



## **Columbia River Gorge Commission**

Meeting Minutes  
November 12, 2025  
via Zoom Webinar

### ***COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT***

Valerie Fowler  
Alex H. Johnson  
Lach Litwer  
Donna Mickley  
Jerry Meninick  
Carina Miller  
Michael Mills  
Rodger Nichols  
Pah-tu Pitt  
Nathan Reynolds  
Amy Weissfeld

### ***COMMISSIONER MEMBERS ABSENT***

Laura Brennan Bissell  
Robert Liberty

### ***STAFF PRESENT***

Mackenzie Aamodt, Land Use Planner  
Connie Acker, Finance & Administration Manager  
Lisa Naas Cook, Climate Action Program Manager  
Sage Ebel, Natural Resource Planner  
Kelly Foster, Public Records & Administrative Analyst  
Bryce Guske, Senior Planner  
Joanna Kaiserman, Senior Planner  
Jeff Litwak, Legal Counsel  
Mike Schrankel, GIS Manager  
Krystyna U. Wolniakowski, Executive Director

### ***AUDIENCE PRESENT***

John Anderson – Southwest Regional Rep. for Governor Bob Ferguson  
Nathan Baker – Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
Angie Brewer – Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development  
Lynn Burditt  
Aulena Carl – Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation  
Keith Cleveland – Hood River County

Sheila Dooley  
Doc Doolittle  
Daniel Dougherty – Wasco County  
Jack Garvin  
Jess Harris  
Senator Paul Harris – Washington Legislature  
Scott Hege – Wasco County  
Steve Hochman  
Dr. Kelly Howsley-Glover – Wasco County  
Madison Kenney – Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
Nick Kraemer – Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
Terra Lingley – Oregon Department of Transportation  
Steve McCoy – Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
Karen O’Neill  
Marc Ratcliff – Washington Department of Natural Resources  
Mary Repar  
Lawrence Squiemphen III – Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs  
Nate Stice – Oregon Regional Solutions Coordinator  
Renee Tkach – Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
Holly Williams – Washington State Parks  
Caleb Wilmer – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation  
Nathan Wilson – Gorge News  
Shane Wolfe  
Richard Wolfe

Others were present during the meeting.

**Call to Order and Roll** (8:31 a.m.) Chair Michael Mills called the meeting to order, and Connie Acker called roll.

**Approval of September 9, 2025, Commission Meeting Minutes** (8:33 a.m.). Commissioner Valerie Fowler moved to adopt the September 9, 2025, meeting minutes, and Commissioner Rodger Nichols seconded. The September 9, 2025, Commission Meeting Minutes were approved by a voice vote. Commissioner Carina Miller abstained because she was not in attendance at the September 9, 2025, meeting.

**Land Acknowledgment** (8:35 a.m.) Chair Mills read the Land Acknowledgment.

**Treaty Tribe Word of the Day** (8:37 a.m.) Commissioner Carina Miller shared pinápxwiša, which means "think oneself into" or "transform oneself into." Commissioner Miller provided the example of Coyote transforming itself into different shapes.

## **Discussion of Agenda modifications and Treaty Tribe Comment Period**

(8:40 a.m.)

- Commissioners Fowler, Nichols, and Litwer expressed appreciation for the Tribes' perspective but also voiced concern about prolonging the process and the potential impact on people traumatized and recovering from the recent fires.
- Commissioner Mickley voiced concern about safeguarding cultural interests and fulfilling the purpose of the Act while moving forward as quickly as possible. She mentioned that the U.S. Forest Service manages the Special Management Area (SMA) and will be waiting the 30 days.
- Commissioner Fowler stated that neither Rowena nor most of the homes lost in the Burdoin fire are within the SMA, but she acknowledged that Courtney Road is part of the SMA. She praised the staff for quickly preparing a draft amendment that fully aligns with the intent of the Act.
- Chair Mills suggested that, regardless of how the Commission proceeds, the counties could begin the adoption process.
- Commissioner Pitt thanked Tribal nations for reaching out and said they should be given more time if needed. She added that she empathizes with those who lost homes and hopes that the Plan amendment will establish rules to better handle future disasters. She mentioned that treaties are not being honored, and as the Commission makes decisions, it is essential to consider history.
- Commissioner Reynolds reminded the Commission that the Section 106 review process, relating to Tribal Consultation, is not optional and cannot be adjusted.
- Counsel Litwak reminded Commissioners that the National Scenic Act requires the Commission to incorporate, without change, the guidelines for the Special Management Areas (SMA). If the Commission does not currently have SMA guidelines, the change would only apply to the General Management Areas (GMA). Any amendments made to the Management Plan require the Secretary of Agriculture's concurrence. The Commission should consider whether the Secretary would be concerned about making a decision if the Treaty Tribes requested more time. He also suggested that Dr. Kelly Howsley-Glover from Wasco County would be able to speak about the county's capacity to adopt the new land use ordinances.

