

---

# CHAPTER 1

## GORGE COMMISSION ROLE

---

Congress assigned to the Gorge Commission a number of duties to implement the National Scenic Area Act. The policies in this chapter define the manner in which The Gorge

Commission will carry out these duties. The Gorge Commission implements some of these policies directly and some of these policies through its Gorge Commission rules.

---

### DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

The Gorge Commission recognizes that the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area represents rich and diverse cultures. The National Scenic Area is located within the ancestral territories of Indigenous peoples who have protected these lands since time immemorial. The Gorge Commission acknowledges that European settlers and their governing authorities took Indigenous land and resources within this region by unjust and inequitable means. Indigenous leaders negotiated treaties that reserved rights to fish at usual and accustomed sites, hunt, and gather traditional foods and medicines on public lands and waters throughout their ceded lands. Despite these treaties, Indigenous people have experienced loss of land and resources essential to their spiritual, cultural, and economic well-being and livelihoods.

Other cultures in the Gorge have also prospered and been discriminated against. Immigrants from Japan, China, Latin America, and other places came to the Gorge to work in agriculture, build railroads, and prepare Columbia River fish and produce for world markets. Their land and possessions were also seized at times, some were taken to internment camps during World War II, and many were discriminated against by unjust federal and state laws and bigotry from fellow citizens. The Gorge Commission acknowledges and regrets Oregon's history of structural racism, including its exclusionary laws and its 1857 Constitution barring Black citizens from residing in Oregon, voting, owning property, or entering into contracts.

The Gorge Commission acknowledges that this legacy created systemic inequities in the policies and decision-making of National Scenic Area governments and commissions. The Gorge Commission commits to listening, learning, and understanding, and developing diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies that take into account and address this legacy.

---

**Policies**

1. The Gorge Commission shall develop and adopt a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan to address these systemic inequities identified or discovered in its work and policies. The Plan shall be reviewed and updated as necessary.
2. The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan shall include specific measures and outcomes to:
  - A. Ensure a diverse staff and commission;
  - B. Develop and apply an equity lens to implementation of the Management Plan, Gorge Commission operations, and policy decisions; and
  - C. Engage under-represented and marginalized communities in the Columbia Gorge region.
3. Based upon the measures and outcomes of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, the Gorge Commission may determine that conditions in the National Scenic Area have significantly changed and may exercise its authority to develop responsive Management Plan amendments pursuant to section 6(h).

**AMENDMENT OF THE MANAGEMENT PLAN**

In section 6(h) of the National Scenic Area Act, Congress gave the Gorge Commission the authority to amend the Management Plan at any time if it determines that conditions within the National Scenic Area have changed significantly.

**Policies**

1. The Gorge Commission may amend the Management Plan upon application by any person or upon its own initiative. The National Scenic Area Act does not require the Gorge Commission to consider amendments to the Management Plan. The Act does not entitle any person or entity to have the Gorge Commission consider an application to amend the Management Plan.
2. The Gorge Commission shall consider a proposal to amend the Management Plan at a hearing held for that purpose only after consultation with the Forest Service, the four Columbia River treaty tribes, and the appropriate county or counties.
3. The Gorge Commission shall consider a plan amendment upon a final judicial determination that a taking of private property has occurred as a result of application of the Management Plan. The judicial determination shall be deemed a significant change in conditions under Section 6(h) of the National Scenic Area Act.
4. The Gorge Commission must approve amendments to the Management Plan by the same majority voting and concurrence requirements specified in sections 6(c) and 6(f) of the National Scenic Area Act for adoption of the Management Plan.