

**From:** [Mitch Patton](#)  
**To:** [Information](#)  
**Cc:** [Mandy Hertel - Skamania County](#); [David Waymire - Skamania County Community Development Director](#); [Josh Neblock - Skamania County](#); [City of Stevenson](#); [franklin.richard@epa.gov](mailto:franklin.richard@epa.gov); [Garriques, Meghan E CIV USARMY CENWP \(USA\)](#); [planningcommissioners](#); [DOH EPH OEPHS Environmental Justice](#); [Mayor Brian Sabo](#); [Pat Albaugh; Commissioners](#)  
**Subject:** Issues not taken seriously 2025  
**Date:** Wednesday, January 22, 2025 10:02:15 AM

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To the Columbia River Gorge Commission and members of the public following your outdated and unjust practices I believe continue within the Commission today,

Over the last 10 years or more, I have seen **hundreds of wineries and small vineyards** establish themselves in the Gorge and surrounding areas. A major concern that seems to be overlooked is the **source of water** for these vineyards. Growing grapes requires a **tremendous amount of water**, whether drawn from the **Columbia River** or **groundwater supplies**. Yet, from my understanding, the Gorge Commission has **welcomed these businesses with open arms** without addressing the impact on our water resources. Meanwhile, individual homeowners are often **restricted by color, material, and placement regulations** for their buildings—**yet no similar scrutiny** seems to apply to water use by large and small-scale vineyards and wineries operations.

Another issue that demands attention is the **Bradford Island Superfund Site at Bonneville Dam**, one of the most toxic locations in the United States and listed on the National Priorities List (NPL). It wasn't until last month that I noticed any involvement from the Gorge Commission regarding this critical environmental hazard. A representative was finally approved as a member of the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), but I'm unclear if they are attending in an **official capacity** for the Commission or as a private citizen. Either way, it's concerning that it took so long for an environmental organization like yours to show interest in **one of the nation's most polluted sites**, especially given its proximity to the Columbia River Gorge.

I have asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to **hold our RAB meetings in different locations** rather than exclusively in Cascade Locks, as this information needs to reach the broader public. The toxic contamination of **fish and water** demands greater visibility and community engagement.

I urge the Gorge Commission to prioritize these issues by making them **topics of discussion** at your next meeting:

1. **Water usage regulations and their impact on the Gorge's resources**—including how large and small -scale vineyards and wineries are affecting sustainability.
2. **The Bradford Island Superfund Site** and the need for stronger advocacy and public awareness regarding cleanup efforts.

Your support and leadership on these matters are long overdue, and I look forward to your response.

Thank you. And to be clear I am speaking as a private citizen and not a RAB member today

**Please add to public comment at your next meeting**

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"Never give up, for that is just the place and time that the  
tide will turn."

- Harriet Beecher Stowe, from "Oldtown Folks"