## **Public comment on items related to the National Scenic Area (NSA) not on the agenda (8:57 a.m.)**

- Mary Repar
  - Noted that she sent in written comments.
  - Expressed concern that property rights take precedence over environmental rights related to Skamania County zoning 2,000

- acres of unmapped land as R10 instead of Commercial Resource Lands 40, as previously recommended by County Commissioners and Planning Commissions.
- Plans to discuss dam removal, data centers, transmission centers, and small nuclear reactors in the future.

### **Written Public Comment**

- Written public comment - Sherri Irish – 9/23/2025 (AttachmentA)
- Written public comment – Mary Repar – 11/10/2025 (Attachment B)

**Executive Director’s Report** (9:01 a.m.) Krystyna U. Wolniakowski, Executive Director, and staff provided updates on actions taken to assist landowners impacted by the Rowena and Burdoin fires, meetings with county commissions and Treaty Tribes, and legislator outreach.

Lisa Naas Cook provided a brief update on the Climate Change Action Plan and Tribal relations work:

- Staff participated in the Carbon and Culture Symposium hosted by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) on September 30-October 1.
  - Learned about different carbon management strategies, impacts, and opportunities for Tribal communities. Topics ranged from carbon storage in forest and agricultural lands to geologic carbon sequestration. Discussion focused on First Foods protection and access as climate resilience strategies.
  - Eighty participants from the region, including Tribes, federal and state agencies, colleges, non-governmental organizations, and interested community members.
  - Summary report will be available in early 2026 as part of CTUIR and Oregon Department of Environmental Quality’s collaboration on this symposium.
- Attended the Oregon Government-to-Government Summit with nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon. Hosted by the Coquille Tribe in North Bend on October 8, 2025.
  - Included a meeting with the Oregon Governor, State Agency Directors, and Agency Tribal Liaisons.
  - Meeting topics included bill signing, Tribes’ priorities and actionable requests, and improved guidance on tribal consultation for state agencies.

### **Commissioner Comments and Questions**

- Chair Mills thanked staff for continuing the Commission’s important work on reduced hours and pay.

- Commissioner Weissfeld thanked the staff and emphasized that the efforts they have made to work closely with the Treaty Tribes are very important.

Wolniakowski continued with her Executive Director’s report by outlining the November 10, 2025, visit from members of the Oregon Legislative Fiscal Office (LFO).

- Thanked Dr. Howsley-Glover and Wasco County Commission Chair Scott Hege for hosting a round-table discussion related to Gorge Commission work with the counties.
- Sheriff Lane Magill gave a tour of the Rowena fire site and shared valuable information about actions taken in recent months to support property owners.
- Commissioners Johnson, Litwer, and Mickley met with LFO members to discuss various policy issues and the role of the Commission.
- The tour ended at Dog River Pet Supplies in Hood River. The owners of this small business received an Oregon Investment Board loan. The owners emphasized the importance of the start-up loans for those businesses that do not qualify for conventional loans without the required capital.

**USDA Forest Service Report** (9:19 a.m.) Donna Mickley, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Forest Supervisor, provided an update on USDA Forest Service activities in the National Scenic Area.

- **Prescribed Burning:** Hope to do some today, there have been press releases. Work is focused on the Drano area, with 120 acres of piles (three days of burning). She shared information about the impact of fuels reduction work.
- **Government Shutdown:** Limited staff continued working during the government shutdown to work on the Plan amendment.

