposition to the organization's mandated products and services can promote or hinder political support and subsequent funding. Or demands for staff effort and services not envisioned in the organization's founding charter may divert resources from production of mandated outputs. In order to fully assess the Commission's organizational capacity, we selected methods that capture its history, mandated and essential additional functions, internal structure and processes, and resourcing.

This open systems model is offered to provide a context for explaining what this analysis will do and what it will not do. The current study focuses on the internal aspects of the model and primarily uses data from within the organizational boundary. This boundary, the dashed line in the model above, is porous with internal dynamics influencing the internal functions. Further, this study does not fully explore individual level aspects of organizational development, position analysis or design. Delimiting the scope of the current study to internal aspects does limit potential findings. However, it is a logical first step to the assessment of organizational capacity and keeping the more comprehensive model in mind provides points of attachment for any future work.

Collecting Information

Harrison (2005) identifies two methods for organizational diagnosis. *Consultant-centered* diagnoses are objective, arm's-length examinations of organizational records, other published material, and observed behavior conducted with little or no interaction with the client. In contrast, *client-centered* diagnoses involve active engagement with members of the client organization. This allows organization members to share their insights, experience, and interpretations as they participate in data collection and analysis. Sole reliance on objective data risks missing the nuances of human interaction and the insights of long-serving organization members. Conversely, sole reliance on member perspectives and over-

involvement by staff risks undue influence of member biases. To mitigate these risks, the authors used both methods.

Analytic Strategy

The overall strategy for bringing evidence to bear on the underlying question of the Columbia River Gorge Commission's organizational capacity is inductive. That is, we started with a general perspective regarding organizations and organizational capacity based on the model above. From this we used both secondary data and primary data (interviews) to build an understanding of the scope and nature of work, the capacity necessary to accomplish that work and then considered the trends and trajectory of the CRGC organizational capacity. The analysis was carried out in the following ways.

Using techniques of content analysis, and consistent with Harrison's (2005) consultant-centered methodology, we reviewed secondary sources for the history of the Gorge, its relationship to the people of the Portland metropolitan area, the origins of the Scenic Area Act and establishment of the Commission, and early years of Commission operations. We used these sources to gain insight into the CRGC's operating environment and the effect of the environment on Commission operations. We also reviewed Commission published reports and products. These secondary sources are listed in the reference section at the end of this report. We also examined numerous primary source documents stored in CRGC files and the history of the Commission's product delivery to determine the degree to which the Commission routinely meets its obligations.

We supplemented our document review with interviews with all commissioners and staff members. These interviews occurred between March and May 2014. Each interview lasted between 1 and 2 hours. We conducted all interviews on a non-attribution basis. Commissioners were asked a series of questions in relation to the Commission's mission, function, and resource needs. The interview questions consisted of both structured and open-ended questions. This was to allow each commissioner and staff member to add information they believed relevant but not formally called out by the interview questions. This ensured we obtained responses to a common baseline of questions as well as providing opportunities for interviewees to generate additional issues, areas of inquiry, and information. It also allowed us to take into consideration the concerns and expectations of commissioners and staff as to the scope of this report. Appendix 2 provides our interview questions; Appendix 3 provides a list of the interviews conducted.

Additionally, we were able to take advantage of data collected in response to a request by the CRGC executive director for each staff member to summarize their current typical monthly workload for a 12 month period. The staff developed this information between January and May 2014 for the previous year. We incorporated these results into our findings of workload tasks as we explored the sufficiency of the organizations capacity.

Consistent with Harrison's (2005) client-centered methodology, we engaged in frequent follow-up communications, either in person, by phone, or via email, with commissioners and staff in gathering, analyzing, and interpreting primary source documents and data and following up on various comments made during the interviews. Using well-established social science principles for analytic induction, we used the opportunities to engage and reengage primary sources to elaborate our understanding of the needs and resources to carry out the work of the organization. We list these sources in the references section. We underscore

that this project focuses only on the internal aspects of the organization and the influences most directly associated with the internal aspects.

Evaluating Organizational Capacity

There is no established method for quantitatively translating a list of functions into an optimum array of staff, funding, and process. We approached the question of organizational capacity from four directions:

- We studied the Act, the Compact, and Commission bylaws in order to identify the functions mandated in these foundational documents. The purpose of this step was to determine exactly what the Commission is formally required to do.
- We reviewed the history of staffing and funding through documents and data on file at the CRGC office, dating to the Commission's inception. We looked at the level of resourcing originally envisioned and also compared the Commission's biennial budget request with the funding and staff provided by the two states legislatures.
- As part of our structured interview questions, we asked interviewees to identify additional functions the staff is expected to carry out to meet mandated services or meet expectations of others. We also asked for their estimates of the annual staffing and funding needed to carry out the Commission's mandated and essential additional functions.
- We looked to a companion to this report prepared by the University of Washington's Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs that compares the CRGC with other bi-state compact commissions (see Clarke and Evans 2014). We originally envisioned value in comparing staffing, organization structure, and funding levels between like-type commissions. However, we quickly learned that each of these compact commissions is unique in its own right, with different roles and expectations for their commissioners and staff and different funding sources. Direct organizational comparisons proved of limited value. What did prove of value are effective practices of these other organizations as may be applicable and importable to the CRGC. See Clarke and Evans (2014) for further discussion.

We tabulated the results of the workload and staffing assessments in an Excel spreadsheet. The spreadsheet of raw data was summarized and this summary is included in this report. The raw data is on file with the authors at the Center for Public Service.

The intent of this four-way approach is to provide a comprehensive assessment of organizational capacity based on mandated and essential additional functions, historic staffing, the Commission's record of product delivery, and member perspectives as to appropriate resource levels. To validate the logical connections between our process, conclusions, and recommendations, we provided our draft report for outside peer review by three recognized academic experts. Their comments were carefully considered in preparing our final report. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations discussed below are thus the responsibility of the authors alone.

Copies of primary materials, unpublished documents, and staff correspondence substantively used in this report and our interview notes and peer review comments are filed with the authors at the Center for Public Service (Portland State University, 506 SW Mill Street, Suite 570T, Portland, Oregon 97207).

Section 4: Findings and Conclusions

Introduction

We present our findings on the Commission’s organizational capacity in the following four sub-sections following this introduction: (1) Function and Workload Assessment, (2) Historical Resourcing, (3) Interview Results: Commission Effectiveness, and (4) Interview Results: Suggested Resource Levels. First, we report the findings from our workload task assessment. We identified functions the Commission is expected to perform in order to carry out the provisions of the Scenic Area Act, the Compact, and the Commission bylaws. We then assess the degree to which the Commission has historically completed these functions. Our purpose in this section is to determine what the Commission as an organization is expected to do and how well it does it. We found that, although the Commission has accomplished much since its inception, it often fails to complete key requirements to the degree expected, suffers long delays in completing others, and fails to address some functions altogether.

Second, we present the historic record of Commission resourcing. This includes funding by the states and other sources and staff levels. Staff levels are measured as “full time equivalents” (FTE).⁵ Our purpose here is to determine whether the level of resourcing provided by the states for the Commission is commensurate with the functions to be performed. We found resourcing by the states to be seemingly low in comparison to the work effort expected.

However, organizational capacity is measured by more than just available resources. It also includes the functionality components of the organization, like internal coherence and efficiency. Internal efficiency requires a shared vision, competent leadership and management, clear priority setting, a trained and cohesive staff, consistent priorities, and established processes. For this information we relied primarily on the interview results, follow up discussions with commissioners and staff, and our own observations. We note that we relied solely on information provided by the staff and commission. This project was limited in scope by design (See Section 3: Methodology) and therefore in preparing this report we did not seek opinions or data from outside of the CRGC. We found the staff to be experienced, well trained, and strongly committed to the values and purposes of the Act. They are, however, overwhelmed by the amount of work before them. The current executive director is energetic, highly respected by the staff, and presents a dynamic vision of what the CRGC is and should be. In this, he is strongly supported by the staff and generally supported by the commissioners. The Commission by design is pluralistic with good people committed to representing different constituencies and perspectives. Based on the information from staff and commissioner members interviewed, many with a long history of involvement with the CRGC,⁶ the current suite of commissioners is considered the most collegial in Commission history. This did not occur by coincidence. The executive director and Commission chair working from 2012 through August 2014 took active steps to build a common sense of purpose and direction among the commissioners through team building, third party facilitation and changes in meeting practices. But, despite these efforts,

⁵ One full time equivalent (FTE) is equal to 40 hours of work per week over 52 weeks (one year) or 2080 hours. One FTE equates to one full time employee, two employees working at half time, four employees working quarter time, etc. FTE also serves as a unit of effort. To say a function requires 0.1 FTE is to say it requires 208 hours of work.

⁶ Two of the current commissioners, Bowen Blair and former Congressman Don Bonker, were among the original advocates for passage of the Scenic Area Act. All commissioners either live and work in the Gorge or have been active in Gorge-related affairs for years.

we found significant divergences in opinion between the staff members and commissioners and among the commissions as to the nature of the Commission and its purpose.

A point upon which all commissioners and staff members agreed is that the Commission is severely under-resourced. The fourth subsection presents staffing and funding levels as recommended by the commission and staff members. We found all respondents to support an increase in staff and funding levels. However, the staff tended to recommend significantly higher levels for both staffing and funding than did the commissioners.

