

## Columbia River Gorge Commission

### 2025 Pilot Communications Strategy (Draft for Committee Review)

#### 1. Purpose and Goals

The Columbia River Gorge Commission (CRGC) is charged with protecting and enhancing the scenic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources of the Columbia River Gorge, while also supporting a resilient economy and vibrant communities. Historically, public engagement has been limited to regulatory interactions (e.g., building permits) and hosting a public website. This 2025 Pilot Communications Strategy aims to:

- Proactively engage Gorge residents and stakeholders beyond land use permits.
- Improve regional understanding of CRGC's mandate, priorities, and work.
- Build trust and visibility by highlighting the Commission's contributions to regional resilience.
- Support transparency and responsiveness during emergencies or high-profile events.

#### 2. Audience

CRGC serves a wide range of stakeholders:

- Local Residents and Landowners – current primary public interface (permits).
- Non-Landowner Stakeholders – business owners, recreational users, conservationists, Tribes, farmers, fire managers, youth.
- Regional Partners – county governments, state agencies (OR/WA), federal partners, utilities, NGOs.
- Wider Public – Oregonians, Washingtonians, and beyond, who care about the Gorge as a national treasure.

#### 3. Core Communications Principles

- Proactive, not reactive: Don't wait for the public to seek us out.
- Accessible and relatable: Plain-language explanations; use visuals (photos, graphics, maps).
- Trustworthy and authoritative: Information grounded in CRGC's mandate.
- Efficient and sustainable: Recognize limited staff time; use volunteer commissioners as content leads.
- Records-compliant: Limit legal risk by disabling comments and archiving posts.

#### 4. Channels and Approach

- Facebook (Primary Public Engagement Tool)
  - Broad reach to Gorge residents, community groups, and small businesses.
  - Posts: landscape photos, staff/Commissioner profiles, small business spotlights, emergency updates.
  - Comments disabled; page maintained as one-way communication.
- LinkedIn (Professional & Institutional Presence)
  - Target: partner agencies, NGOs, funders, policymakers.
  - Posts: updates on initiatives, profiles of Commissioners/staff, policy clarifications, inter-agency collaborations.
- Website (Anchor Resource)
  - Remains official repository for full documents, meeting notices, and permit info.
  - Social posts will link back to website content whenever appropriate.
- Optional Future Channels (Phase 8?as.capacity.allows): Instagram (visual storytelling), YouTube/Vimeo (explainer videos, recorded webinars).

#### 5. Content Strategy

CRGC will produce two categories of content, balancing evergreen storytelling with timely responsiveness.

##### Category A: Evergreen (Pre-Scheduled, Non-Time-Bound)

- Mission and Mandate Explained: Plain-language summaries of Section 3 of the NSA Act, and what it means for residents.
- Profiles: Commissioners, staff, local community members, and past small-business loan recipients.
- Spotlights: Local businesses, conservation projects, community initiatives.
- “Did You Know?” Posts: Fun facts about Gorge history, natural resources, recreation.
- Visual Storytelling: Landscape photos, maps, graphics.
- Partnership Features: Highlight collaboration with agencies, counties, Tribes.

##### Category B: Responsive (Time-Bound, As Needed)

- Emergencies: Forest fires, landslides, flooding, road closures – clear, authoritative, and timely info (in coordination with county/state emergency agencies).
- Announcements: Key Commission meetings, new reports, funding opportunities, deadlines.
- Policy Clarifications: Quick myth-busting or FAQs when issues arise in the community.

## 6. Posting Cadence & Management

- Frequency:
  - Facebook: 1–2 evergreen posts per week + as-needed time-bound updates.
  - LinkedIn: 2–3 posts per month, focusing on policy and partnerships.
- Responsibility:
  - Volunteer Commissioners draft and post content.
  - Commissioners & Staff review/approve content as needed (especially policy-sensitive items).
- Scheduling: Use free tools (e.g., Meta Business Suite, LinkedIn native scheduling) to pre-load evergreen content in monthly batches.

## 7. Governance & Risk Management

- Commenting Policy: All comments disabled to avoid public records issues and staff burden.
- Archiving: Posts will be archived quarterly (PDF capture of feeds stored with CRGC records).
- Approval Protocol:
  - Evergreen content: drafted by Commissioners, light-touch review by staff and Commissioners as needed.
  - Emergency content: coordinated with relevant agency (e.g., county emergency management, USFS, ODOT).
- Branding: Consistent use of CRGC logo, tone, and plain-language style.

## 8. Implementation Timeline

- Month 1 (Pilot Launch):
  - Open Facebook and LinkedIn accounts.

- Draft and schedule 8–10 evergreen posts (2 months of content).
- Publish a Commissioner/staff profile and a landscape feature as kickoff posts.
- Month 2–3:
  - Monitor engagement metrics (reach, clicks, shares).
  - Adjust cadence and refine content mix.
- Quarterly:
  - Communications Committee reviews analytics and content pipeline.
  - Identify new themes, priorities, or adjustments.

## 9. Evaluation Metrics

- Reach: Followers, post impressions, shares.
- Engagement: Click-throughs to CRGC website.
- Diversity of Content: Balance between evergreen and responsive.
- Feedback from Partners: Are agencies and stakeholders finding posts useful?

## 10. Resource Needs

- Commissioner Time: Estimated 2–3 hours/month per volunteer for drafting/scheduling.
- Staff Time: ~2 hours/month for light review/approval.
- No new budget required at this stage; leverage existing tools.

## 11. Next Steps

- Committee review and approval of draft strategy.
- Identify 2–3 Commissioners willing to serve as “Content Captains.”
- Collect first set of evergreen materials.
- Launch pilot within 60 days.