### **Commissioner Comments and Questions**

- None

**Disaster Replacement Amendment Hearing\*** (9:23 a.m.) The Gorge Commission held a public hearing on a proposed Plan Amendment to the Management Plan that addresses rebuilding in the National Scenic Area after a disaster. (Attachments C and D)

- Kelly Howsley-Glover, PhD, Wasco County Community Development Director outlined the legislative process based on Oregon state law, the Management Plan, and Wasco County’s local ordinance.
- Chair Mills thanked Dr. Howsley-Glover and Wasco County staff for the collaborative work with Gorge Commission staff.

**Opportunity for Treaty Tribe Nations to Address the Commission on the Plan Amendment, other items on the agenda, or any other matters.** (10:05 a.m.)

- Lawrence Squiemphen III, Historic Tribal Preservation Officer for the Warm Springs Tribe
  - Expressed that Government-to-Government consultation should continue and requested another 30 days to ensure Treaty/trust responsibilities are not being hindered or impacted.
- Aulena Carl, Cultural Specialist for the Yakama Nation
  - Stated she received notice from Naas-Cook on October 14, 2025, and from Chris Donnermeyer of the U.S. Forest Service on October 22, 2025.
  - She noted that their staff time is limited due to shutdowns, and travel has constrained their ability to connect more with Donnermeyer. She would like to send the proposal to legal counsel.
  - Added that the land is more than just attractive; it provides water, food, and much more. She also noted that remains are still being found and need to be repatriated. (Attachment E)

Commissioner Pitt noted she is speaking personally as a tribal member. She named that she likes win-wins and hopes to create a pathway for that. Stated that Governor Bob Ferguson issued an Executive Order that tribal consultation should be independent of public processes. Noted that Tribes are showing up despite staffing challenges. Expressed hope for commitment to action.

**Public Comment on the Plan Amendment** (10:13 a.m.)

- Jack Garvin from Rowena
  - Working with the nonprofit Village of Rowena group, thanked the Commission for the opportunity to comment. He expressed that his biggest concern is timing. He noted that many people in the neighborhood are giving up on their properties because the rebuilding process is insurmountable. He pointed out that many residents in Rowena are elderly, disabled, and low-income. Many renters and owners may or may not rebuild. He also added that it is great that the Commission is moving forward with the Plan amendment, but it is not solving problems on the ground.
- Shane Wolfe
  - Stated that he is working side-by-side with Jack Garvin. He thanked the Gorge Commission and Wasco County for working quickly on the amendment. He emphasized the importance of timing. He asked to create a secondary committee to help speed up the process. He requested any effort to accelerate things and expressed concern about extending the comment period and the overall time before residents on the ground would see changes.

- Renee Tkach, Conservation Director, with Friends of the Columbia Gorge
  - Acknowledged the challenges facing residents who have lost homes and more.
  - Asked the Commission to ensure the proposal is consistent with the Act. Requested stronger evidence demonstrating that the conditions in the Scenic Area have significantly changed since the last Plan review, as required by law.
  - Requested a straightforward process that only legally existing structures are eligible for replacement and suggested requiring proof within two years.
  - Offered that Friends believes the draft guidelines on temporary structures raise concerns.
  - Suggested that there does not appear to be a lawful pathway to immediately implement the Plan amendment without changes to Commission rules and county ordinances.
- Nick Kraemer, Senior Planner with Friends of the Gorge
  - Complimented the collaboration between the County and the Commission.
  - Expressed that an analysis of the changing physical condition of the Gorge is missing.
  - Noted concerns about the difficulty of validating the legal existing status of structures and requested a clearer process
  - Also expressed concern about enforcement and the removal of temporary structures to prevent future problems.
- Steve McCoy, Staff Attorney with Friends of the Gorge
  - Stated that the proposal requires review, but does not give a process. Stated that under Wasco County's process, the ministerial review removes public comment and can only be used when there are no approval standards to evaluate. In addition, since the decision could not be appealed to the county under its ministerial decision procedures, the only appeal process for final decisions would be a direct appeal to the Gorge Commission. Stated that there should be an approval process that applies.
- Nathan Baker, Senior Staff Attorney with Friends of the Gorge
  - Offered concerns about the immediate implementation of less restrictive provisions of the Plan Amendment.

