



KLICKITAT COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

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September 2, 2025

Michael Mills, Chair
Columbia River Gorge Commission
P.O. Box 730
White Salmon, WA 98672

Dear Chair Mills,

I am writing to express the support of the Board of Klickitat County Commissioners for the amendments to the National Scenic Area Management Plan, which are being proposed by Wasco County. This is an important step to modernize National Scenic Area rules consistent with national and state best practices for disaster recovery.

While we are aware that Wasco County is currently in the process of finalizing their proposed amendments, we understand they include the following concepts which we fully endorse:

- Provisions to allow for a timely permitting process that is responsive to the needs of property owners impacted by a disaster; this may be in the form of an expedited permitting process and/or clear and objective standards that reduce uncertainty and discretion.
- Sliding scale consideration of replacement structures to help people replace "like with like," but with flexibility that recognizes that construction and manufacturing practices have changed or that property owners might wish to make minor changes in their rebuild.
- Extend the ability of property owners to utilize the disaster replacement pathway for up to five years.
- Allow RVs and other temporary living accommodations to be used for an extended period, recognizing that each disaster victim's situation differs in relation to finance, insurance, and other factors that could delay a rebuild.

Klickitat County supports the prioritization of these plan amendments to ensure responsiveness to Columbia River Gorge wildfire events like those in Broughton, Burdoin, and Rowena as well as supporting future disaster recovery efforts. The proposed amendments represent solutions to disaster recovery that also maintain protection of the resources we value in the Columbia River Gorge.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Ihrig".

Ron Ihrig, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners