

Columbia River Gorge Commission [Draft] Values

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 supporting the economic vitality of its communities. The Gorge is more than a scenic treasure – it is a living, breathing, resilient place where people, cultures, and economies intersect. At the heart of CRGC’s work is a shared commitment to values-driven leadership to evolve from gatekeeper to partner; from regulator to relationship-builder; from narrowly defined protector to holistic steward. The following values are not abstract ideals but will serve as drivers of active commitments related to how we engage with people, place, and purpose.

1. Transparency

We value clarity, openness, and honesty in all aspects of our work – from processes, to decision-making, to communication, to public engagement.

In action, this value may mean:

- Clarifying CRGC’s unique mandate and scope through plainspoken, consistent communication.
 - Promoting understanding by demystifying Commission processes and priorities
 - Making decisions in ways that are understandable, accessible, accountable, and traceable to community input.
 - Distinguishing CRGC from other Gorge actors by sharing stories and data that highlight our full spectrum of work – including economic support and community engagement.
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2. Sustainability

We value long term resilience of the holistic ecosystem that we steward, including the environment, communities, and economies.

In action, this value may mean:

- Updating our Vital Signs Indicators and our priorities to reflect a better balance of scenic, recreational, ecological, ecological, cultural, economic, and equity-focused factors.
- Regularly revisiting our land use rules to ensure they align with our core purpose and values, while avoiding overly prescriptive regulation of everyday community activities that do not significantly impact our goals.
- Integrating science, traditional knowledge, and community wisdom.

- Making decisions that reflect the interconnectedness of people and place.
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3. Respect

We strive for respectful relationships—with each other as staff and commissioners, and with the public.

In action, this value may mean:

- Building a culture of repair, care, and trust internally and externally
 - Honoring different perspectives and lived experiences both within our Commission and in the communities we serve
 - Upholding compassion, even amidst disagreement
 - Holding ourselves and each other accountable for communicating with care and empathy.
 - Strengthening relationships among commissioners and between staff and the Commission through community agreements, shared governance structures, and accountability tools.
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4. Equity

We believe that all people — regardless of background, income, geography, or political perspective — deserve a fair opportunity to thrive in the Gorge.

In action, this value may mean:

- Seeking out and removing barriers to participation in the Commission and in the NSA.
- Listening to and partnering with communities that have been historically marginalized or alienated by Gorge policy.
- Investing in entrepreneurs, farmers, and local enterprises from underrepresented groups.
- Framing equity in language that resonates across communities, such as opportunity, prosperity, and fairness.
- Including underrepresented histories in how we interpret, regulate, and celebrate the Gorge.
- Centering Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations, communities of color, rural communities, and working class and socioeconomically depressed communities in decision-making.
- Moving beyond land acknowledgments to co-create policies and programs with tribal governments and Indigenous communities.

- Prioritizing tribal treaty rights, cultural knowledge, and co-governance approaches in our work.
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5. Access

We support access to the Commission's processes, to information, and to the Gorge itself.

In action, this value may mean:

- Considering factors such as housing access, public transit, livability, and economic opportunity in our programs and decisions.
 - Promoting physical access infrastructure such as public transit that benefits all Gorge residents in addition to visitors from outside the Gorge area, or ADA-accessible visitor infrastructure in recreational areas.
 - Promoting inclusive access through multilingual signs, culturally relevant design, and fair regulation.
 - Advocating for equitable access to natural and cultural resources.
 - Engaging all community members — including those outside the NSA — in shaping how access is defined and delivered.
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6. Community

We believe that the Gorge is not just a protected landscape — the region constitutes homelands to many Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities and a place where diverse communities live, work, and build futures. We are accountable to the diverse communities of the Gorge and recognize the importance of relationship-building in our work.

In action, this value may mean:

- Actively engaging historically excluded stakeholders — including Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations, communities of color, rural communities, and working class and socioeconomically depressed communities, and non-landowning residents.
- Listening deeply to community concerns and aspirations.
- Working collaboratively across jurisdictions, cultures, and differences.
- Broadening engagement with urban areas within the NSA.