### **Written Comment**

- Written public comment - Chris Carvalho – 9/22/2025 (Attachment F)
- Written public comment - Elizabeth Turner – 9/22/2025 (Attachment G)
- Written public comment - Sheila Dooley – 9/30/2025 (Attachment H)
- Written public comment – Jess Harris – 10/3/2025 (Attachment I)
- Written public comment - Wendy Huskey – 10/14/2025 (Attachment J)
- Written public comment - Hood River County Community Development – 10/16/2025 (Attachment K)

- Written public comment - Wasco County Board of County Commissioners – 10/17/2025 (Attachment L)
- Written public comment - Hood River County Board of Commissioners – 10/20/2025 (Attachment M)
- Written public comment - Sorensen Family Ranch LLC – 10/20/2025 (Attachment N)
- Written public comment - Jeffrey Johnston & Carrie Buchanan – 10/21/2025 (Attachment O)
- Written public comment - Klickitat County Board of County Commissioners – 10/22/2025 (Attachment P)
- Written public comment - Friends of the Columbia Gorge – 10/22/2025 (Attachment Q)
- Written public comment - Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development – 10/22/2025 (Attachment R)
- Written public comment (supplemental) - Friends of the Columbia Gorge – 10/30/2025 (Attachment S)
- Tribal Comment – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation - 11/7/2025 (Attachment T)
- Written public comment – Scott C. Hege, Wasco County Commission Chair – 11/11/2025 (Attachment U)
- Written public comment – Kelly Howsley-Glover, PhD, Wasco County Community Development Director - 11/11/2025 (Attachment V)

### **Commissioner Comments and Questions**

- Chair Mills requested a discussion to determine whether to extend the hearing to include necessary tribal consultation.
- Commissioner Fowler requested clarification from legal counsel on the legal issues raised in public comment.
  - Counsel Litwak stated he is comfortable that the Commission can direct counties to apply the Management plan and amendments directly and immediately. Regarding whether a county can directly implement less restrictive policies, he stated that, in his opinion, direction from the Commission would make that a non-issue. Stated he would have concerns about doing this for all plan amendments, but noted this is a unique situation requiring an emergency response.
- Commissioner Mickley stated that she feels that if the Commission is not going to extend the time for meaningful engagement with the Treaty Tribes, the GMA and SMA provisions must be separated. Stated that it may hinder her ability to recommend approval to the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Chair Mills suggested extending the comment period for the Treaty Tribes who have requested more time and giving staff time to incorporate today's comments.

- Counsel Litwak explained that there are provisions against adopting unknowns and that the county cannot begin work until concurrence is obtained.
- Dr. Howsley-Glover stated the county did extensive analysis on how to expedite the adoption process, including out-of-the-box strategies to help residents recover. Stated that the county cannot adopt an ordinance without knowing the Gorge Commission outcome is a violation of law and due process, and would likely subject Wasco County to litigation. Noted that many procedures are based on ORS 196 that dictate the legislative process. Stated that this is an emergency provision that does not set precedents, as it is tied to an emergency declaration.
- Commissioner Nichols expressed concern that changing the plan amendment during the extended comment period may slow the process down.
- Commissioner Johnson expressed hearing requests to move as fast as possible, but recognizing obligations to the Treaty Tribes, supported extending the comment period.
- Commissioner Pitt expressed hearing a lot of perspectives from all sides. Noted the loss of homes is a significant tragedy. Expressed hope to move forward with a better process. Suggested wording like “tribal feedback” to separate it from public comment. Stated that Tribal nations are maneuvering in response to unprecedented times. Expressed willingness to meet in December and hope that the comments are heard.
- Commissioner Fowler asked whether December 16th could be the final timeline or if there could be additional delays. For example, would changes based on public comments or Tribal consultation require an additional 30-day public comment period? Asked Commissioner Mickley if December 16th provides enough time to complete the SMA piece.
  - Commissioner Mickley said that the December 16th date would likely work, but some tribes want to meet and set up meetings. She noted that meaningful engagement is required and has no fixed timeline, but she is doing her best.
  - Counsel Litwak stated that his staff report notes that revising text during the hearing will require an opportunity for comment at the hearing. Stated that rules require a 30-day comment period, which was provided. Stated that if the amendment changes in a way that these rules do not anticipate or that people cannot understand, there needs to be an additional comment period. For example, changing standards not already included in this amendment could require an additional comment period.
  - Wolniakowski noted staff plan to have outreach meetings with the Tribes and have contacted Tribal Chairs and followed up with phone calls.

