

TO: Columbia River Gorge Commission

FROM: Sage Ebel, Vital Signs and Natural Resources Planner, Columbia River Gorge Commission
Rashawn Tama, Project Manager, USDA Forest Service, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

DATE: October 8, 2024

RE: **Information Item*:** Vital Sign Indicators Monitoring Program Quarterly Progress Report – October 2024

The attached Vital Signs Indicators Quarterly Report provides an overview of progress on the Vital Sign Indicators (VSI) monitoring program implementation using a standardized reporting template initially approved by the Commission in June of 2023 and adapted slightly to incorporate all the Vital Signs. The focus of this report is accomplishments made between July and September 2024.

As background, the attached report includes the 2024-2025 VSI Work Plan Timeline that was presented to the Commission in February of 2024, and reported on in July of 2024.

Staff welcomes questions on this quarterly update, and feedback on the update format at the October 8th Commission meeting.

For more information on Vital Sign Indicators, see the Gorge Commission website:

- Vital Sign Indicators: <https://www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/vital-sign-indicators>



Vital Sign Indicators Program: October 2024 Quarterly Update

On Track	On Hold
At Risk	Complete
Off Track	

	Program Tasks	Key Accomplishments	Next Steps	Status
	Developing Reporting Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Main structure of reporting platform developed by ESA. Details of three Vital Signs drafted that will act as main page types developed by ESA. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop all pages for vital signs with the data we have available Design landing page (Name) 	
	Indicator	Key Accomplishments	Next Steps	Status
	Agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Doug Glavich, Ecologist with Forest Service Northwest Oregon Area Ecology Program, on finalizing Special Habitats Map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize land types for analysis Prepare online reporting platform design using preliminary data 	
	Cold Water Refuge Streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchased equipment for installation of a flow and temperature monitoring gauge on the Little White Salmon River in collaboration with the USFWS. Initial page for CWR Vital Sign developed by ESA. Challenges with staffing as well as siting have delayed the installation of the Klickitat and Sandy river temperature gages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Siting analysis for Klickitat and Sandy Rivers followed by instrumentation installation Support USFWS with reinstallation of LWS Temp and Flow Gauge 	
	Economic Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VSI Update and Discussion at Bi-State OIB WIB Annual Meeting. Data compilation and QAQC. Staff workshop to determine visualization plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine standardized demographic questions for inclusion in loan applications for both states 	
	Oregon White Oak Woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Doug Glavich, Ecologist with Forest Service Northwest Oregon Area Ecology Program, on finalizing Special Habitats Map. Collaborative work on Climate Change Action Plan Oak Goals that support both programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate with ECOP to compare map products for mutual benefit Refine/combine map as needed 	
	Recreation Impacts on Other Protected Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of draft online reporting platform page in collaboration with ESA. Review of final unofficial trails map and report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and update draft visualizations 	
	Scenic Landscapes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update monitoring plan summary. Review data collection methodology. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with USFS staff to discuss visualizations and data applications 	
	Wetlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of draft online reporting platform page in collaboration with ESA. This version uses draft data, but will help us identify key methods to visualize challenging data. Identify areas within the NSA where wetland restoration projects could influence indicator trends. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize visualization plan considering the comparatively small area of this habitat 	

Challenges & Planned Action

Timelines and actions for the VSI program are largely dependent upon partner collaboration. Staff will continue to coordinate closely with key partners to adapt to changing capacity and availability where possible.