Function and Workload Assessment

Commission Functions

There are thirty-five provisions in the Scenic Area Act, thirteen in the bi-state Compact, and eight in the Commission's bylaws that specify or imply necessary staff effort. Appendix 4 tabulates those provisions. These provisions charge the Commission staff to carry out multiple functions. Additionally, over time, the Commission identified and adopted other functions not specified in Act or Compact provisions but that they believed necessary to fulfilling the intent of those documents. The Commission considers these additional functions as important to stakeholder groups and the Gorge community. Among these essential additional functions are maintenance of tribal relationships, assistance to local governments in support of sustainable community policies and initiatives, stakeholder and agency collaboration, data collection and research, grant writing, commissioner support, and special projects.

Working with the CRGC staff, we've characterized the functions specified by the provisions of the Act, Compact, and bylaws and essential additional functions identified by the Commission under the following categories:

1. **Planning.** Includes creation, review and revision of the Scenic Area Management Plan, reviewing the county ordinances of five counties to ensure Act compliance, processing of all Klickitat County development permits, reviewing county development decisions, adjudicating appeals to county land use decisions, addressing special and urban area boundary issues, economic development, special projects, and monitoring and enforcement.
2. **Legal.** Includes litigation (both as defendant and plaintiff); administrative law services such as contract review, state compliance, and records retention; appeals of county land use decisions to the Commission; Commission rulemaking; and education of the Commission, local and state governments, and the public regarding the requirements of the Act and Compact.
3. **Intergovernmental Coordination.** Includes collaboration with local, state, tribal, and federal agencies and governments.
4. **Financial Management.** Includes biennial preparation of Commission budget requests, financial analysis, grant-writing, and internal accounting.
5. **Operations Management.** Includes staff workload planning and oversight, assistance in policy development, management of contracts and intergovernmental agreements, and internal personnel management.

6. Information Analysis. Includes geo-informatics support to monitoring efforts and revisions to the management plan, data collection, research and analysis, geographic information system (GIS) spatial analysis, and support to special projects.
7. Executive Management. Includes strategic planning, policy analysis, stakeholder relationships, financial decision making, and lobbying of state agencies and legislatures.
8. Public Outreach. Includes public information, responses to inquiries, community outreach and involvement, website and media content development, conduct of public meetings and hearings, and promotion of the Commission's mission and purpose.
9. Information Technology. Includes development and administration of technology policies, internal technology support, website establishment and maintenance, and equipment software and hardware acquisition and updating.
10. Office Administration: Includes office management, reception, preparation of venues for hearings and meetings, records retention, reporting, compliance with the administrative requirements of Oregon and Washington, contract management, support to the commissioners, personnel management, and staff development and training.

This list of functions thus establishes the baseline of workload tasks the Commission is expected to achieve.

Commission record in meeting functional requirements

The Commission has succeeded over the years in meeting the Scenic Area Act's intent to manage commercial, industrial and residential development outside of urban areas. Due to the requirement to create and enforce land-use ordinances compliant with the Management Plan, industrial development in non-urban areas has been arrested, commercial development is limited in scope, and residential development managed to the point where ordinances dictate structure placement, size limitations, exterior finish colors, and screening for new structures (Columbia River Gorge Commission, 2004).

Another area of success has been in defending the Commission against legal challenges and bringing cases in response to violations of the Act. Between 1987 and 2014, 79 court cases pertaining to the Act and involving the Commission were filed. In fourteen of these cases, the Commission served as the plaintiff or petitioner.⁷ Additionally, more than 161 appeals for permit decisions issued under the provisions of the Act were heard and decided by the commissioners between 1987 and summer of 2014. The Commission has been predominately successful either in court or upon appeal. These legal and adjudicative cases require an abundance of legal expertise in a body of law that is highly specialized and for which there are few precedents. Additionally, the preparation for these cases greatly impacts administrative, executive, planning and legal staff workloads (interviews; staff communications).

However, in other areas the Commission has been less successful. After formation of the Commission in 1987, the first task was to formulate a Scenic Area Management Plan. By

⁷ Three court cases are pending involving the Commission as of this writing.

law the Management Plan was to be completed within 3 years. It is required to be reviewed and updated every 5-10 years. In February of 1992 (over a year past the mandated timeline) the Commission and Forest Service had adopted the first Management Plan. In 2004 the Management Plan was revised and adopted by the Commission, two years late and with some aspects of the plan revision limited or incomplete (staff communications, 2003 CRGC meeting minutes). . The next revision is due for completion in 2014. As of the date of this writing, the Commission is behind in its preparation to review and revise the Management Plan. The demands of other, more routine work, have limited the time for staff to properly prepare for a Plan revision. Preparations to date are limited to a preliminary list of items that need to be addressed (staff communications).

The delays in Management Plan completion and revisions are not solely a function of a lack of resources. Management Plan revisions tend to be controversial and trigger litigation. Other delays may be caused by constituent objections and questions or disagreements among commissioners regarding plan content (interviews and staff communications).

The Commission has other planning functions beside revisions to the Management Plan. With the adoption of the bi-state Compact, the counties were asked but not required to establish land-use ordinances consistent with the Act. Should a county opt not to adopt a compliant ordinance, the Compact requires the Commission to perform all development reviews for that county to ensure compliance with the Act. Klickitat County in Washington opted out of adoption of a compliant land-use ordinance. Presently the Commission performs all development reviews for non-federally owned property within the Scenic Area boundaries in Klickitat County. Since 1988 there have been 1,215 development reviews conducted in that county by Commission staff. As of July 2014 there was a backlog of 23 Klickitat County development review applications and amendments. The estimated time for completion of review and decision was 9-15 months. This is a circumstance not anticipated during the formation of the Commission, as it was assumed that all counties would adopt appropriate ordinances. Yet it greatly impacts planning and administrative staff workloads. Moreover, Commission staff is required to review land-use decisions for the remaining 5 counties to ensure compliance with adopted ordinances and the Management Plan. Since 1993, the Commission staff reviewed over 3,243 decision reviews for the remaining 5 counties (interviews; communications with CRGC staff).

An additional planning function is completion of special projects. These are projects not called for in the Act but determined necessary for accomplishment of the Commission's mission. In 2007 the Commission initiated the Future Forum project. The purpose of this project was to "conduct 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" (Columbia River Gorge Commission, 2008). This collaborative process included over 500 participants, over 14 community meetings, and several focus group meetings. After a one-year process this collaborative effort produced a final report documenting "the planning and implementation of the Future Forum visioning process, summarizes the citizen-inspired values and vision, and details the corresponding strategies for action proposed as part of the process" (Columbia River Gorge Commission, 2008). This was the first time in the Commission's 20 year history it had made the effort to collectively work with the Gorge community as a whole to define a common vision for the Gorge.

Although The Future Forum Report is a document that can be of great use in assisting the Commission and other jurisdictions to set priorities and create land-use strategies, the website associated with the report states:

However, there is no specific plan of action attached to the Gorge Vision and Strategies 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... (See <http://www.gorgecommission.org/futureforum.cfm>).

In 2008, the Commission initiated another special project. The intent was to set baseline indicators in an attempt to empirically assess and monitor protection of the resources associated with the Act. The Commission's initial product associated with this project was the *Vital Signs Indicators Project State of the Gorge 2009 Report*. It clearly states the objective of the Vital Signs Indicators (VSI) project:

To fulfill our responsibilities under the Scenic Area Act, the Commission and our partner agencies must be able to understand and track changes to the condition of Gorge resources. The complexities of our region and the inter-relatedness of seemingly distinct issues make this task challenging, but no less necessary (Columbia River Gorge Commission, 2009).

The VSI Project has four goals:

1. Develop a set of high level measures to assess the conditions of Gorge resources
2. Inform future plan review sessions, and guide adaptive management
3. Build new and strengthen existing relationships with our partner agencies and Gorge communities
4. Share information through community presentations and a dedicated website.

While the VSI Project remains an important element of the Commission's strategic approach few resources have been available to actualize its ambitious goals. The Commission presently maintains a committee dedicated to continuing the VSI project if resourcing is made available (Interviews; Columbia River Gorge Commission, 2009).

Resolution of urban area boundary issues is another significant planning function. The Commission is currently undertaking a collaborative process to address the important issue of finalizing the original urban area boundaries that were left somewhat vague in the original mapping of the Scenic Area. While most of the urban area boundaries are easily interpreted, there are many areas in which mapped boundary lines are imprecise and do not provide logical reference points. The intent of the collaborative effort is to convene stakeholders to reach agreement on a process to decide final urban area boundary lines. This effort is scheduled for the summer and fall of 2014 (interviews; staff communications).

In summary, the Commission holds a mixed record in meeting its mandated and essential additional functions. Whereas it has achieved many of the broader purposes of the Act, it is behind in completing many others.

Current Staff Workloads

The CRGC executive director requested each staff member to develop a summary of their current typical monthly workload over the previous 12 months. This information was developed between January and May 2014 and provided to the authors. In most instances, staff were found to be performing work beyond what was expected for their specific job classification. That individual members are willing to work beyond job description is evidence of the commitment, cohesiveness, and teamwork we observed among the staff

members. While this is not unusual in small, commitment driven organizations where task sharing is required to maximize efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness in getting necessary work done, the frequency with which this occurs at the Commission is significant for several reasons. First, as illustrated above, the sharing of work is not sufficient to achieve all commission functions. In this case, it is indicative of a lack of adequate staffing with expertise critical to all functions of the Commission's work. Second, when staff is performing work outside of their area of expertise they are not able to perform critical work within their job classification. Third, staff not trained for specific functions lowers efficiency by requiring more time to complete certain tasks. In summary, while some work beyond job classification is expected in small organizations and functional; the degree of such worked evident in the self-reported work histories is not functional.

