

2025 Climate Action Annual Report

Columbia River Gorge Commission

March 10, 2026



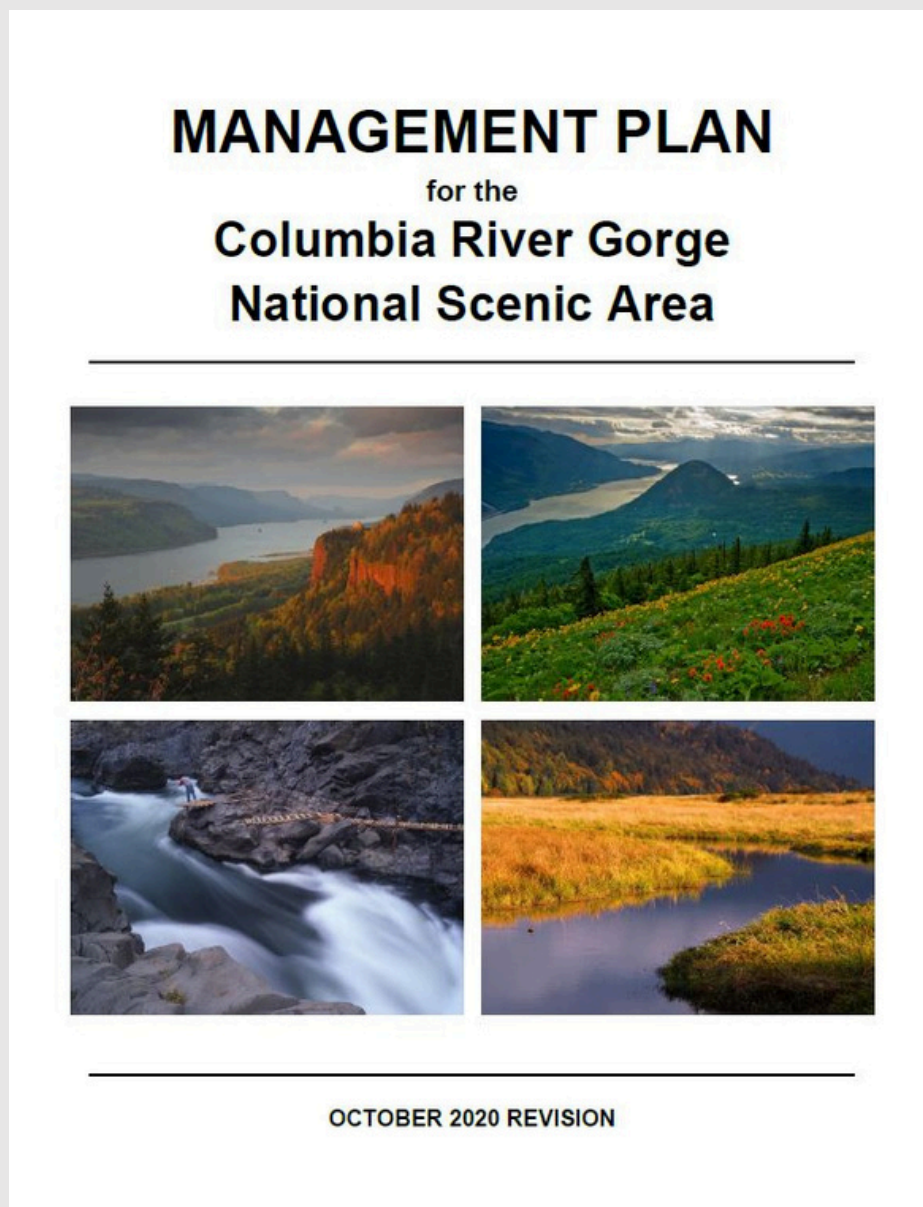


Presentation Overview

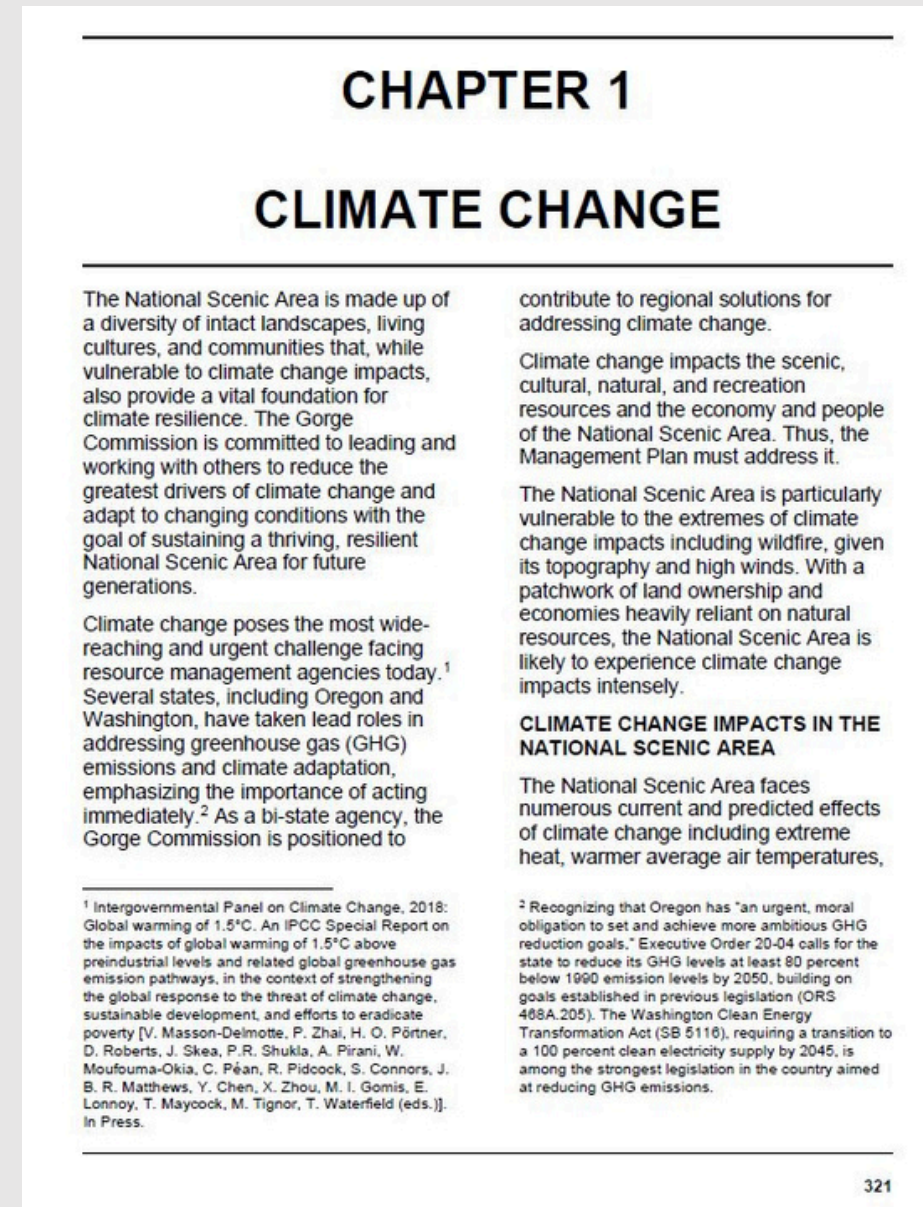
- Background on Climate Change Action Plan
- 2025 Climate Action Goal Status Updates
- PEAR Team's Climate Equity Recommendations and First Foods Project Spotlight
- Commission Questions and Discussion

