



TO: Columbia River Gorge Commission
FROM: Jessica Olson, Senior Natural Resources Planner
DATE: October 12, 2021
SUBJECT: **Progress Report***: Climate Change Action Planning

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Commissioners on progress toward developing the Commission's first Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). In addition to general progress, staff will highlight discussions during a recent public zoom meeting focusing on forest resilience. Staff is also seeking Commission feedback on the Draft CCAP report outline that will be presented at the Commission meeting.

BACKGROUND

In 2020, the Columbia River Gorge Commission identified climate change as an agency priority and directed staff to develop an action plan in 2021. The CCAP will address mitigation and adaptation to the most pressing climate change impacts on natural, scenic, cultural, and recreation resources and to the economic vitality of NSA communities.

Some of these most urgent climate change topics include streams and riparian areas, priority habitats (13 sensitive habitat types and features protected by the Management Plan), wildfire, and the priorities of the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes.

The Commission, together with the U.S. Forest Service National Scenic Area Office, manages land use and resource protection in the NSA. To address climate change, the Commission and the Forest Service are working together to build resiliency by adapting to the impacts of climate change and mitigating greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.

OVERALL PROGRESS ON THE CCAP

- Staff has met with several experts and practitioners over the past month:
 - Participated in August and September meetings of the MCEDD Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy update process, focusing on transportation priorities in the region.
 - Facilitated a meeting with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 Office on monitoring and implementation goals for the Columbia River Cold Water Refuges Plan.
 - Spoke with City of Hood River about alignment with the Hood River Energy Plan and other priorities.
 - Coordinated a meeting with Pacific Northwest Region of the U.S. Forest Service on measuring carbon storage.
- Staff and Forest Service co-convened a “Forests in the Gorge” evening workshop on September 29 with presentations from OSU Extension, U.S. Forest Service, Yakama Nation Fuels Management, and WA Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network. Meeting materials are posted on the Commission’s website CCAP page: <http://www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/climate-change/>. During the October meeting, we will present on meeting outcomes, including results of a post-meeting participant survey asking for suggested Commission climate actions.
- Staff is also planning two meetings with agricultural producers in November with a focus on climate adaptation actions to protect water quality, biodiversity, and to cope with drought and other climate impacts, as well as ways to enhance carbon storage on agricultural lands (See [Oregon Global Warming Commission’s Natural and Working Lands Proposal](#) for more on carbon storage).
- Staff will be engaging the CCAP Review Committee, including individuals working on climate change from government entities, the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes, and nongovernmental organizations, to complete sections of the Draft CCAP that will be described during the staff presentation.
- The first Draft CCAP will be ready for public and Commission review at the January 11, 2022 Commission meeting.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

Staff will present a summary of the Forests in the Gorge workshop and a draft outline of the CCAP at the Commission meeting and will invite Commission response and discussion on next steps.