In interviews conducted for this report staff expressed frustration with the degree to which they are pulled in different directions and in their inability to complete other critical work within in their primary area of responsibility. At the same time, they understand that all the functions they perform, whether within or outside of their job classification, are important to the function of the Commission. A few examples include:

1. The Commission does not presently staff a position for accounting and budgeting. This need becomes most acute during the biennial requirement to prepare budget requests for the two state governors' offices and legislatures. The staff administrative assistant and executive director perform most of this work in addition to their other responsibilities.
2. The individual in the geoinformatics position is frequently asked to manage contracts regardless of relevance to that field. This individual also performs the Commission's information technology functions. These duties come at the expense of information analysis needed for effective monitoring, enforcement, Management Plan revisions, county ordinance compliance reviews, and special projects.
3. Planning staff members are asked to perform many administrative duties at the expense of permit processing, preparing for the next Management Plan review, and county ordinance compliance reviews.
4. Legal counsel is periodically asked to perform as an operations manager when staff is seeking advice on how to proceed with a given project.
5. The Executive Director serves multiple roles as an operations manager, strategic leader, and outreach coordinator.

From both the self-reported work histories and interviews, it is clear that there is more work than current staff can complete within their assigned task areas and that some areas are not covered by current staffing.

Future Planning Needs: Visitation, Climate Change, and Fossil Fuel Transportation

In addition to the types of work the Commission has historically performed were three new areas interview respondents felt the Commission would need to address in the future. These issues and associated areas of work identified include the dramatic increase in recreational visitation and its impact on Gorge resources, climate change impacts in the Gorge and potential human in-migration to the Gorge in response to extra regional impacts, and anticipated increases in the movement of petroleum and natural gas through the Gorge via truck, barge, or railroad.

Recreational Visitation. National and international tourism in the Gorge has greatly increased with significant impacts on Scenic Area usage. Unfortunately, good data on Gorge visits is very limited since no single entity tracks visitation to the Scenic Area. Forest Service data, based on parking permit sales, indicates an estimated 2 million visitors to federally-owned properties (personal communication with US Forest Service staff, May 27, 2014). In 2013 Oregon State Parks estimated about 3.5 million visits to Oregon State-owned properties (White & Goodding, 2013). There is little reliable data available to extract more accurate numbers for visitation from other agencies or sectors, for example the number sail boarders using city-owned beaches in Hood River. Our best guess, based on the information at hand, is that visits to the Gorge number between 3.5 – 5.0 million annually. The Commission recognizes this as a significant issue to be addressed either in the next Management Plan revision or as a separate planning document. As of this writing, the staff had not yet started that effort.

Climate Change. The Gorge, like the rest of the Pacific Northwest, is experiencing forest fires of ever greater frequency, increased insect infestations and changes in rainfall patterns. These phenomena are related, in that large stands of trees killed by insects are that much more vulnerable to fire. Beyond the biophysical impacts of climate change relative to the Act's charge regarding natural areas, there are likely to be impacts to the region's human demographics amplifying the recreation issues cited above as well as pressure for development in the designated urban areas of the Gorge. Staff is aware of the need to address climate change in their next Management Plan revision but have not yet determined how best to do so.

Fossil Fuel Transportation. Recent years have seen efforts to build liquefied natural gas terminals along the Oregon and Washington coasts and increase coal shipments to northwest ports from the Midwest. Rail shipments of shale oil from North Dakota to ports on the lower Columbia River are also increasing. Accidental spills of oil products have occurred in the past, and state, federal, and local authorities are prepared to respond as they occur. But with the increased volume of traffic comes increased risk. The Commission recognizes the need to address this issue.

Each of these issues is qualitatively different from the traditional roles and work the Commission performed for natural resource protection and economic development. Some of these issues like may require different arrays of staff expertise than the Commission has employed in the past.

Summary

Based on review of staff workloads, the types of work staff perform, the types of work that the Act and Compact require, the backlog of work, and the challenges facing the Commission in the future, the analysis reported above demonstrates that the Commission is under-resourced to carry out its current and likely future duties. To determine if this is a recent phenomenon we also examined historic trends in Commission funding and staffing.

Historical Resourcing

Historic Annual Budget

We found that, from the Commission's inception, the two states provided different levels of support in funding the Commission. The original budget and staffing plan reveals that the states depended on a limited interpretation of the Commission's responsibilities which did not fully reflect the provisions of the Act as outlined in the functional analysis above. One specific document outlines assumptions made by Oregon concerning resource needs for the Commission.

A January 22, 1987 memorandum from the former Director of the original bi-state Gorge commissions⁸ to an Oregon legislative fiscal analyst provided a proposed biennial budget and staffing plan for the newly establish Columbia River Gorge Commission. It also included the rationale for requested resources. The document assumed a staff of 6.0 FTE and approximately \$560,000 biennially from Oregon alone to be matched by Washington State (Breckel, 1987). Meanwhile, an April 16, 1987 memorandum from the chairman of the Washington Gorge commission to a Washington State Senator recommended Washington consider a biennium amount of less than \$500,000 (Powell, 1987).

Article IV of the Compact describes funding provisions for the Commission. Each state has different accounting and recording-keeping standards that the Commission must follow. These funding provisions add considerably to administrative workload. The provisions of the bi-state Compact require that Oregon and Washington match expenditures. The state budget allocations in the 1987-89 biennium were \$560,000 from Oregon and \$530,000 from Washington. Additionally, Article IV restricts the Commission from utilizing state funding beyond the lesser of the two allocations. Therefore, the actual biennium funding available for 1987-89 was approximately \$1,060,000 ($\$530,000 \times 2$). This funding provision offers little incentive for one state to allocate more funds than the other. It has resulted in a proverbial "race to the bottom" for funding, especially when the states are face with difficult economic and political climates.

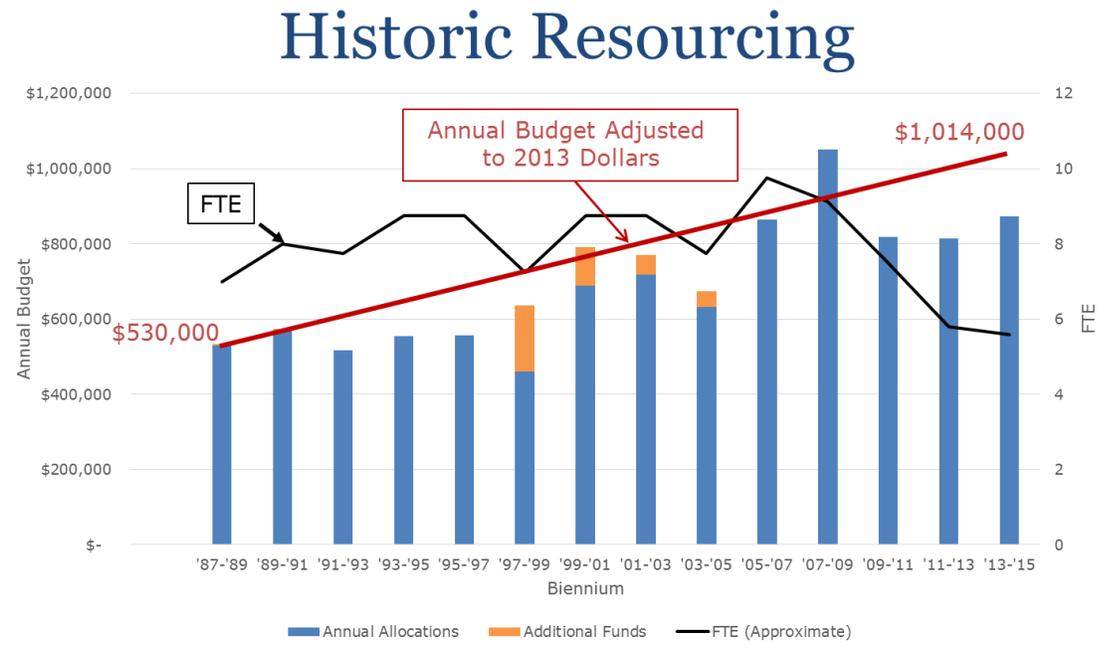
Exhibit 3 presents the history of Commission resourcing through fiscal years 1987-89 to 2013-2015. For the purposes of this report, the authors have taken biennium budget and staff numbers and converted them to annual budget numbers. The purpose of this is to simplify budgeting and accounting into more easily measurable comparatives. In addition to state funding, the Commission received additional funds through grants from non-state entities between 1997 and 2005. These grants ranged from \$1,000 to \$175,000 per year. For the budget data, we show both actual dollars (in the bars) and inflation adjusted levels (shown by the red line). Inflation was calculated using the Bureau of Labor Statistics "inflation calculator" (available online at http://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm).

Exhibit 3 illustrates that, if the of \$530,000 annual budget provided in 1987 accurately estimated the Commission's funding needs, then, in inflation-adjusted terms, the Commission has been underfunded for most of the years since. For example, the Commission's initial annual budget of \$530,000 for fiscal years 1987-1989 equates to \$1,014,000 in 2013 dollars. The \$873,000 provided per year for the 2013-2015 period,

⁸ Prior to adoption of the bi-state Compact, each state had established a "commission" to collaborate on Gorge issues. The two commissions were facilitated by an executive director. Each commission was established under state law with limited jurisdiction in their own states and no jurisdiction in the other.

while an increase from the previous biennium, represents a budget reduction of \$139,000 from the original inflation-adjusted amount.