- Commissioner Nichols reiterated that he is concerned about making changes that reopen a new 30-day public comment period. Requested input from Tribal members on the Commission.
- Commissioner Fowler also requested comments from Vice Chair Meninick and Commissioner Miller. Also asked to follow up on Commissioner Reynolds' comments about doing things simultaneously. Stated that she finds it compelling to have full Tribal consultation.
- Commissioner Reynolds stated that Tribal consultation should commence 30 days before the meeting and continue for at least 30 days afterward, ending when the Tribes are satisfied. He noted that public comment is a parallel process. He added that only substantive changes would require a new 30-day comment period and mentioned he did not hear anything he believed was substantive. He expressed confidence that, by listening to the Tribes quickly, we can reach December deadlines. He also noted that Tribal members on the Commission may not necessarily speak from the perspective of the sovereign government.
- Commissioner Miller expressed appreciation for everybody's comments. Stated that she saw the trauma on the tour of Rowena. Suggested the possibility of a special meeting after working with the Tribes as quickly as possible. Expressed not knowing how to respect both communities; noted that Tribal communities have been pushed aside when needs were not met, but outside communities have been able to expedite things. Expressed a need to respect the Government-to-Government relationship.
- Commissioner Meninick expressed the difficulty created by this natural disaster that impacted people. Noted a dramatic difference coming from the Tribes in current history and going back to 1855, but what the Tribes speak of goes back thousands of years, and the promises of resources made to their people. Stated that the difference created the knowledge they have as a people and their utmost respect for what is around us. As for the Plan Amendment, he noted that the Commission has that authority, but the process may add time. Stated that in his experience, seldom do results satisfy the majority.
- Commissioner Pitt expressed hope that the outcome will expedite this process in the future. Related the loss of homes when dams went in, and her family losing homes in the Gorge, and that promises were made that she felt were not fulfilled. Expressed that the outcome should be that the Tribes feel heard and consulted with and noted that many people do not interact with Tribal members often because they were violently removed. Stated that in the Gorge, there have been many ways to honor local people who were not removed. Noted that as someone not speaking for the political entity, there are still cultural connections, and one should be careful with the words used. Expressed

a wish that the investment in homes lost that can't be rebuilt was more of a conversation.

- Commissioner Fowler expressed deep respect for Government-to-Government consultations and stated that these decisions will impact people today, so there must be a timeline. Expressed that even a December meeting would leave people not knowing when they can rebuild. Suggested a determinative decision at a December meeting with an understanding that the four Treaty Tribes will be the only parties to make additional comments. Expressed concern about delaying the process until springtime and how that may impact residents hoping to live in RVs on their land and trying to return home.
- Chair Mills agreed with the desire to do everything possible to get a decision. Stated that the date would be December 16th. Discussed his experience working with relocating a community losing their homes for other reasons. Expressed thanks for the reminder of the Tribal members who were forced to leave their homes and never return.
- Commissioner Pitt wanted to name that their population in the Gorge was about 100,000 people. Explained that there is a rich heritage of building cedar winter homes and summer homes near the water. Expressed that Commissioner Meninick may have been referring to early history when mentioning that there were no homes.
- Commissioner Fowler asked about the difference between public comment and Tribal consultation.
  - Counsel Litwak stated that if staff change proposed text, he recommended taking public comment; there are no changes today.
- Commissioner Reynolds stated processes are parallel. Stated public comment could be closed. Stated that only substantive comments would open public comment, and we don't know yet if the consultation process will yield substantive changes.
  - Counsel Litwak advised against formally closing the comment period due to procedural challenges if there is a need to reopen.
  - Commissioner Pitt expressed support for keeping it open.
- Commissioner Fowler asked about the possibility of a date before December 16th, noting that a 30-day period for Tribal consultation would end December 5<sup>th</sup>.
  - Wolniakowski explained the need for additional time for staff to review and compile comments and meeting feedback received during the Government-to-Government process, and an additional week to send materials ahead of the meeting.
- Commissioner Nichols requested clarification on the final date for the comment period as December 5th or December 16th.
  - Counsel Litwak explained that if the comment period closes December 5th, it may cause problems to reopen it. He clarified that public comment does not close for the hearing, but it can be

noted that staff will consider comments through the 5th. He also provided a definition of recreational vehicle from ORS 197.493, Oregon’s law allowing RV placement in a disaster.

