

TO: Columbia River Gorge Commission

FROM: Lisa Naas Cook, Climate Program Manager, Columbia River Gorge Commission

DATE: October 8, 2024

RE: **Information Item*:** Climate Action Quarterly Progress Report – October 2024

The attached Climate Action Quarterly Report summarizes progress on key work items included in the 2024-2025 Climate Action Work Plan shared with the Commission in February 2024. This report highlights staff work completed from July-September 2024.

An overview of all climate priorities and the list of Climate Change Action Plan Implementation Actions for FY 2024-2025 are also included as background information.

Staff welcomes questions on this quarterly update at the October 8th Commission meeting.

For more information on the Climate Change Action Plan, see the Gorge Commission website: <https://www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/climate-change>.

Climate Change Action Plan Priorities

OVERALL PRIORITIES



Inclusive Climate Action

Engaging with diverse communities and partners across the Gorge



High Climate Resilience Areas

Identifying and conserving areas expected to support species in a changing climate

ADAPTATION



Cold Water Refuge Streams

Protecting water temperature and flow for fish



Wetlands

Improving wetland habitat for associated plants and wildlife



Tribal Treaty Rights

Supporting Tribes to ensure ecosystems and land use promote accessible, thriving First Foods



Oak Woodlands

Improving oak woodland habitat and corridors

MITIGATION



Regional Transportation

Reducing single-passenger vehicle travel and promoting regional transit



Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Increasing charging stations and collaborative electrification planning



Carbon Sequestration

Enhancing land-based carbon sequestration in habitats and working lands



Fire Risk

Supporting resilient forests and fire-adapted communities



Climate C
Action
Priorit

Climate Change Action Plan Implementation Actions FY 2024-2025

2025

2030

Continue Coordination with Treaty Tribe Staff for First Foods Protection and Associated Habitat Priorities



Goals, Strategies and Policy Approaches for First Foods



2,200 Acres of Fuels Reductions Complete



Oak Habitat Maps and Policy Options



Wetlands Extent and Distribution Mapping



DEI Plan in Place with Climate Equity Goals and Actions



Carbon Sequestration Goals and Strategies



Summer Baseflows and Winter High Flow Goals Set



Summer water temps not Increasing



Oak Woodlands are Maintained or Improved



Wetland Extent & Function Increasing

Develop Oak Policy Options and Supporting Maps

Develop Climate Equity Goals and Actions with Pro-Equity Anti-Racism Team

Begin Fire Adapted Communities Regional Inventory and Assessment



6 Community Fire Adaptation Groups

Coordinate with Partners to Develop a Strategy for EV Charging Station Locations in the Gorge



DC Fast Charging Stations Available



Locations and Types of EV Charging Stations Identified



Gas Powered Vehicle Numbers Down













Transit Riders Increasing from 2022-2025



Climate Change Action Program: October 2024 Quarterly Update

● On Track ● On Hold
● At Risk ✔ Complete
● Off Track

Goal(s)	Climate Action Priority Tasks for 2024-2025	Key Accomplishments	Next Steps	Status
 Goals, Strategies, and Policy Approaches for First Foods by 2025	Continue Coordination with Treaty Tribe Staff for First Foods Protection and Associated Habitat Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stefanie Krantz, Climate Change Coordinator with the Nez Perce Tribe, presented an overview of the Tribe's Climate Change Program to the Commission in July. Austin Smith, Branch of Natural Resources Manager with Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, will present in October on Tribal priorities in the region including restoration work in the Gorge and how climate change is incorporated in their updated Integrated Resource Management Plan. Partnering with Confluence Project to offer Field School, a month-long virtual learning series centering Native voices of the Columbia River, for planners and community partners in winter 2025. Member of Gorge Stewardship Network project team focused on improving Tribal access for gathering First Foods in the Gorge. Staff from Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation are leading this project and will be offering Tribal Treaty Rights and First Foods workshops this fall. 	Schedule meetings with Treaty Tribe staff to gather input on draft strategies for strengthening First Foods protection and access.	
 Oak Habitat Maps and Policy Options by 2025	Develop Oak Policy Options and Supporting Maps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building on a USFS-CRGC staff work session in June, facilitated workshop with National Scenic Area Planners' Network in August to identify needs and opportunities to protect and enhance oak habitat in the permitting process. Developing draft oak needs assessment to summarize key issues and potential implementation guidance and policy approaches for oak management in the NSA. 	Finish draft oak needs assessment and gather feedback from Forest Service and County planning departments. Presentation to Commission anticipated in winter 2025.	
 Climate Equity Goals and Actions in Established DEI Plan by 2025	Develop Climate Equity Goals and Actions with Pro-Equity Anti-Racism Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convened Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Team meeting in August to identify action ideas for climate equity focus topics, reducing fire risk and protecting First Foods. Sophia Caesar, Summer Climate Fellow, completed a summary report with recommendations and resources to integrate equity and inclusion in the Commission's climate action strategies. Findings will be part of the DEI annual report to the Commission in December. 	Further refine action ideas through work with Tribal and community partners and share with PEAR Team at next meeting in October.	
 Six Community Fire Adaptation Groups by 2030	Begin Fire Adapted Communities Inventory and Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sydney Tamplin, Summer Hatfield Fellow, developed an inventory and map of current wildfire risk reduction and community fire adaptation efforts across the National Scenic Area. Working with Underwood Conservation District to update informational materials for landowners on achieving defensible space goals while meeting resource protection standards. Participating in Hood River All-Lands Partnership and Skamania County Community Wildfire Protection Plan stakeholder group to support interagency coordination on wildfire resilience efforts in OR and WA. 	Complete defensible space informational materials with Underwood Conservation District and discuss possible open house with community partners for spring/summer 2025.	
 DC Fast Charging Stations Available, Locations & Types of EV Charging Stations Identified by 2025	Coordinate with Partners to Develop a Strategy for EV Charging Station Locations in the Gorge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sydney Tamplin developed a draft map of existing and desired EV charging locations in the Gorge. Conducted staff work session to identify how EV charging stations may be considered as a review use in the Management Plan. Participating in WA Interagency Electric Vehicle Coordinating Council public meetings to track funding opportunities to share with Commission and NSA communities. 	Meet with recreation managers in the NSA to identify desired and in-progress EV charging stations and integrate in strategic mapping effort.	

Challenges & Planned Action

Continued climate funding from WA will depend on the outcome of WA Initiative 2117 to repeal the Climate Commitment Act. Given this funding uncertainty, staff did not hire an additional 1.0 FTE to support Climate Change Action Plan implementation this fiscal year and recently hired a 10-month Climate Corps Fellow, Colin Jarvis, to help advance climate goals for the remaining biennium. This Climate Corps Fellow position runs through mid-July 2025.