Exhibit 3: Historic Resourcing of the Columbia River Gorge Commission



Historic Staffing

Exhibit 3 shows that, since 1988, the number of FTE for the CRGC staff ranged from a 5.6 in the most recent biennium to 9.75 in biennium 2005-2007. As with the funding numbers, current levels of FTE are below those estimated at the Commission’s inception. There is more to Commission staff levels than total FTE, however. Historically, staffing plans for the Commission show consistent gaps and shifts in positions. Several positions were hired for a few fiscal cycles then eliminated due to reduced budgets and/or the need to refocus staffing efforts. Some essential staff positions were not anticipated in the original workload plan of the Commission. And some staffing needs, while seemingly evident in the reading of the Act or Compact, have never been filled (interviews; staff communications). Those responsibilities have been allocated among the staff on hand, diverting effort from the functions that they were originally hired to perform.

The January 22, 1987 memorandum from former director Breckel (noted above) recommends a staffing level of 6.0 FTE. His proposed staffing plan called for one executive director, two planners, one administrative assistant, one secretary, and one information officer. Additionally, he anticipated that, in the first year of operation, the Commission would set aside a non-recurring \$262,000 to hire consultants to provide the required resource inventories and assessments for the Commission. Another \$60,000 per year was allocated to hire state attorneys to address legal issues. These allocations for one-time or

limited external services would not account for on-going resource needs and essential functions of the Commission.

The types of positions hired have varied throughout the years. We found the following noteworthy items related to historical staffing:

- The original suggested resourcing plan from the January 22, 1987 Breckel memorandum called for an Information Officer position. This position was never created, although a Communication position was created in 2000. This position was eliminated in 2003 due to budget cuts and has not been replaced. This means that issues of public outreach and coordination falls to other members of the staff.
- The original staffing and resourcing plan did not consider a number of essential elements needed to implement the Act and bi-state Compact. Items not anticipated in the plan included the need for Klickitat County development reviews, the extensive litigation the Commission experienced, hundreds of public meetings, budgeting, accounting and record-keeping compliance for both states, monitoring and enforcement, continued inventory updates, on-going resource inventories, and extensive inter-agency coordination. These are all critical elements for the implementation of the Act for which staff has not been provided.
- Despite the heavy workload in litigation, rulemaking and appeals to county decisions, the Commission had no on-staff legal counsel until a part time attorney was hired in 1992 at .75 FTE. Up until then, over 19 court cases had been filed and dozens of appeals heard by the Commission. Absent in-house counsel, the Commission relied on both State Attorneys General for legal representation despite compact law being a highly specialized body of law and the Act being a highly controversial piece of legislation with few legal precedents (see Cooper 2014 for further discussion of the CRGC's legal complexity). The FTE level was increased to 1.0 FTE in 2012 which is where it now stands. Since then, all work is conducted in-house and coordinated with the State Attorneys General when advice is needed regarding issues of state law, money claims, or as otherwise appropriate. A legal secretary was added from 1994 until 1996, when it was eliminated to fill a planning position.
- The maximum number of FTE in Planner positions was 5.0 in 1997. Planner positions were reduced to 2.5 FTE by 1999 due to budget cuts. Currently, there are 1.6 FTE to conduct the Commission's planning functions.
- Throughout its history, the Commission has not been adequately staffed to complete the required Management Plan updates within the timeline provisions of the Act.
- The Commission has never had a position for monitoring and enforcement actions.

A history of CRGC staffing is tabulated at Exhibit 4 (data provided by CRGC staff).

Exhibit 4: History of CRGC Staffing

| Calendar Year | Average FTE | Listing of Positions | Milestones |
|---------------|-------------|---|---|
| 1987 | 1 | Admin Officer | Commission Established |
| 1988 | 7.0 | ED, Admin Officer, Admin Assist., Planner (3), Clerk, | |
| 1989 | 7.0 | ED, Admin Officer, Admin Assist., Planner (3), Clerk, | |
| 1990 | 8.0 | ED, Admin Officer, Admin Assist., Planner (4), Clerk, | |
| 1991 | 8.0 | ED, Admin Officer, Admin Assist., Planner (4), Secretary | |
| 1992 | 7.75 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (4), Secretary. Legal Counsel | 1st Management Plan Adopted |
| 1993 | 7.75 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (4), Secretary. Legal Counsel | |
| 1994 | 8.75 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (4), Secretary. Legal Counsel, Legal Secretary | |
| 1995 | 8.75 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (4), Secretary. Legal Counsel, Legal Secretary | |
| 1996 | 8.25 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (4), Secretary. Legal Counsel, Legal Secretary (6 Months only) | |
| 1997 | 8.75 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (5), Secretary. Legal Counsel | |
| 1998 | 7.50 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (4.5), Secretary. Legal Counsel | |
| 1999 | 6.25 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (2.5), Secretary. Legal Counsel | |
| 2000 | 8.75 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (3), Secretary. Legal Counsel, GIS, Communications | |
| 2001 | 8.25 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (3), Secretary. Legal Counsel, GIS, Communications | |
| 2002 | 8.25 | ED, Admin Assist., Planner (3), Secretary, Legal Counsel, GIS, Communications | |
| 2003 | 7.25 | ED, Planner (3), Secretary, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | |
| 2004 | 6.25 | ED, Planner (3), Secretary, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | <i>Revisions to Management Plan Adopted</i> |
| 2005 | 7.75 | ED, Planner (4), Secretary, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | |
| 2006 | 9.75 | ED, Planner (4), Planning Manager, Secretary, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | |
| 2007 | 9.75 | ED, Planner (4), Planning Manager, Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | <i>Management Plan Updated, Future Forum Initiated</i> |
| 2008 | 9.50 | ED, Planner (3.75), Planning Manager, Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | Future Forum Report Complete, Vital Signs Indicator Project initiated |
| 2009 | 8.50 | ED, Planner (3), Planning Manager, Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | Vital Signs Indicator Project Report Complete |
| 2010 | 8.50 | ED, Planner (3), Planning Manager, Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | |
| 2011 | 6.50 | ED, Planner (2), Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS, Admin Specialist | Vital Signs Indicators - Resident and Visitor Study Completed |
| 2012 | 5.75 | ED, Planner (2), Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS | |
| 2013 | 5.6 | ED, Planner (1.6), Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS | Commission Completes Collaborative Communication Training |
| 2014 | 5.6 | ED, Planner (1.6), Admin Assist, Legal Counsel, GIS | Urban Area Boundary Collaborative Process |

Interview Results: Commission Effectiveness

Organizational capacity is comprised of more than staff and funding. It is also a function of organizational cohesion, morale, training, sound leadership and management, and effective processes. In assessing these factors, we relied primarily on our interview results, supplemented with follow-up discussions with the commissioners and staff and our own observations. We found a number of *trends* in the comments provided by commissioners and staff. We present those trends below.

We also found an array of important topics upon which opinion diverged. That disagreements among commissioners exists on significant issues is not remarkable given their diversity of experience and background and the diverse array of Gorge constituencies they represent. Nor are disagreements inherently dysfunctional. Creative management of the tensions that naturally arise as individual commissioners place emphasis on whether resource protection or economic development take priority on a given issue, or over any other question before the Commission, can lead to better decision-making. What is dysfunctional is when such disagreements are left unresolved and result in confusing signals to staff regarding priorities of effort or which direction to take on a given issue.

Converging Trends

The converging trends found from our interviews and discussions were as follows:

- Commissioners believed that the collaborative communication trainings provided in 2013 were very helpful in improving understanding and respectful dialogue between commissioners.
- Commissioners and staff members recognize and greatly appreciate the difficult work and workloads the staff currently undertakes.
- Commissioners believe the Commission is under resourced. One Commissioner offered a dissenting view in general but opted not to formally respond due to lack of detailed current budget and expenditure information.
- Commissioners and staff believe the Commission should work toward negotiating an ordinance with Klickitat County consistent with the Act or an alternative agreement to reduce the staff workload involved in processing the county's development permits.
- Staff members feel strongly that there is a need for an operations manager to provide direction on daily operations and to set staff priorities for long-term planning, freeing the executive director from day-to-day management and routine decision making. This issue was not raised by the commissioners.
- A large majority of commissioners and staff believe the Commission is not fulfilling the requirements of the Act.
- Most commissioners believe a revised Management Plan with a strong emphasis on recreation planning should be a Commission priority.
- Most commissioners believe that implementing the Vital Signs Indicator (VSI) project should be a priority.

- A majority of the Commission believes that a communications position is essential to improving public education and engagement.
- Many commissioners expressed interest in improving tribal relations with the four treaty tribes of the Scenic Area.

Areas of Disagreement

A number of respondents had conflicting responses on a specific subject.