- Commissioner Weissfeld requested a definition for what it means to say that RVs can be temporary structures. Expressed need for a clear definition for laypeople, so there aren’t problems with enforcement.
  - Counsel Litwak explained that these definitions are defined slightly differently throughout state law, as something to be used temporarily, with size and manufacturing standards. Noted it doesn’t include all homes on wheels.
- Commissioner Fowler expressed agreement with leaving the comment period open, but anticipated that comments would have to be received earlier to be absorbed and incorporated. Noted that at the same time, Government-to-Government conversations do not have a timeline, but the Commission’s decision does.
- Commissioners discussed the wording of the motion and how best to address leaving the comment period open and the need for staff time to incorporate comments into the staff report and finalized the motion.

Moved by Commissioner Fowler:

**Motion: Move to postpone the Plan Amendment vote until December 16, 2025, Commission meeting to allow additional time for Tribal consultation. Staff will receive written public comments through December 5, 2025.**

Commissioner Miller seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote

Columbia River Gorge Commission Meeting - November 12, 2025	
<b>Motion 1</b>	
Motion	Commissioner Fowler
Seconded	Commissioner Miller
Move to postpone the Plan Amendment vote until the December 16, 2025, Commission meeting to allow additional time for Tribal consultation. Staff will receive written public comments through December 5, 2025.	

	Yes	No	Abstain
Brennan Bissell			
Fowler	x		
Johnson	x		
Liberty			
Litwer			
Meninick	x		
Miller	x		
Nichols	x		
Pitt	x		
Reynolds	x		
Weissfeld	x		
Mills - Chair	x		
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**BREAK – 11:47 a.m.**

**2026 Chair and Vice-Chair Elections** (11:58 a.m.) Counsel Jeff Litwak outlined the November 12, 2025, staff report related to election of officers. (Attachment W)

**Nominations and Roll Call Vote for 2026 Chair and Vice Chair**

Columbia River Gorge Commission						
2026 Chair & Vice-Chair Nomination/Vote						
November 12, 2025						
	Chair	Chair	Vice-Chair	Vice-Chair	Abstain	State
Nichols Nominated Miller	Miller					
Nichols Nominated Meninick			Meninick			
* Nominated *						
Laura Brennan Bissell						WA
Valerie Fowler	X		X			WA
Alex Johnson	X		X			OR
Robert Liberty						OR
Lach Litwer						OR
Jerry Meninick	X				X	WA
Carina Miller	X		X			OR
Michael Mills	X		X			OR
Rodger Nichols	X		X			OR
Pah-tu Pitt	X		X			WA
Nathan Reynolds	X		X			WA
Amy Weissfeld	X		X			WA
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	

Commissioner Carina Miller was elected as the 2026 Chair, and Commissioner Jerry Meninick was elected the 2026 Vice-Chair of the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

**2026 Commission Meeting Schedule and Work Plan** (12:10 p.m.)

Director Wolniakowski shared: (Attachment X)

- Sage Ebel and Lisa Naas-Cook, although working reduced hours, continue making progress on the Climate Action Plan and Vital Sign Indicators (VSI).
- Legislative outreach efforts by the Communications Committee continue.
- Commission Meetings will be held six or seven times in 2026 rather than monthly.
- Staff are working as quickly as possible, given the limited resources.
- Plan Review will be postponed until the 2027-29 biennium due to the current staff reductions.

**Commissioner Comments and Questions**

- Commissioner Fowler:
  - Asked for a website update.
  - Asked that the September Economic Vitality Committee Meeting recording be uploaded to its meeting page. *NOTE: Staff later reviewed this and confirmed the video had already been posted.*

- Wolniakowski responded that the website is nearly ready to go live by late December or at the latest by early January 2026.
- Acker indicated that she would investigate the missing video recording.

