

Rooting in Shared Values

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Columbia River Gorge Commission

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Community Agreements



- **Be Curious:** Learn about each other: Listen to understand. Ask questions; try on new ideas.
- **Be Compassionate:** Acknowledge everyone has different growth areas
- **It's ok to disagree but don't be disagreeable:** Center kindness and respectfulness as you listen and discuss with others.

what to expect

Framing

Why are we here today and how do we hope to support you?

Interview Themes

High level themes of what many of you have shared with us in one-on-one meetings

Values

What values should guide your work together and how do the human dimensions of your work fit in?

Framing

Why are we here and how do we hope to support you?

Our opportunity to bridge by reflecting on how DEI often...

- has fixated on diversity
- lacks a shared definition
- employs academic terms
- focuses on race to the detriment of class, education, disability, etc.
- has been practiced using a “my way or the highway” philosophy
- has been siloed/separated it from the rest of our work



Interview Themes

Summary of 8 commissioner interviews

Challenge

Myopic Focus

Despite dual conservation/economic, CRGC's role has been interpreted narrowly:

- CRGC has prioritized conservation over economic vitality
- Within the first prong, CRGC has prioritized aesthetics and scenic preservation over other factors
- CRGC has interpreted its sphere of influence narrowly to NSA boundaries



Challenge: *Imbalanced Impact*

Who benefits most?

1. Tourists and recreationists
2. Recreation economy
3. Landowners
4. Second homeowners
5. People with economic privilege

Who doesn't:

1. Visitors of different backgrounds
2. Renters/non-land owning residents
3. Working families/low-income community
4. Farmers/ranchers
5. Agricultural workers
6. Business owners of different backgrounds



Challenge: *Public Perception*



1. Damaged reputation and trust due to:
 - a. Not reaching all communities with a stake in the Gorge.
 - b. "Homeowner's Association" perception
 - c. Political polarization re: DEI
2. Confusion about CRGC's identity:
 - a. Mistaken for Friends of the Gorge, county entities, or state agencies.
 - b. Friends of the Gorge has outsized influence over Commission work

Challenge: *Governance & Funding*



1. Lack of clarity on Commissioner roles
2. Tension due to ideological differences
3. Interpersonal conflict
4. Gender dynamics create a lack of inclusion
5. Process orientedness
6. Focus on the trivial rather than policy
7. Commissioner/staff tensions
8. Risks of future defunding

Opportunity: *Community & Resilience- Focused Strategy*

1. Expand CRGC's focus:
 - a. Champion resilience, equity, and community wellbeing.
 - b. Address housing access, economic development, and livability
 - c. Broaden definitions of "protection" that include people and place.
 - d. Create shared values for the CRGC
2. Update Vital Signs Indicators to reflect economic, equity, and community indicators
3. Promote access infrastructure



Opportunity: *Deepen Community Relationships*

1. Community outreach & bridge building:
 - a. Better engage with counties
 - b. Engage with cities within NSA boundaries but carved out from land use planning
 - c. Engage rural residents, conservative landowners, renters, and working families.
2. Strengthen Indigenous relationships:
 - a. Move beyond land acknowledgements to center land access and sovereignty.
 - b. Co-create programs with Tribes and Indigenous communities.
3. Support local enterprise:
 - a. Invest in small businesses and entrepreneurs from underrepresented groups.
 - b. Recruit and incubate community-led economic opportunities.



Opportunity: *Strengthen Governance*

1. Internal relationship building
 - a. Strengthen relationships amongst commissioners
 - b. Improve connection between staff and commissioners
2. Governance structures
 - a. Create structures to support commissioners in better working together



Opportunity: *Reframe, Clarify, & Amplify*

1. Frame “DEI” work in resonant ways and integrate it with values
2. Shift messaging and narratives to promote economic vitality and healthy communities
3. Amplify CRGC’s current work supporting local economies
4. Distinguish CRGC from other actors.
5. Brand CRGC as a partner in resilience and prosperity.