- There is a fundamental disagreement among commissioners about the executive director's degree of autonomy in informing the Commission about operations, fiscal matters, and human resource management.
- There is a fundamental disagreement about whether it is appropriate for commissioners to contact Commission staff directly to request assistance or discuss work-related items without the executive director's knowledge.
- There is disagreement about the degree to which commissioners should be directing staff workloads to provide support to the Commission. This is primarily a resourcing issue. With staff already feeling overloaded, added work for Commission committees, etc., is difficult to manage while continuing to complete mandated work such as development reviews and resource inventories, or improving resource plans.
- There is disagreement about the degree of emphasis the Commission should place on resource protection versus economic development in the Gorge, a disagreement to be expected given the purposes of the act and the appointment of commissioners. The tension resulting from this disagreement can be functional or dysfunctional depending on the nature of Commission decision making.
- There is some disagreement about whether the Commission should extend the range of partners and stakeholders not historically engaged with the Commission, especially in an environment of limited resources. This was raised in the context of engaging the port authorities within the Scenic Area.
- There is substantial divergence between commissioner and staff opinions about the level of resources needed to fulfill the mandates of the Act, about which further is presented below.
- Ideas for finding potential additional funding sources varied considerably. Increased funding sources mentioned were additional state funding, direct federal funding, grants, private sponsorship, local taxes, use-fees and Gorge-specific license plates.
- There is divergence of opinion about priorities and approaches the Commission should take to fulfill the Act. This reflects a strategic misalignment within the agency. The Commission lacks consensus on its primary roles regarding its regulatory, policy, planning and technical functions. While some commissioners expressed the need for a technical focus, when asked about additional staff to perform this function, no technical positions were mentioned as essential. For example, a number of commissioners want the staff to have the capacity to collect, monitor and analyze resource data, yet few suggested the need for relevant science-based staff to be able to perform this type of data collection and analysis.

- Related to the differences over priorities and approach are differences over the Commission's managerial alignment. The Commission bylaws define the process for the Commission to hear appeals and set strategic policy. The role of the executive director is discussed in the bylaws. But the degree to which the executive director is to inform and gain the consent of the commissioners to perform certain functions is open to interpretation. The commissioners expressed varying opinions about the degree to which the executive director is expected to keep the commissioners informed of his actions. Some wish to keep fairly close control over the executive director's actions and decisions; others are comfortable with delegating considerable autonomy. The current executive director believes the bylaws grant him considerable discretion, thus generating friction between him and those who believe the position should be subject to greater supervision. The lack of alignment among the commissioners and between the commissioners and executive director generates unnecessary friction and delay in decision-making and occasionally fosters confusion among the staff as to priorities.

Summary

It is apparent from a review of the findings in this subsection that the Commission lacks a shared understanding in interpretation of the purposes of the Act. Some commissioners expressed an emphasis on the resource protection portion of the Act while others were explicit that equal emphasis be given to economic development. While differences in perspective are constructive on the commission, coming to agreement around the Commission's twin purposes is an important aspect of strategic alignment. The history of limited resources and litigation indicate that better alignment among commissioners regarding the Act's purposes will benefit the Commission's effectiveness.

Underscoring the importance of the current state of convergence and divergence among the commissioners, we return to the finding discussed earlier where many of those interviewed this to be the most engaged and collegial group of commissioners in memory. Despite the differences and disagreements, we found strong respect among commissioners for each other. Furthermore, the Act recognized the diverse perspectives among Gorge residents and designed Commission membership to reflect them in Commission decision-making (Scenic Area Act, §544c). But improvements in achieving a common organizational vision, developing a shared sense of purpose, procedures for assigning tasks to staff, and managerial alignment would greatly improve Commission effectiveness. Fortunately, the collegial relationship between current commissioners provides a constructive environment for such improvements to be made.

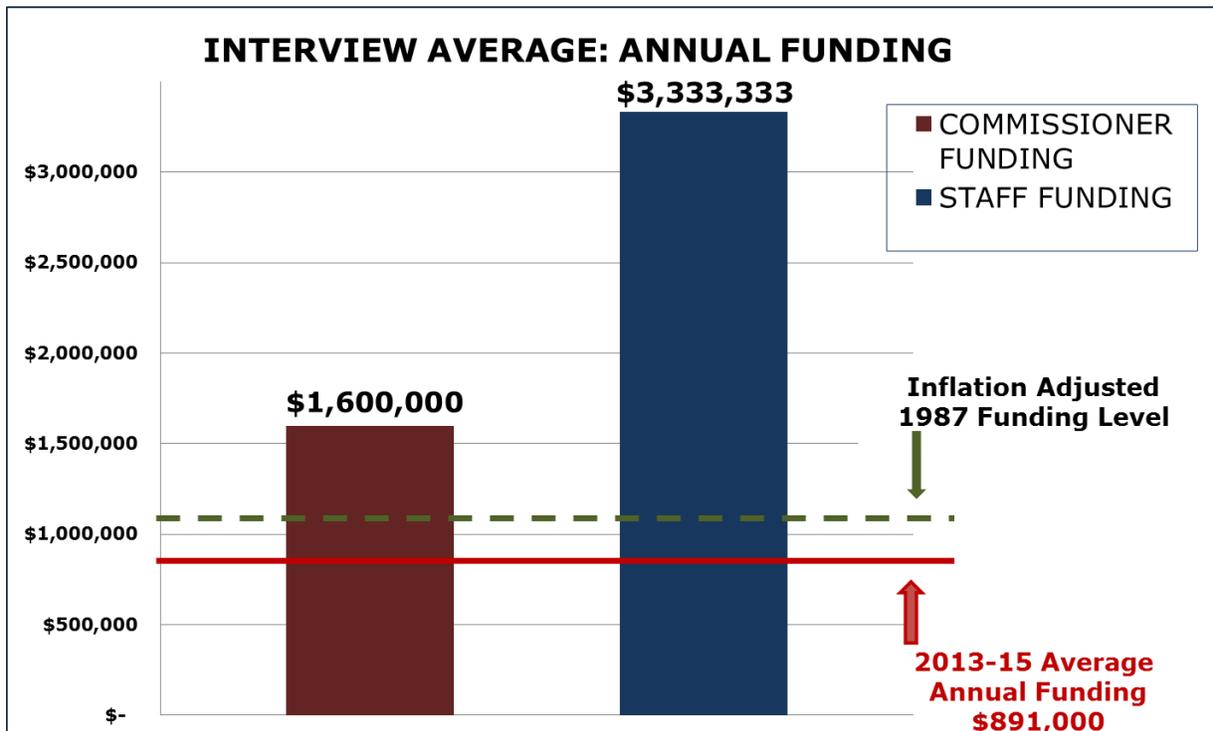
These improvements in understanding and alignment among commissioners and for the commission as a whole are insufficient to generate the resource capacity needed to reduce the backlog of legal and planning-related work, complete the overdue Management Plan review, implement the Vital Signs Indicators project, initiate the needed recreation study, or simply keep up with the press of day-to-day business. If the Commission is to be fully effective, and if the vision for the Gorge as presented in the Scenic Area Act is to be realized, then the issue of the Commission's chronic under-resourcing must be addressed.

Interview Results: Suggested Resource Levels

Whereas the staff and almost all of the commissioners agree that additional staff resources are necessary, there is wide divergence between the levels of increase viewed as needed. These differences are illustrated in Exhibits 5 and 6.

Exhibit 5 presents the interview responses for appropriate funding levels. It also presents a comparison to those responses with the inflation-adjusted 1987 funding level and the annual amount budgeted for the current biennium. Responses were received from eleven of the thirteen commissioners. The responses ranged from \$900,000 (roughly equivalent to the current biennium funding level) to \$4.5 million. As a matter of method, we discarded the outliers. This left nine data points ranging from \$1.0 million to \$1.7 million that averaged to \$1.6 million per year (interviews).

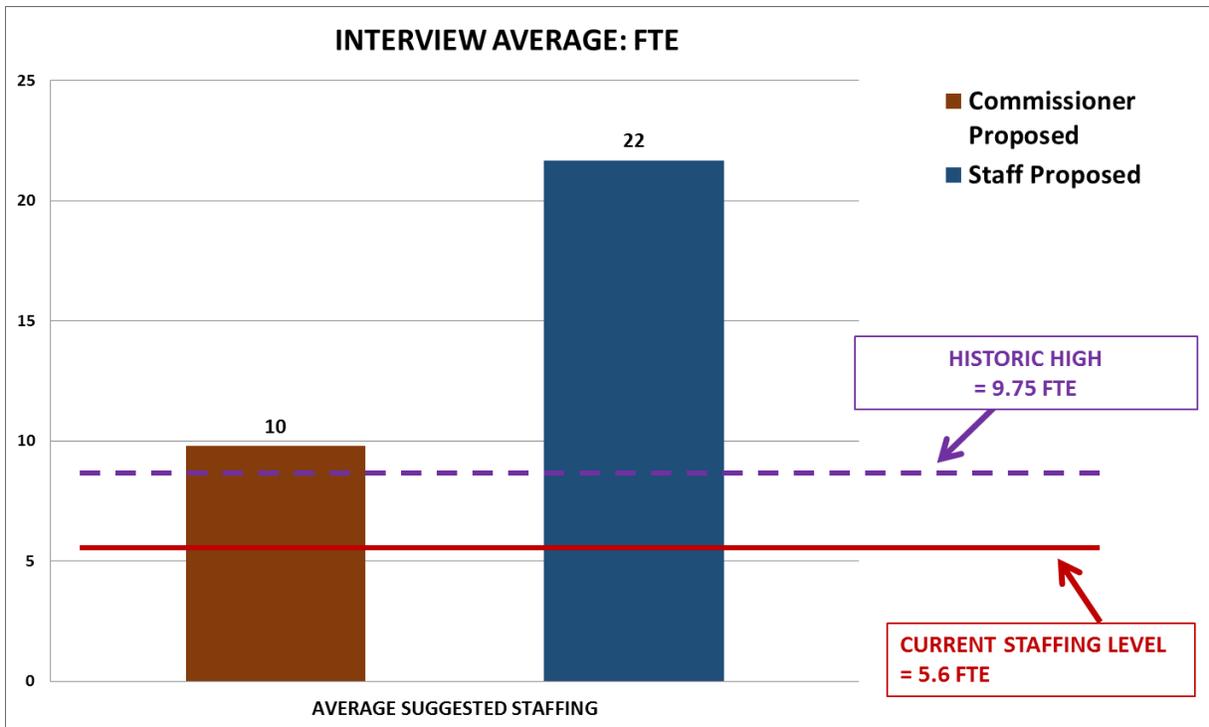
Exhibit 5: Commission and Staff Suggested Funding Levels



Responses to the same question from five staff members ranged from \$2.5 million (two responses) to \$4.5 million (again, two responses) per year. Because we received two responses each at the high and low end, dropping one of each still left the remaining three responses ranging between \$2.5 million and \$4.5 million. Those three responses averaged to \$3.3 million per year, about double the average amount recommended by the commissioners.