## Committee Reports (12:25 p.m.)

### Communications Committee

- Commissioner Weissfeld updated the Commission on the Committee’s work, including the strategic communications plan and plans for social media launch. Communications Committee members have approved the plans and recommend that the Commission do so as well.
- Commissioner Johnson announced that the Facebook and LinkedIn pages will be live soon, and comments will be turned off, due to the effort and time it takes to manage those comments from a records management perspective.
  - Wolniakowski added that comments are always welcome, and anyone wishing to comment can send them to [info@gorgecommission.org](mailto:info@gorgecommission.org) or [PublicComment@gorgecommission.org](mailto:PublicComment@gorgecommission.org).
  - Wolniakowski added that a staff roster is posted on the door to the office and on the website
- Commissioner Pitt requested a review of the plans.
- Several commissioners expressed concern about delaying the vote to approve the plans.

Moved by Commissioner Nichols:

**Motion: Move to approve and implement the current Communications Committee strategic plan and social media plan.**

Commissioner Reynolds seconded the motion.

### Roll Call Vote

Columbia River Gorge Commission Meeting - November 12, 2025	
<b>Motion 2</b>	
Motion	Nichols
Seconded	Reynolds
Move to approve and implement the current Communications Committee strategic plan and social media plan.	

	Yes	No	Abstain
Brennan Bissell			
Fowler	X		
Johnson	X		
Liberty			
Litwer			
Meninick	X		
Miller	X		
Nichols	X		
Pitt	X		
Reynolds	X		
Weissfeld	X		
Mills - Chair	X		
Total	9	0	0

## **Economic Vitality Committee**

- Commissioner Johnson stated that the committee is grappling with many issues in good faith as they refine their goals and purpose. The Act is not particularly clear about the types of activities the Gorge Commission can and should undertake to promote economic vitality. There remains the question of whether the second purpose of the act necessarily has an urban focus or whether it should be throughout the entire NSA.

## **Other Business (12:46 p.m.)**

- Commissioner Pitt reminded everyone that it is Native American Heritage Month. She shared that she hopes to attend several events before the end of the month.
- Commissioner Nichols mentioned that he attended a ceremony dedicating a memorial along Highway 35 to Nisei (Japanese American) Veterans of World War II. He thanked Chair Mills for his work.
- Commissioner Johnson shared congratulations to Chair Miller and Vice Chair Meninick. He expressed hope of securing new funding to undertake work beyond permitting that directly benefits residents in the National Scenic Area.

**Adjourn – 12:50 p.m.**

## **Meeting Attachments:**

- Attachment A – Public Comment - Sherri Irish – 9/23/2025
- Attachment B – Public Comment – Mary Repar – 11/10/2025
- Attachment C – Staff Report and Text – Management Plan Amendment for Disaster Recovery – 11/12/2025
- Attachment D – Staff Presentation – Management Plan Amendment for Disaster Recovery – 11/12/2025
- Attachment E – Tribal Comment – Aulena Carl, Yakama Nation Cultural Specialist – 11/12/2025
- Attachment F – Public Comment – Chris Carvalho – 9/22/2025
- Attachment G – Public Comment - Elizabeth Turner – 9/22/2025
- Attachment H – Public Comment – Sheila Dooley – 9/30/2025
- Attachment I – Public Comment – Jess Harris – 10/3/2025
- Attachment J – Public Comment – Wendy Huskey – 10/14/2025
- Attachment K – Public Comment – Hood River County Community Development – 10/16/2025

- Attachment L – Public Comment – Wasco County Board of County Commissioners – 10/17/2025
- Attachment M – Public Comment – Hood River County Board of Commissioners – 10/20/2025
- Attachment N – Public Comment – Sorensen Family Ranch LLC – 10/20/2025
- Attachment O – Public Comment – Jeffrey Johnston & Carrie Buchanan – 10/21/2025
- Attachment P – Public Comment – Klickitat County Board of County Commissioners – 10/22/2025
- Attachment Q – Public Comment – Friends of the Columbia Gorge – 10/22/2025
- Attachment R – Public Comment – Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development – 10/22/2025
- Attachment S – Public Comment (supplemental) – Friends of the Columbia Gorge – 10/30/2025
- Attachment T – Tribal Comment – Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation – 11/7/2025
- Attachment U – Scott C. Hege, Wasco County Commission Chair – 11/11/2025
- Attachment V – Kelly Howsley-Glover, PhD, Wasco County Community Development Director – 11/11/2025
- Attachment W – Staff Report – Election of Officers – 11/12/2025
- Attachment X – Staff Report – Status Update for 2025-2027 Work Plan Priorities – 11/12/2025

**Approved** – December 16, 2025