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## Phase 1: Setting the Stage (Weeks 1–4)

### Week 1 – Why CRGC Exists

#### Facebook:

“The Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC) is a unique bi-state agency created by Congress and the states of Oregon & Washington. We work with partners to protect Gorge resources and support healthy communities.”

<https://gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/about-us/>

#### LinkedIn:

“The Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC) was created by the 1986 Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act and a bi-state compact between Oregon and Washington. The Commission has 13 members (6 appointed by Oregon counties, 6 by Washington counties, and 1 from each Governor). We work alongside the U.S. Forest Service, counties, Tribes, and community partners to protect Gorge resources and support resilient communities.”

<https://gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/about-us/>

### Week 2 – The Two Purposes of the NSA Act

#### Facebook:

“The National Scenic Area Act has two purposes: (1) Protect and enhance scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources; (2) Support the Gorge economy by focusing growth inside 13 urban areas.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/scenic-area/about-the-nsa/>

#### LinkedIn:

“The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act is about balance: protect scenic,

natural, cultural, and recreation resources while also supporting the Gorge economy by focusing growth inside the 13 urban areas. This dual mandate is what makes the Gorge management model so unique — it requires stewardship and vitality.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/scenic-area/about-the-nsa/>

### Week 3 – Economic Vitality

Facebook:

“Did you know CRGC helps support the Gorge economy? We certify loan and grant projects to ensure state funds for small businesses and local communities are consistent with the Scenic Area Act.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/scenic-area/about-the-nsa/> (scroll to Economic Vitality section)

LinkedIn:

“Economic vitality is one of the core purposes of the National Scenic Area Act. Oregon and Washington administer grant and loan programs to support local businesses. CRGC’s role is to certify that these investments are consistent with the Act, the Management Plan, and county ordinances — ensuring communities thrive while Gorge resources are protected.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/scenic-area/about-the-nsa/>

### Week 4 – Vital Sign Indicators (VSI)

Facebook:

“How do we know if the Gorge is healthy? Our Vital Sign Indicators (VSI) track long-term health in scenic, natural, cultural, recreation, and economic areas — providing data to guide future decisions.”

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

LinkedIn:

“The Gorge’s health is tracked through Vital Sign Indicators (VSI), a science-based framework adopted by CRGC and partners. VSI monitor trends across five areas: scenic, natural, cultural, recreation, and local economies. These indicators help the Commission and partners adapt policies and actions to ensure the Gorge remains resilient for generations.”

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

## Phase 2: Management Plan Deep Dive (Weeks 5–8)

### Week 5 – What Is the Management Plan?

Facebook:

“The Management Plan is the Gorge’s rulebook. It translates the Scenic Area Act into on-the-ground standards for land use, recreation, resource protection, and economic vitality.”  
<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

LinkedIn:

“The Management Plan is the cornerstone of Gorge stewardship. Updated every 10 years (most recently with Gorge2020), it establishes standards for land use, resource protection, and economic vitality. The Plan ensures the Scenic Area Act’s dual purposes are carried out consistently across six counties and two states.”  
<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

### Week 6 – Protecting Scenic & Natural Resources

Facebook:

“The Management Plan protects the Gorge’s world-famous views and landscapes. Standards guide how projects are sited, protect ridgelines, and conserve wildlife habitat.”  
<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

LinkedIn:

“One of the core standards in the Management Plan is scenic and natural resource protection. This includes scenic overlays, siting standards to maintain viewsheds, and habitat conservation policies that protect fish and wildlife corridors. Protecting what makes the Gorge extraordinary is at the heart of our work.”  
<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

### Week 7 – Cultural & Recreation Resources

Facebook:

“The Gorge is rich in cultural heritage and outdoor recreation. The Management Plan protects Tribal treaty rights, cultural resources, and ensures safe recreation access.”  
<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

LinkedIn:

“The Management Plan recognizes the Gorge as both a cultural landscape and a world-class recreation destination. Standards protect Tribal treaty rights and cultural sites, while

also guiding recreation planning to ensure access, safety, and protection of natural resources.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