Exhibit 6 presents commissioner and staff suggestions regarding appropriate staffing levels as compared to the current staffing level (5.6 FTE) and the high of 9.75 FTE experienced during the 2005 – 2007 biennium (previously illustrated in Exhibit 3). The responses from eleven Commissioners ranged from 7 to 20 FTE. Following our practice of dropping the outliers, the remaining nine responses averaged from 8 to 12 FTE and averaged to 10 FTE per year.

Exhibit 6: Commission and Staff Suggested Staffing Levels



Consistent with the trend observed with funding, staff opinions on needed staffing were generally higher than the suggestions of the commissioners. The five staff member responses ranged from 14 to 35 FTE. Dropping the outliers left three responses ranging between 18 and 28 FTE, averaging to 22 FTE per year.

We thus find almost universal agreement that additional staff resources are necessary. But there were wide discrepancies between the staff and commissioners as to what the appropriate amount should be. We present our resolution and recommendations on issue in the next section.

Section 5: Discussion and Recommendations

Introduction

Although there are improvements to be made in the Commission's internal processes, we conclude that the most significant hindrance to the Commission's effectiveness is under-resourcing. We further conclude that the Commission has been chronically under-resourced since its inception. We consequently address resource needs first. We present our recommendations in the following three subsections entitled Recommended Staffing Levels, Recommended Funding Levels, and Recommendations for Improvements in Commission Alignment and Managerial Oversight, followed by our closing comments.

Formal recommendations for organizational redesign cannot be offered at this time, in part because of the limitations and in part because resource levels directly impact staffing levels and therefore the key organizational design parameters. As a consequence, we cannot offer recommendations as to specific staff positions, qualifications, or grades. Organizational design, job design and position specification are important next steps once overall resourcing decisions are made.

Recommended Staffing Levels

We divide Commission staffing needs by mandated and essential additional functions. Mandated functions are those baseline needs required to meet the provisions of the Scenic Area Act, Compact, and bylaws as identified in Section 4. Recall that these needs include the work required for review and processing of Klickitat County development requests, since the Act requires this for any county that fails to adopt Act-compliant planning ordinances (per §544e(c)). These needs also cover functions not anticipated in the Act or Compact but required by the states' regulations for financial management, contracting, record retention, and accounting.

Recall also that essential additional functions are those functions not specified in the Act or Compact but that the Commission has determined essential to meeting the intent and purposes of those documents. These functions include improved coordination with federal and state agencies, public outreach and education, improved coordination with Indian tribal governments, development of resource inventories, establishment of criteria for monitoring (such as outlined in the Vital Signs Indicators report), and completion of other reports, studies, and special projects. Despite the importance attached by the Commission to these necessary additional functions, many have been only partially addressed or not addressed at all due to resource limitations.

Recommendations

We recommend:

- That a baseline staffing level of 16.9 FTE be provided to meet the Commission's mandated functions.
- That an additional 8.5 FTE be provided to meet the current needs of essential additional functions. The number of FTE needed for these functions will likely fluctuate in the future as projects are completed and new requirements identified.

- Any staff increases be phased in gradually over time. Although the need for additional staff resources is acute and immediate, attempting to hire all at once will likely cause more problems than it will solve. New staff to any organization needs to be trained and socialized into the organization's mission and culture. Hiring should therefore be at a rate the current staff can absorb without serious loss of efficiency to ongoing operations.

Discussion

Recall from Exhibit 6 that the commissioners and staff recommended average annual staffing levels of 10 and 22 FTE respectively. In order to refine these estimates, we drew on the workload studies requested by the executive director in April and followed those with detailed discussions with each staff member. We discussed with each staff member each of the tasks and functions associated with the ten functional categories identified in the function and workload assessment above. The staff provided the researchers with data indicating workloads over the previous 12 months and based on interviews the researchers determined the appropriate level of effort required to complete the task properly. The raw data was collected, entered into an Excel spreadsheet and analyzed.⁹ The result of our analysis and our staffing recommendation for each of the ten functional categories are displayed at Exhibit 7.

Exhibit 7 consists of four columns. The first column lists the ten function categories previously identified. The second column shows the current staff effort being expended on each category. It is important to note that this column represents effort expended, and not staff positions. For example, the CRGC staff currently have one full time and one part time employee in planning positions for a total of 1.6 FTE. Their time, however, is often diverted to non-planning tasks, such as meeting support, administrative tasks, or contract management.

The third and fourth columns represent our best judgment as to the baseline staffing levels required to meet mandated and essential additional functions, respectively. We estimate that 16.9 FTE, distributed between function categories as shown, are needed to meet the mandated functions of the Commission. This includes dedicated staffing for processing Klickitat County development permits and the regulatory requirements of the two states, together estimated at 1.8 FTE. In other words, the total baseline staff number could be reduced by 1.8 FTE if Klickitat County were to adopt ordinances consistent with the Act and if the states of Oregon and Washington could agree to a common set of record and accounting rules for purposes of Commission business.

An additional 8.5 FTE are needed to meet the Commission's essential additional functions. Unlike the staffing needed for mandated functions, this number will likely change over time. It is recommended for the fiscal year 2015–2017 biennium only with future adjustments to be made as appropriate. These FTE do not need to be filled by direct hires. They could be met through temporary hires, contractors, intergovernmental agreements, or other arrangements for the duration of the need.

The staffing shortage is acute and requires action. However, attempting hire all needed positions at once will likely cause more problems than it will solve. New staff to any organization needs to be trained and socialized into the organizations mission and culture.

⁹ Due to its size, this spreadsheet is not included with this report. It is, however, on file at the Center for Public Service.

Hiring should therefore be at a rate the current staff can absorb without serious loss of efficiency to ongoing operations.

Exhibit 7: Recommended Annual Staffing

| Functions and Estimated Staffing | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Function Category | Current Staff Effort¹ | Baseline Staffing for Mandated Functions | Staffing for Essential Additional Functions ² | Total |
| Planning | 1.00 | 5.95 | 2.50 | 8.45 |
| Legal | 1.00 | 1.85 | .75 | 2.6 |
| Intergovernmental Coordination | .05 | .50 | .50 | 1.0 |
| Financial Management / Accounting | .45 | .60 | .40 | 1.0 |
| Operations Management | .30 | .95 | .05 | 1.0 |
| Information Analysis | .40 | 1.80 | 2.45 | 4.25 |
| Executive Management | 1.05 | 1.50 | 0 | 1.50 |
| Public Outreach and Communications | .04 | 1.00 | .50 | 1.50 |
| Information Technology | .26 | .40 | .35 | .75 |
| Office Administration and Management | 1.00 | 2.39 | 1.01 | 3.40 |
| TOTAL (Totals rounded to nearest tenth) | 5.6 | 16.9 | 8.5 | 25.5 |

1. Reflects effort currently dedicated to function category and not staff positions

2. May be full time, temporary, intergovernmental agreement, contract, or other

Recommended Funding Levels

As with our recommendations on staffing, we divide Commission staffing needs by mandated and essential additional functions.

Recommendations

We recommend:

- The Commission be provided a baseline funding level of \$2.5 million per year (\$5 million total) to support mandated functions, indexed for inflation.

- That funding of an additional \$1.0 million per year (\$2 million total) be provided in order to support the Commission's essential additional functions. As with the FTE for essential additional functions, the funding needs will vary and should be adjusted over time accordingly.
- This funding be introduced gradually over time, commensurate with the staff increases recommended above.

Discussion

The authors estimate that \$2.5 million per year, indexed in the future for inflation, is necessary to meet the mandated functions of the Act, Compact, and bylaws. We estimate an additional \$1 million per year is needed to fund essential additional functions. These funding levels are inclusive of all Commission expenses. They include salary and benefits, goods and other services, professional contracts, travel, capital outlays, and other Commission expenses.

Recommendations for Improvements in Commission Alignment and Managerial Oversight

Recommendations

We recommend that:

- The Commission Chair and executive director continue the team building activities initiated in 2013 to foster a common understanding of Commission authorities and responsibilities and maintain the Commission's camaraderie.
- The commissioners and executive director participate in a facilitated meeting to come to agreement on a governance model and have that model written into the Commission's bylaws. The governance model would define the role of the executive director, the relationship of the executive director to the commissioners, and the relationship of the commissioners with the staff.
- Once agreement is reached, the agreement be formalized by way of revisions to the Commission bylaws or other documentation.

Discussion

Throughout our discussions with commissioners and staff we repeatedly heard comments as to the collegiality of the current Commission. We believe this is at least in part due to the team-building efforts the Commission chair and executive director initiated in 2013. Those efforts should continue.