Climate Change Action Plan Background

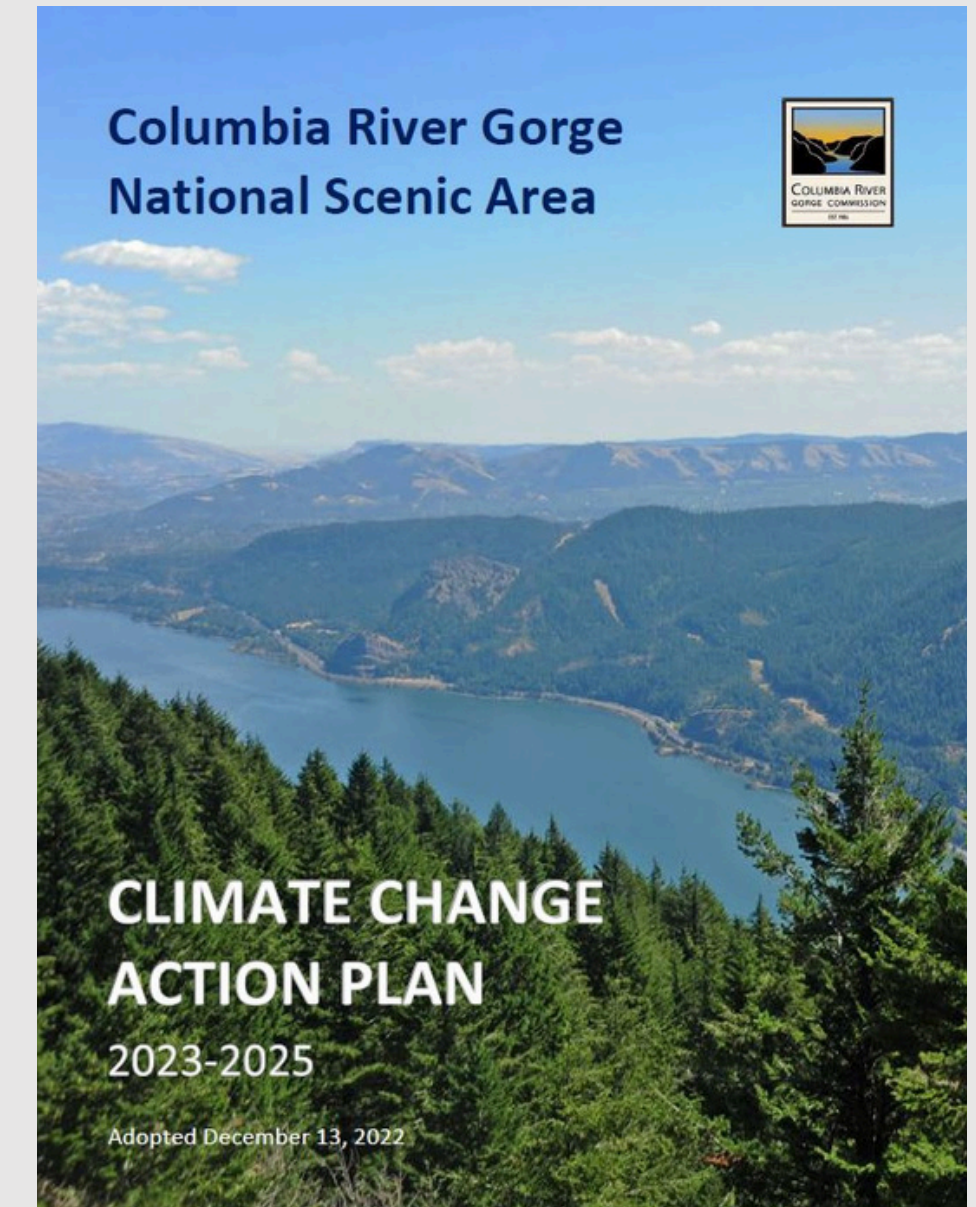
National Scenic Area Management Plan



Management Plan Climate Change Chapter



Climate Change Action Plan



Climate Change Action Plan Priorities

OVERALL PRIORITIES



Inclusive Climate Action

Engaging with diverse communities and partners across the Gorge



High Climate Resilience Areas

Identifying and conserving areas expected to support species in a changing climate

ADAPTATION



Cold Water Refuge Streams

Protecting water temperature and flow for fish



Wetlands

Improving wetland habitat for associated plants and wildlife



Tribal Treaty Rights

Supporting Tribes to ensure ecosystems and land use promote accessible, thriving First Foods