## Week 8 – Agriculture, Forest Lands & Urban Areas

Facebook:

“The Management Plan supports the Gorge’s rural economy by keeping farmland and forest land in production — while focusing growth in 13 designated urban areas.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

LinkedIn:

“Agriculture and forestry remain vital to the Gorge economy. The Management Plan protects these resource lands from conversion while directing urban growth to 13 designated urban areas. This balance supports economic resilience and protects open spaces.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/plan/>

## Phase 3: Climate, DEI, Permitting & Appeals (Weeks 9–12)

### Week 9 – Climate Change Action Plan

Facebook:

“In 2022, CRGC adopted its first Climate Change Action Plan. We’re working with partners to address risks like wildfire, heat, and flooding across the Gorge.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/climate-change/>

LinkedIn:

“The Gorge is already experiencing climate impacts. CRGC’s Climate Change Action Plan, adopted unanimously in 2022, lays out adaptation and mitigation priorities — integrating climate into the Management Plan and Vital Sign Indicators. Each year we report progress and work with partners to build community and ecosystem resilience.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/climate-change/>

### Week 10 – Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

Facebook:

“Stewardship works best when everyone has a voice. CRGC’s DEI Strategic Plan addresses

inequities and ensures Gorge management reflects all communities.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

LinkedIn:

“CRGC is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work. Our DEI Strategic Plan acknowledges historic inequities in Gorge management and sets priorities for more inclusive engagement, equitable policy development, and stronger partnerships with underrepresented communities.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/initiatives/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/>

## Week 11 – Permits: What to Expect

Facebook:

“Planning a project in Klickitat County’s Scenic Area? CRGC reviews permits here. Expedited reviews take about 30 days; standard reviews about 72 days. Start early!”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/land-use/process-applications/>

LinkedIn:

“For Klickitat County projects in the National Scenic Area, CRGC is the reviewing authority. Expedited reviews typically take 30 days, while standard reviews are closer to 72 days depending on complexity. We encourage pre-application conferences to streamline the process and answer questions early.”

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/land-use/process-applications/>

## Week 12 – Appeals & Rebuilding After Disaster

Facebook:

“CRGC hears appeals of land-use decisions and provides pathways for rebuilding after wildfire, landslides, or other disasters.”

[https://www.gorgecommission.org/images/uploads/pdfs/Fire\\_Response\\_Statement\\_\\_Burdoin\\_Rebuilding\\_FAQ\\_-\\_COMBINED.pdf](https://www.gorgecommission.org/images/uploads/pdfs/Fire_Response_Statement__Burdoin_Rebuilding_FAQ_-_COMBINED.pdf)

LinkedIn:

“Appeals are a key part of the Commission’s responsibilities. We hear appeals of county land-use decisions (on the record) and of CRGC’s own decisions in Klickitat County (de novo). We also provide guidance for rebuilding after natural disasters — including like-for-like replacement rules and timelines that help communities recover while protecting Gorge resources.”

[https://www.gorgecommission.org/images/uploads/pdfs/Fire\\_Response\\_Statement\\_\\_Burdoon\\_Rebuilding\\_FAQ\\_-\\_COMBINED.pdf](https://www.gorgecommission.org/images/uploads/pdfs/Fire_Response_Statement__Burdoon_Rebuilding_FAQ_-_COMBINED.pdf)

## Profile Examples

### Commissioner Profile: Alex Johnson

#### Facebook

Meet Commissioner Alex Johnson, appointed by the Governor of Oregon. Alex is a third-generation farmer from Mount Hood Parkdale, managing timber, wheat, and pear orchards in Hood River, Sherman, and Klickitat counties. In addition to farming, he serves as Chief Strategy Officer at Virridy, a water and carbon finance company, and has spent nearly two decades working at the intersection of energy, water, and environmental markets. Alex brings deep experience in watershed restoration, utility partnerships, and land use planning to the Commission.”