We found several instances of misalignment on issues among commissioners and between the commissioners and staff. We believe this to be due, in part, to the normal differences in perspectives of the commissioners and, in part, due to the lack of a formal governance model for the Commission. For differences in representation, perspective and values to be functional in the Commission, an effective governance model for mediating the differences among members.

The thirteen commissioners represent the broad interests of their constituencies from within the Gorge and in the two states. As individuals, commissioners reflect diverse perspectives and professional backgrounds. The challenge is to ensure the Commission decision processes work well so the staff can be provided with clear and consistent direction.¹⁰

The composition of the current commissioners includes members with strong environmental advocacy backgrounds, US Congressional experience, agricultural roots, independent business ownership, tribal rights advocacy, science-based training, active involvement in local politics, and expertise in investment banking, law and journalism. Approximately half of the commissioners reside within the Scenic Area boundaries; most reside within the six counties that comprise the Scenic Area. Such diversity can be a major strength in that it ensures a wide array of perspectives are presented in decision making. Continuing the team building efforts will assist in ensuring the Commission can build on that potential strength, avoid divisiveness, and yield creative, sustainable solutions that meet the twin purposes of the Act. Building consensus among commissioners with such varied interests requires unique appreciation and understanding of the value of the purposes of the Act.

The Commission's bylaws are the formal document that articulates the roles and responsibilities of the executive director and commissioners. Review of the bylaws indicates that the language does not offer the degree of specificity that may be desirable for the organization in its present developmental stage. There seems to be a fundamental disagreement and misunderstanding of the executive director's role, degree of autonomy and authority to manage the operational and strategic approach of the Commission. Interviews with the Commission indicate that clarifications or revision of the Commission's bylaws to more clearly define the executive director's role, responsibilities and authority may be warranted. In certain instances actions taken by the executive director and individual commissioners have been viewed as outside the position's authority. This has caused tensions that inhibit the required trust-building needed for improving organizational effectiveness.

The Commission bylaws do not clearly define a governance structure and process for the Commission. By this we mean that the role and authorities of the executive director, the relationship of the executive director to the Commission chair and commissioners, the relationship of the executive director to staff, and the relationship of the commissioners to the staff are not clear. For example, the current executive director approaches his duties in a manner similar to that of a strong mayor or council-manager form of local government in which the chief executive exercises wide latitude and autonomy in exercising their duties. Conversely, the chair in office when our research was conducted appears to view the Commission as a weak mayor or commission form of government in which the chief executive shares decision making (Morgan, Robinson, Strachota, and Hough 2014). We take no position as to which model would best serve the Commission and Gorge residents. But

¹⁰ The Commission may benefit by reviewing other local boards and commissions to determine how they increase functionality under circumstances of diverse values and strong opinions by members. Examples include the Board of Forestry in Oregon, the Pacific Marine Fisheries Council, or Washington's Department of Natural Resources. There are, of course numerous others.

we strongly recommend the Commission engage in a facilitated session to explore these (and perhaps other) governance forms and determine which is most appropriate. The Commission's decision should then be incorporated into the bylaws for the benefit of future Commissions.

Conclusion: Opportunities and Challenges for the Columbia River Gorge Commission

Understanding the historical context in which the current Commission functions offers the opportunity to appreciate the work the Commission has done and to recognize the challenges it faces to fulfill the purposes of the Act. Throughout Commission interviews the authors noted a common sentiment that a unique sense of collegiality and greater willingness to reach across the aisle and open dialogue to acknowledge the diversity of opinions commissioners have for implementing the Act now exists. The efforts the commissioners have made to obtain formal training in collaborative communication and leadership no doubt assisted in this and may help the Commission create new ways of reaching consensus on issues that have traditionally been barriers. The general sense among the 13 commissioners is that dialogue has reached new levels of respectful interaction and openness.

Also apparent from Commission interviews is great appreciation for the difficult and valuable work the staff performs to implement the Act. Each of the 6 staff members is dedicated to serving the Gorge community as well as implementing the purposes of the Act. With an ambitious mandate, extremely limited resources and, at times, unnerving political pressure, staff members routinely perform work outside of job classifications to cover essential functions. Each staff member values co-worker roles. The level of respect among staff members is high. Staff members identify closely with their role as representatives of the Commission.

The intention of Congress in determining the membership requirements of the Commission was to ensure that local and state jurisdictions have a continuous place at the table to express the interests of their respective constituencies. The six counties, two states, and the Forest Service have jurisdiction which include distinct constituencies, which may have divergent, disparate and unique interests in relation to the implementation of the Act. By creating the multi-jurisdictional structure of the Commission Congress established an ad hoc governance network. The success of a governance network relies on "democratic anchorage" for legitimacy. "Governance networks are democratically anchored to the extent that they are properly linked to different political constituencies and to a relevant set of democratic norms that are part of the democratic ethos of society" (Sørensen & Torfing, 2005). The nine jurisdictional bodies representing the Commission are intended to operate in a collaborative manner to establish policy and implement the Act. According to the literature on network governance prior to effective collaborative efforts, network governance structures typically pass through several developmental phases and require specific elements of trust and common purpose (Morse, Buss, & Kinghorn, 2007; Silvia, 2011; Koliba, Meek, & Zia, 2010). Historically, the Commission has had limited success creating the foundations needed to build a successful governance network.

Given the current composition of the Commission the authors believe the Commission may be uniquely positioned to harness its improved communication, strong leadership, dedicated staff, and diverse backgrounds to begin to transform the Commission. This transformation would shift the 13-member Commission from its narrow focus of representing their respective jurisdictional interests to a more broad institutional perspective defined by a common purpose and unified strategic approach.

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The authors considered commissioner and staff input within the totality of all information collected and reviewed. We applied our own collective best judgment in determining the findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The material presented herein is therefore the responsibility of the authors alone and does not necessarily reflect the positions of the Columbia River Gorge Commission, the states, or the Center for Public Service.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Columbia River Gorge Commission

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|---|--|
| List of Current Commissioners | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">GORHAM BLAINE</p> <p>PO Box 445 Parkdale, OR 97041 Home: 541-352-9342 E-mail: gorham.blaine@gorgecommission.org Appointed by Hood River County Term: 2012-2016</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">BOWEN BLAIR</p> <p>2365 NW Flanders, Suite A Portland, OR 97210 Business: 503-719-4536 E-mail: bowen.blair@gorgecommission.org Appointed by the Governor of Oregon Term: 2012-2016</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">HON. DON BONKER</p> <p>10535 Sunrise Bluff Bainbridge Island, WA 98110 Cell: 202-361-7456 Fax: 202-879-3375 E-mail: don.bonker@gorgecommission.org Appointed by the Governor of Washington Term: 2011-2015</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">LYNN BURDITT</p> <p>902 Wasco Ave., Suite 200 Hood River, OR 97031 Business: 541-308-1706 E-mail: lburditt@fs.fed.us Secretary of Agriculture Non-voting</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">KEITH CHAMBERLAIN</p> <p>PO Box 252 Carson, WA 98610 Cell: 541-490-1791 E-mail: keith.chamberlain@gorgecommission.org Appointed by Skamania County Term: 2012-2016</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">LORRIE DEKAY</p> <p>1440 SW Brislaw Loop Road White Salmon, WA 98672 Home: 509-637-2737 E-mail: lorrice.dekay@gorgecommission.org Appointed by the Governor of Washington Term: 2013-2017</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">DAN ERICKSEN</p> <p>3240 Knob Hill Road The Dalles, OR 97058 Home: 541-298-1744 Cell: 541-288-6805 Fax: 541-298-7270 E-mail: dan.ericksen@gorgecommission.org Appointed by the Governor of Oregon Term: 2012-2016</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">CARL E. MCNEW</p> <p>PO Box 1336 White Salmon, WA 98672 Business: 509-493-2607 Fax: 509-493-4953 E-mail: carl.mcnew@gorgecommission.org Appointed by Klickitat County Term: 2013-2017</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">JIM MIDDAGH</p> <p>#1 Town & Country Square White Salmon, WA 98672 Home: 503-367-7364 E-mail: jim.middaugh@gorgecommission.org Appointed by Multnomah County Term: 2013-2017</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">ANTONE MINTHORN</p> <p>52006 Cayuse Road Adams, OR 97810 Home: 541-566-9520 E-mail: antone.minthorn@gorgecommission.org Appointed by the Governor of Oregon Term: 2010-2014</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">RODGER NICHOLS</p> <p>1617 Oregon Avenue The Dalles, OR 97058 Home: 541-290-1636 Business: 541-296-9102, ext. 312 E-mail: rodger.nichols@gorgecommission.org Appointed by Wasco County Term: 2011-2015</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">JANET WAINWRIGHT</p> <p>PO Box 327 Stevenson, WA 98648 Cell: 206-854-4391 Home: 509-427-4399 Business: 206-935-3608 Fax: 206-932-3651 E-mail: janet.wainwright@gorgecommission.org Appointed by the Governor of Washington Term: 2012-2016</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;">DAMON WEBSTER</p> <p>1325 SE Tech Center Drive, Suite 140 Vancouver, WA 98683 Business: 360-695-3411 Fax: 360-695-0833 E-mail: damon.webster@gorgecommission.org Appointed by Clark County Term: 2011-2015</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">STAFF</p> <p>Nancy Andring—Administrative Assistant (ext. 221) Angie Brewer—Planner (ext. 232) Michele Dailey—Geoinformatics (ext. 226) Jennifer Kaden—Planner (ext. 227) Jeff Litwak—Counsel (ext. 222) Darren Nichols—Executive Director (ext. 224)</p> |
| <p>Revised August 7, 2013</p> | |

Appendix 2: Interview Questions

Introductions and Background:

Introduce ourselves.