Vital Sign Indicators Program: October 2024 Quarterly Update










	On Track		On Hold
	At Risk		Complete
	Off Track		

Indicator	Key Accomplishments	Next Steps	Status
Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitated meeting with partners from USFS Air Program staff to hear an update on regional efforts and create a data sharing, application, and visualization plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up meeting to finalize details on data visualization and sharing plans 	
Archeological Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began coordinating yearly Priority Heritage Asset (PHA) monitoring program condition summary presentation from the USFS. This presentation will eventually act to complement the planned indicator data once staff resources allow all data to be entered into the database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of presentation for end of year 	
Coniferous Forests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Doug Glavich, Ecologist with Forest Service Northwest Oregon Area Ecology Program, on finalizing Special Habitats Map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare online reporting platform design using preliminary data 	
Grasslands & Prairies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination with Doug Glavich, Ecologist with Forest Service Northwest Oregon Area Ecology Program, on finalizing Special Habitats Map. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare online reporting platform design using preliminary data 	
Historic Structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Began coordinating yearly Priority Heritage Asset (PHA) monitoring program condition summary presentation from the USFS. This presentation will eventually act to complement the planned indicator data once staff resources allow all data to be entered into the database. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support development of presentation for end of year 	
Recreation Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dataset to track fees collected at recreation sites finalized. Performed a spatial analysis to identify recreation sites accessible within walking distance of public transportation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize visualization plan, develop online platform page 	
Talus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hosted meeting with partners to begin to design the temperature monitoring network. Further discussions are needed with scientists and USFS partners to determine exact monitoring locations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize data application plan Support the installation of the temp monitoring devices 	
Visibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Light Pollution Monitoring Locations are being finalized; permits for installation of monitoring equipment are being processed with the USFS. Meeting with Haze Program specialist from USFS to inform online platform visualizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the installation of the monitoring equipment Create a visualization plan 	
Visitor Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVUM Data Acquired. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with USFS Recreation Staff to determine which satisfaction metrics to track over time 	
Wildfire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on USFS fuels reduction planning efforts. Brainstorming data application questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm data is complete with USFS staff 	

Challenges & Planned Action

Timelines and actions for the VSI program are largely dependent upon partner collaboration. Staff will continue to coordinate closely with key partners to adapt to changing capacity and availability where possible.

2024-2025 Vital Sign Indicators Work Plan Timeline

	VSI Program Task	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	Mar 2025	Apr 2025	May 2025	Jun 2025
Commission Update					Progress Update			Progress Update			Progress Update				Annual Report			Progress Update	
Staff Work	Completing Monitoring Plans				 Monitoring Plans Completed for 7 Vital Signs		 Monitoring Plans Completed for 10 Vital Signs												
	Developing Reporting Platform							 Staff Workshop: Reporting Platform Design			 Reporting Platform Conceptual Designs Complete				 VSI Public Reporting Dashboard Complete				
	Data Collection & Reporting				 Partner Spotlight: Data Provider Presentation (Topic TBD)			 Partner Spotlight: Data Provider Presentation (Topic TBD)			 Partner Spotlight: Data Provider Presentation (Topic TBD)				 VSI Annual Reporting				 Partner Spotlight: Data Provider Presentation (Topic TBD)

Key:










Interim VSI Outcome










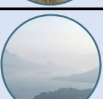


Completed VSI Outcome

2024-2025 Vital Sign Indicators Work Plan Timeline Targets

Vital Sign		Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	
	Agriculture				Monitoring Summaries Complete	Initial Data Compiled				Data Refined by CRGC				Integrate Data into Online Platform	VSI Annual Reporting	
	Cold Water Refuge Streams					Initial Temp Monitoring Design Complete	Temp Probes Installed	Historic Data Compiled			Flow Monitoring Design Workshop					
	Economic Vitality			Initial Data Compiled		Partner Spotlight							Data for 2024 Compiled			
	Oregon White Oak Woodlands					Initial Data Compiled				Data Refined by CRGC	Partner Spotlight (TBD)					
	Recreation Impacts on Other Protected Resources						Map Complete				Initial Analysis of Priority Impact Areas					
	Scenic Landscapes						Integrity Map Procured				Scenic Photos Utilization Workshop					
	Wetlands					Initial Data Compiled					Data Refined by CRGC					

Proposed Vital Signs to Sequence First in 2024

2024-2025 Vital Sign Indicators Work Plan Timeline Targets

Vital Sign		Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	Jun 2024	Jul 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025	Feb 2025	
	Air Quality						Monitoring Summaries Complete	Partner Spotlight (TBD)	Historical Lichen Record Compiled			Precipitation Chem Data Compiled		Integrate Data Into Online Platform	VSI Annual Reporting	
	Archeological Resources												Data Compiled			Heritage Site Annual Update (USFS) TBD
	Conifer Forests										Initial Data Compiled					Data Refined by CRGC
	Grasslands & Prairies										Initial Data Compiled					Data Refined by CRGC
	Historic Structures												Data Compiled			Heritage Site Annual Update (USFS) TBD
	Recreation Equity										Public Transport Data Compiled		Fees Data Compiled			
	Talus					Pika Surveys Begin						Partner Spotlight (TBD)	Data Compiled			
	Visibility										Initial Data Compiled					
	Visitor Experience								Receive USDA Forest Service Data			Data Refined				
	Wildfire				Historical Fuels Data Compiled						Extent & Distribution Data Compiled		Fuels Data Received			