<https://gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/commissioners-staff/>

#### LinkedIn

Commissioner Spotlight: Alex Johnson of Mount Hood Parkdale, Oregon, is a third-generation Gorge farmer managing timber, wheat, and pear orchards across Hood River, Sherman, and Klickitat counties. Alex is also Chief Strategy Officer at Virridy, a Colorado-based company advancing water delivery, water quality monitoring, carbon finance, and watershed restoration projects globally.

He has nearly 20 years of experience developing environmental markets and previously worked for The Freshwater Trust, partnering with agricultural producers and water utilities throughout the West. Alex has served on the Hood River Planning Commission and is active with the Hood River Agricultural Water Quality Management Plan. His expertise in land management, carbon finance, and community resilience informs his service on the Columbia River Gorge Commission.”

<https://gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/commissioners-staff/>

### Staff Profile: Mackenzie Aamodt

#### Facebook

Meet CRGC Planner Mackenzie Aamodt. Growing up in Vancouver, Washington, Mackenzie developed a lifelong love for the Gorge. She joined the Commission in 2023 after earning a Master’s degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University, with a focus on land use and collaborative governance.

Mackenzie is passionate about working directly with people on land use and natural resource issues. When she’s not helping residents and communities in the Gorge, you’ll

likely find her on a trail, cross-country skiing, or exploring the Pacific Northwest in her campervan.”

<https://gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/commissioners-staff/>

#### LinkedIn

Staff Spotlight: Mackenzie Aamodt joined the Columbia River Gorge Commission in 2023 as a Land Use Planner. Raised in Vancouver, WA, Mackenzie’s connection to the Gorge began at an early age and has grown into a professional commitment to thoughtful, collaborative planning. She holds a Master’s in Urban and Regional Planning from Portland State University with a focus on land use and a graduate certificate in Collaborative Governance.

Her professional background spans education, small business account management, and chaplaincy — unified by a passion for connecting with people at a personal and community level. At the Commission, Mackenzie works with landowners and stakeholders on planning and permitting, while outside of work she enjoys hiking, skiing, and discovering new corners of the Pacific Northwest.”

<https://gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/commissioners-staff/>

#### Emergency Response Example: Rowena Fire

##### Facebook

Wildfire Update: The Rowena Fire has caused severe damage in the Gorge, with 56 homes and 91 outbuildings lost. Our thoughts are with the families and communities affected.

Wasco County Sheriff’s Office has established a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) to provide disaster-related assistance, in partnership with organizations including the Columbia Gorge Food Bank and the American Red Cross. Please rely on official sources for evacuation and recovery updates:

- Wasco County Sheriff’s Office: <https://sheriff.co.wasco.or.us>
- ODOT TripCheck: <https://tripcheck.com>
- Oregon Department of Forestry Fire Updates: <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/pages/firestats.aspx>

The Gorge Commission’s role is to assist during recovery, helping landowners understand options for rebuilding within Scenic Area rules. Learn more:

<https://www.gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/legal-authorities>

## LinkedIn

The Rowena Fire has devastated parts of the Columbia River Gorge, destroying 56 homes and nearly 100 outbuildings along Highway 30 and Rowena River Road. Our thoughts are with the families and communities who are now facing the difficult road to recovery.

Local response is being led by the Wasco County Sheriff's Office, which has established a Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) in collaboration with the Columbia Gorge Food Bank, American Red Cross, and other partners. The Sheriff's Office has also provided guidance on avoiding scams targeting online fundraising efforts.

As communities move from immediate response into recovery, the Columbia River Gorge Commission's role becomes critical. We provide permitting and guidance for rebuilding, including "like-for-like" replacement provisions designed to help residents rebuild safely and quickly while ensuring the Gorge's resources are protected.

## Resources:

- Wasco County Sheriff's Office: <https://sheriff.co.wasco.or.us>
- ODOT TripCheck: <https://tripcheck.com>
- Oregon Department of Forestry Fire Updates: <https://www.oregon.gov/odf/fire/pages/firestats.aspx>
- CRGC Disaster Recovery Guidance: <https://www.gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/legal-authorities>