We are interviewing you today on behalf of the Center for Public Service. The Center for Public Service is a part of the Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. The Center for Public Service has been asked to perform an administrative assessment of the Columbia River Gorge Commission and staff. The administrative assessment consists of three components. The first is a comparative case study of the CRGC with three similar interstate compacts. The second is a legal assessment that seeks to situate the CRGC within the body of compact-related law. The third is an organizational assessment that examines CRGC functions, staffing, processes, and resourcing. The findings, conclusions, and recommendations of each component will be presented in written reports, scheduled to be presented to the Commission in October 2014.

This interview being conducted as part of the organizational assessment. Our goal is to objectively and accurately understand the strengths of the process and recommend improvements where appropriate. A large part of our understanding will come from these interviews, and the candid information that you and others familiar with Commission business share with us.

All interviews are conducted on a non-attribution basis. If we believe a specific comment is worth quoting by name, we will obtain permission before including it in our final report.

Interviewee Thoughts and Perspectives (open ended):

What do you think we should know about the Commission and its functioning?

Specific Questions:

1. How would you define the purpose of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act?
2. From your perspective, what is the primary purpose of the Columbia River Gorge Commission? The Staff?
3. What you see as your role as part of the Commission/staff?
4. How would you describe the relationship between the staff and Commission?
5. What is working well? Why?
6. What is not working well? Why?
7. What functions are being performed by the CRG Staff? By the Commissioners?
 - a. Are there functions that the staff should be performing that it is not?

- b. Are there functions that the staff is performing that it should not be?
- 8. Are current staffing levels adequate? If not, what staffing levels do you think are needed for optimal functioning of the Commission to fulfill its mandate?
- 9. To what degree is additional funding needed to fulfill the CRGC's responsibilities?
 - a. If more funding is needed, what additional funding sources might be feasible?
- 10. What made you interested in serving as a Commissioner/on staff?

Closing Thoughts:

Last question: Is there anything else that you think we should know that we haven't already discussed?

Appendix 3: Interviews Conducted

The research team interviewed each CRGC commissioner and staff member in office from March 11 through May 15, 2014. Interviews typically lasted between one and two hours with the exception of one which lasted only about 30 minutes due to a time constraint imposed by the commissioner being interviewed. All interviews were conducted on a non-attribution basis.

All interviewees were eager to share experiences and perspectives of the Commission. In many cases, the information they provided went well beyond what was being asked. That additional information frequently led to additional lines of inquiry, follow-up discussions, or requests for additional information from CRGC files. All interviewees were accommodating, accessible, and responsive to all of our questions and information requests.

Exhibit 8 lists the interviews conducted. Interviewees are grouped as “commissioners” or “staff members” and listed by the date of the interview.

Exhibit 8: Interviews Conducted

| Name | Position | Date of Interview | Interview Location |
|----------------------|---|-------------------------|---|
| Commissioners | | | |
| Damon Webster | Clark County Appointee | 3-26-2014 | Vancouver, WA |
| Rodger Nichols | Wasco County Appointee | 3-28-2014 | Hood River, OR |
| Lorrie DeKay | State of Washington Appointee | 3-28-2014 | Hood River, OR |
| Carl McNew | Klickitat County Appointee | 3-28-2014 | Bingen, WA |
| Janet Wainwright | State of Washington Appointee and CRGC Vice Chair | 3-29-2014 | Stevenson, WA |
| Jim Middaugh | Multnomah County Appointee and CRGC Chair | 3-31-2014 | Metro Offices, Portland, OR |
| Dan Ericksen | State of Oregon Appointee | 4-3-2014 | The Dalles, OR |
| Bowen Blair | State of Oregon Appointee | 4-9-2014 | Portland State University, Portland, OR |
| Lynn Burditt | US Forest Service Appointee | 4-10-2014 | US Forest Service Offices, Portland, OR |
| Hon. Don Bonker | State of Washington Appointee | 4-18-2014 | Portland Airport, Portland, OR |
| Keith Chamberlain | Skamania County Appointee | 4-18-2014 | Stevenson, WA |
| Gorham Blaine | Hood County Appointee | 5-13-2014 | Vancouver, WA |
| Antone Minthorn | State of Oregon Appointee | 5-13-2014 and 5-15-2014 | Vancouver, WA (continued via phone) |
| Staff Members | | | |
| Jeff Litwak | CRGC Legal Counsel | 3-11-2014 | Hood River, OR |
| Darren Nichols | Executive Director | 3-12-2014 | Portland, OR |
| Nancy Andring | Administrative Assistant | 4-3-2014 | CRGC Office, White Salmon, WA |
| Jennifer Ball Kaden | Planner | 4-3-2014 | CRG Commission Office, White Salmon |
| Angie Brewer | Planner | 4-3-2014 | CRG Commission Office, White Salmon |
| Michele Dailey | Geoinformatics Specialist | 4-4-2014 | Portland, OR |

Appendix 4: Provisions of the Scenic Area Act, Compact, and Commission Bylaws Mandating Staff Action

Mandates of the Scenic Area Act impacting ongoing Commission workloads

1) §544c, Section 5:

- a. States will enter into a compact and create the CRG commission
 - i. Commission will establish regulations relating to admin procedures, making of contracts, conflicts of interest, financial disclosures consistent with the more restrictive statutory provisions of either state (b)
 - ii. Federal agencies are authorized to provide Commission with technical assistance on a reimbursable bases (c)
 - iii. Secretary is authorized to provide assistance on a non-reimbursable basis (c)
 - iv. The Commission shall establish volunteer technical and advisory committees (d)

2) §544d, Section 6:

- a. Scenic Area Management Plan
 - i. Establish Resource inventory (a(1))
 - ii. Establish Economic Opportunity Study (a(2))
 - iii. Recreational Assessment (a(3))
 - 1. Interpretive center in Oregon
 - 2. Convention center in Washington
 - 3. Identify areas for public use facilities for recreational opportunities
 - 4. Identify areas for increase access to the Columbia River
 - iv. Land use designations (b)
 - 1. Designate agricultural, timber, open spaces, commercial areas, residential development, urban areas
- b. Establishment of Management Plan
 - i. Based on results of resource inventories (c(1))
 - ii. Include land use designations (c(2))
 - iii. Incorporate management plan for federal properties (c(4))
 - iv. Include guidelines for land-use ordinances for Counties (c(5))
 - v. Shall not apply to Urban areas (c(5B))
 - vi. Standards for Management Plan (d)

1. Protect and enhance – agricultural lands, forest lands, open spaces, public and private recreation (d(1-4))
 2. Prohibit major development in SMA’s (d(5))
 3. Prohibit Industrial uses outside of Urban areas (d(6))
 4. Require that commercial and residential dev. and mineral exploration outside of urban areas are consistent with 1st purpose of the Act (d(7-9))
 - vii. Conduct public hearings and solicit comments prior to adoption of Management Plan and land use ordinances (e)
 - viii. Notify Secretary, states, local governments and Tribes of all proposed major development actions and residential dev. in Scenic Area (e)
 - ix. Plan review/revisions every 5-10 years (g)
 - x. Amendment of Plan as needed (h)
- 3) §544e, Section 7
- a. Administration of Scenic Area
 - i. Administer the non-federal lands in accordance with Management Plan (a)
 - ii. Adopt land use ordinances
 1. Review and approval of development review by other counties (b)
 2. If a county fails to adopt the Plan the Commission will create and administer land use regulations for given county (c)
- 4) §544f, Section 8
- a. Administration of SMA’s
 - i. Coordinate with the US Forest Service for administration of SMA’s (h –n)
- 5) §544i, Section 11
- a. Economic Development
 - i. Review and approve any proposals for economic development for consistency with Plan (c(1))
- 6) §544m, Section 15
- a. Enforcement –
 - i. Monitor activities in counties and take actions as it determines necessary Hear and Manage appeals for land-use decisions (a(1))
 - ii. Assess civil penalties for non-compliant land-uses (a(3))
 - iii. Address civil suits as they arise (b(2))

Mandates of the Bi-State Compact impacting ongoing Commission workloads:

- 1) Article I
 - a. Commission Establishment/Function
 - i. Sue and be sued (a(1))
 - ii. Disapprove land-use Ordinances (a(2))
 - iii. Power to enact land use ordinance in absence of county ordinance (a(3))
 - iv. Review all major developments (a(4))
 - v. Hire/fire/pay staff (b) & (c)
 - vi. Right to contract (d)
 - vii. Establish and maintain a place of business (f)
 - viii. Adopt by-laws, rules and regulations (g)
- 2) Article IV
 - i. Compensation of commissioners (a)
 - ii. Prepare, lobby for, oversee budget requests to the two states (b)
 - iii. Equal budget expenditures –tracking and report (d) & (e)
 - iv. Accounting for annual auditing (e)
 - v. Maintaining Public records (f)

By-laws impacting ongoing Commission workloads:

- 1) Article II, Section 1
 - a. Hold regular meetings
- 2) Article IV, Section 5
 - a. Executive Director responsibilities:
 - i. Record meeting minutes for public record
 - ii. On-going management of staff/budget/work plans
 - iii. On-going communication with the Public
 - iv. Periodic reporting to Commission
 - v. Enter into contracts
 - vi. Address litigation and report to Commission
 - vii. Other duties as assigned