

From: [Jeffrey Johnston](#)
To: [Public Comment](#)
Subject: Plan Amendment Request for Disaster Recovery Comment
Date: Friday, September 5, 2025 11:34:01 AM

Dear Columbia River Gorge Commissioners,

First we want to thank the Columbia River Gorge Commissioners for allowing us to share our story from the Rowena Fire and thank-you for giving us the opportunity to give public input.

We have been windsurfing the Columbia River Gorge for 30 plus years. We have been in the Tooley Terrace Community for the same number of years. We have windsurfed the Columbia River from Rooster Rock to 3 Mile Canyon. We have experienced and witnessed the purpose of the National Scenic Area and the role of the Columbia River Gorge Commissioners. One most notable experience that was heartbreaking was the installation of the Windmills pass Maryhill State Park and at the time we were concerned those Windmills would move to the West and from Tooley Terrace our view across the River would be those Windmills. We have always wondered if the National Scenic Area protected that expansion. Those Windmills changed the landscape from the River going East.

The Rowena Fire was not what people wanted to happen to them, but it did. It is heartbreaking for us to know that we have friends that are so traumatized they may never return and those neighbors we know that will not have the financial means to re-build. The Tooley Terrace Community has it was has been lost as we know it.

For us we want to re-build and return to a place we love, be with the people in The Dalles we know and a River we love to windsurf on.

It is best to put out thoughts in a timeline of sorts:

Once we learned we lost our place we were heartbroken. Losing something we have had for 30 years, however, for many it was more devastating, (losing pets and farm animals along with their home.).

Within 2 weeks we received a letter from a Real Estate agent in The Dalles asking if we needed to sale our property to please contact the company, (our land can be sold to developers for future Short Term Rentals or developers to build other concept homes), and along with that a contractor sent a letter saying they did not lose their home (the helicopter saved it), but it came close but consider hiring my company to re-build your future home.

We also received a letter that same week from an attorney.

When PUD came into the neighborhood the following weekend, (fire began June 11 and PUD was in the neighborhood June 13-14). The tree company that PUD hired cut all of our trees down that interfered with the power lines. We had a beautiful spruce tree and ponderosa trees. We understand they were damaged and hazard trees, however when we went to dig for items during the Interim period we discovered all the tree remained on our property that were cut down and the trees need to be removed off our property and will be a cost to us. One property owner received a bid for \$14,500 for tree removal.

For us, we recently received a bid for clean-up, Metal, ash etc.....\$20,000.

We want to re-build and we have participated in the meetings for the Rowena Recovery to learn the permitting process. We desire to follow the codes that govern development with the National Scenic Area. It may not be a template there needs to be flexibility and coaching for us making the right decision for our property.

For modernizing the process one may want to turn to the community of Blue River Oregon learn the permitting process for re-building a community. 5 years later the community are still wanting their neighbors to return and have the vibrant community they once had.

Blue River had to re-build

Firehouse

Library

General Store

Medical Clinic

Also, working with a non-profit to re-build affordable homes.

Our fear is that developers will look at Tooley Terrance and take advantage of those that need to sell and edge out those that can re-build, but find the process too expensive, or will take too long. Whatever direction the re-building goes the community was lost.

Sincerely,

Carrie Buchanan

Jeffrey Johnston