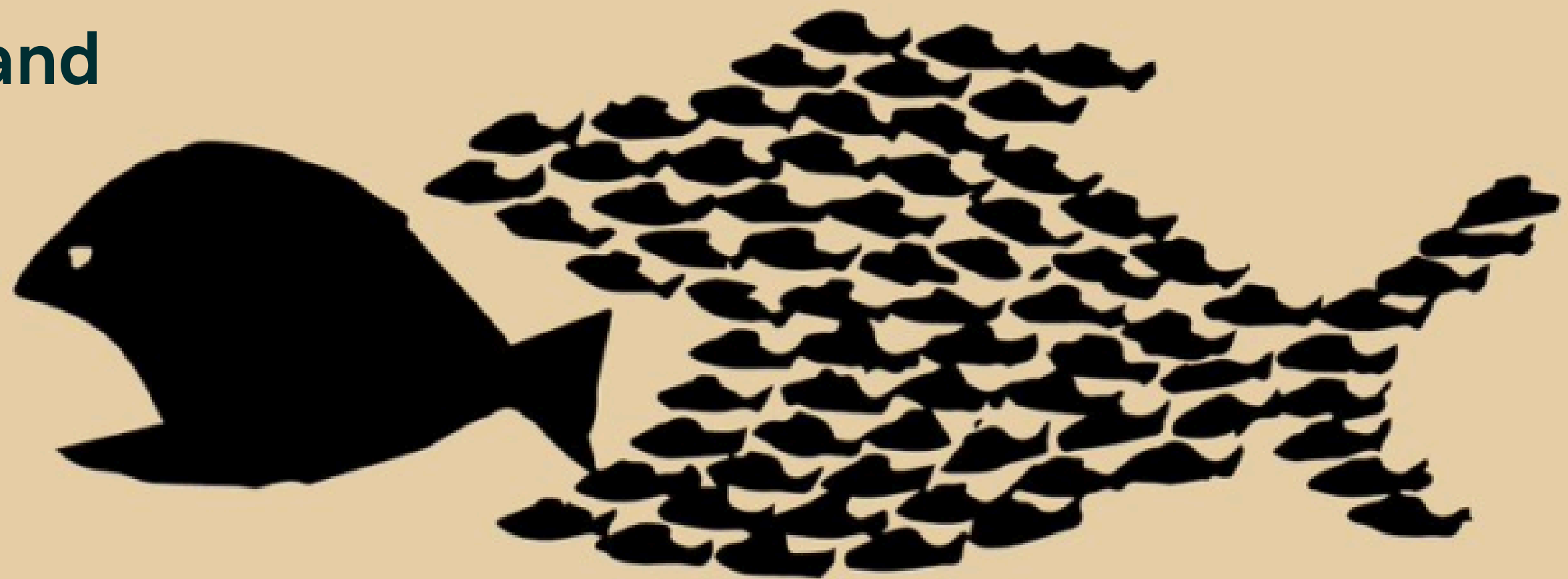
Values

Now what? What values should guide your work together and how do the human dimensions of your work fit in?



Without values, you are more vulnerable to powerful groups fragmenting you and jeopardizing your work


If you are aligned on shared values, you are more powerful

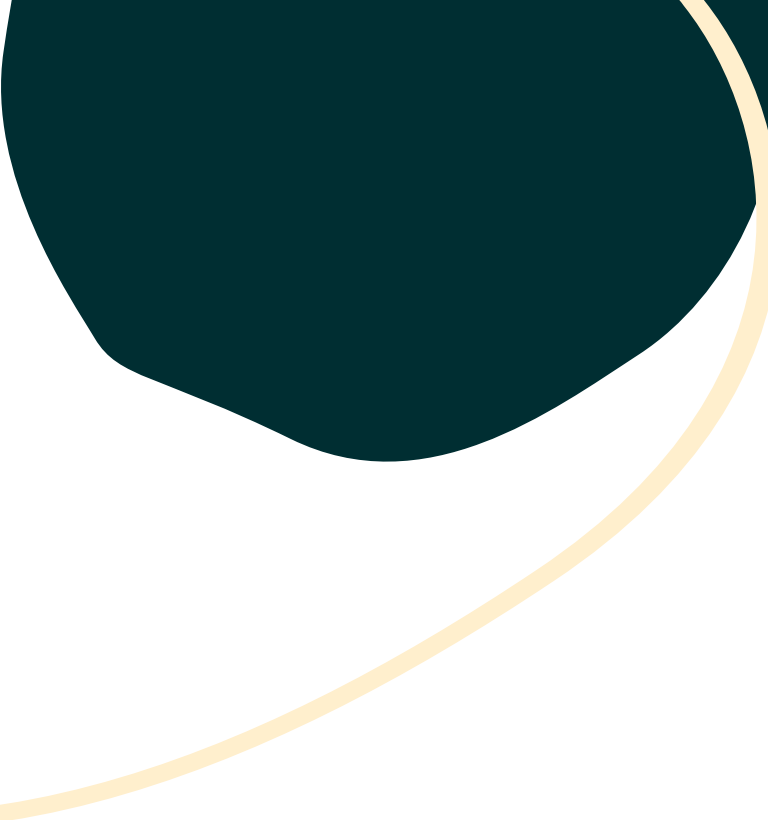




Your mission

The Columbia River Gorge Commission's mission is to establish, implement and enforce policies and programs that **protect and enhance the scenic, natural, recreational and cultural resources of the Columbia River Gorge**, and to **support the economy** of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and allowing economic development **consistent with resource protection**.





What Are Values?

There are many paths to your dual-pronged mission of promoting conservation and economic vitality.

Values are the compass that help you decide how you will get there.

Values aren't just a list of feel-good words and phrases on a website; they are powerful, accountability mechanisms that ensure continued alignment in all that you do collectively. They are a list of words/phrases that describe how you want to approach your work.



Thank you!

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