Oak Woodlands

Improving oak woodland habitat and corridors

MITIGATION



Regional Transportation

Reducing single-passenger vehicle travel and promoting regional transit



Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Increasing charging stations and collaborative electrification planning



Carbon Sequestration

Enhancing land-based carbon sequestration in habitats and working lands

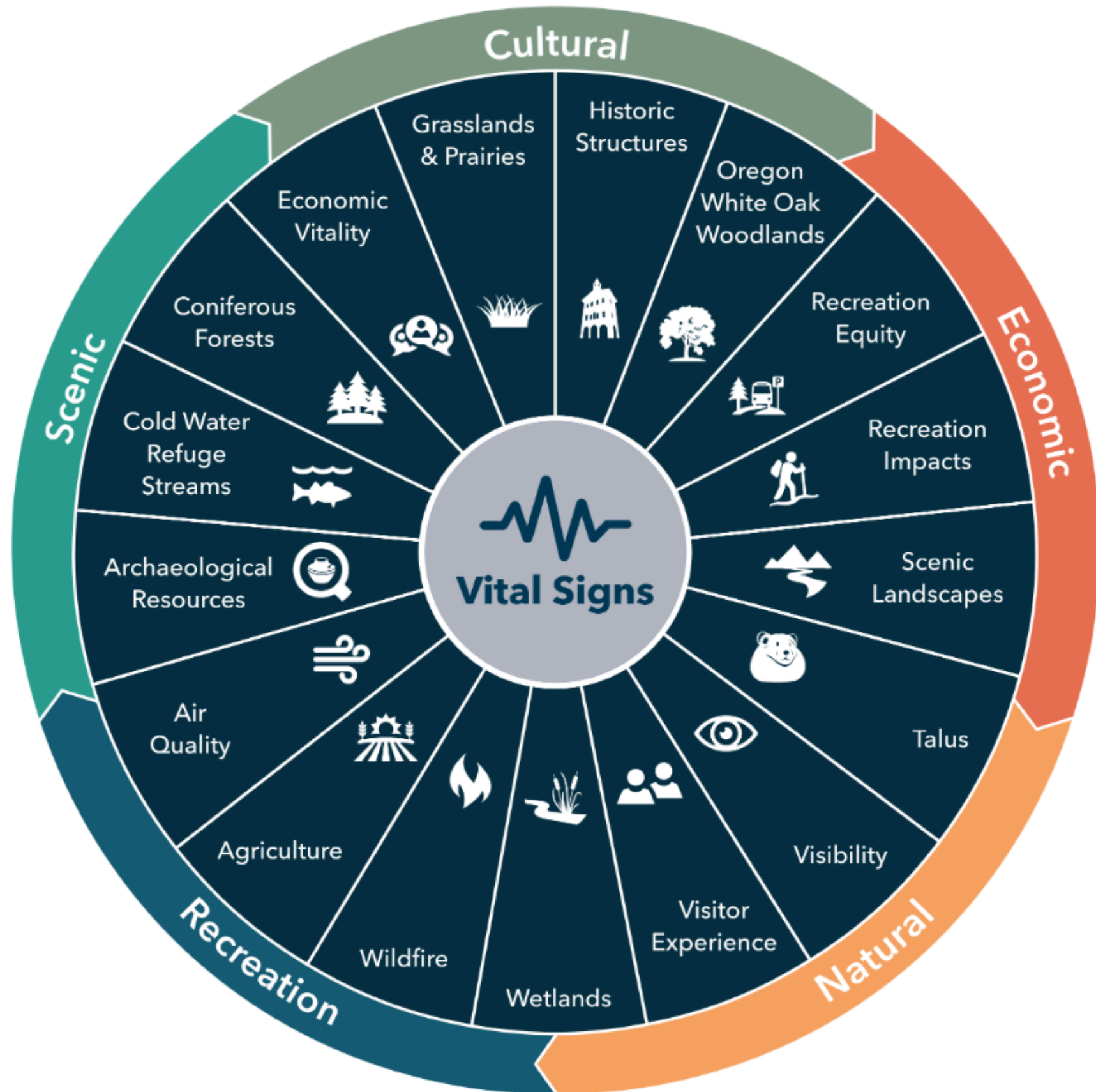


Fire Risk

Supporting resilient forests and fire-adapted communities





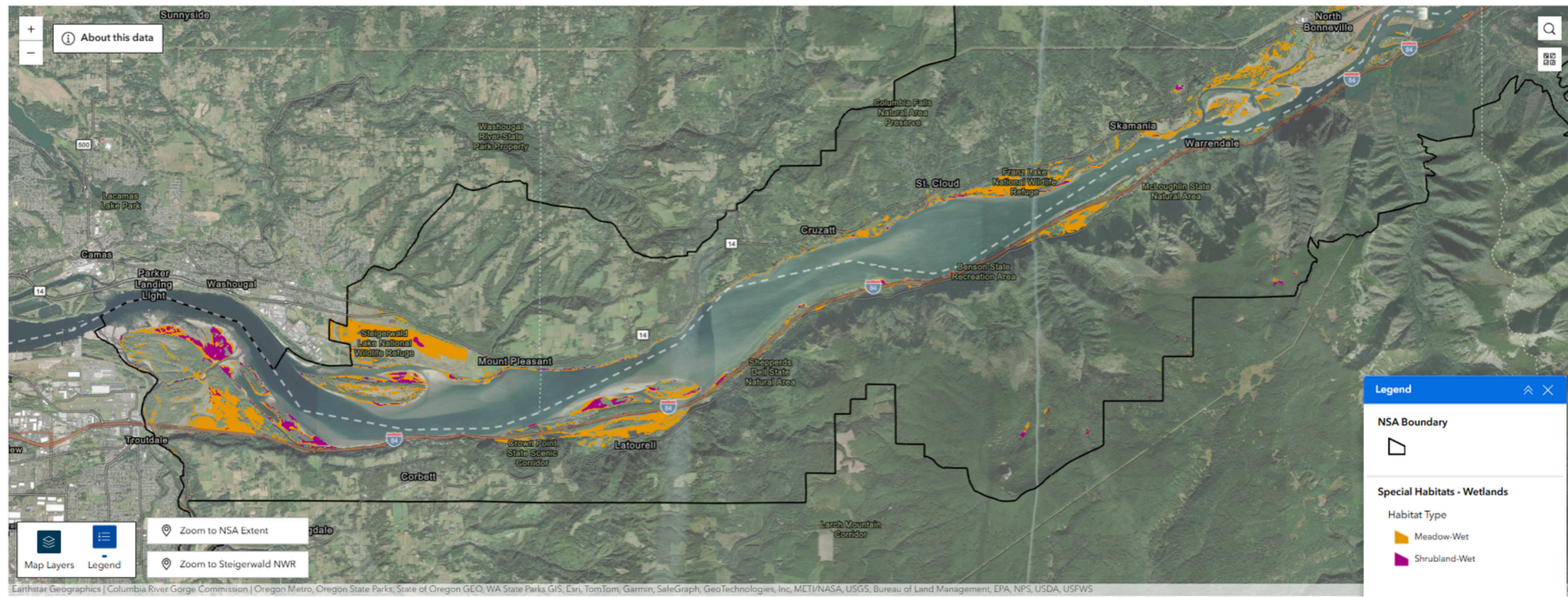
Vital Signs Monitoring Program



- Assesses the health of the National Scenic Area and how well we are meeting Management Plan goals
- Tracks progress toward Climate Change Action Plan goals
- Online, public-facing Vital Signs Data Hub available in 2026

Climate Action Priority: Wetlands

-  **Goal:** By 2025, baseline extent and condition for wetlands are established and support implementation of the Management Plan's goal for no wetland loss.
-  **Status:** Wetlands map available through Vital Signs monitoring program. Continue to work with land managers to better understand wetland condition across NSA.



Climate Action Priority: First Foods & Tribal Treaty Rights



Goal: Goals, strategies, and policy approaches for First Foods protection and access are developed with the Columbia River treaty tribes.



Gathering wakamoo (camas)

Photo credit: Nch'i Wana Housing



First Foods at Carbon and Culture Symposium

Photo credit: Janine Gordon

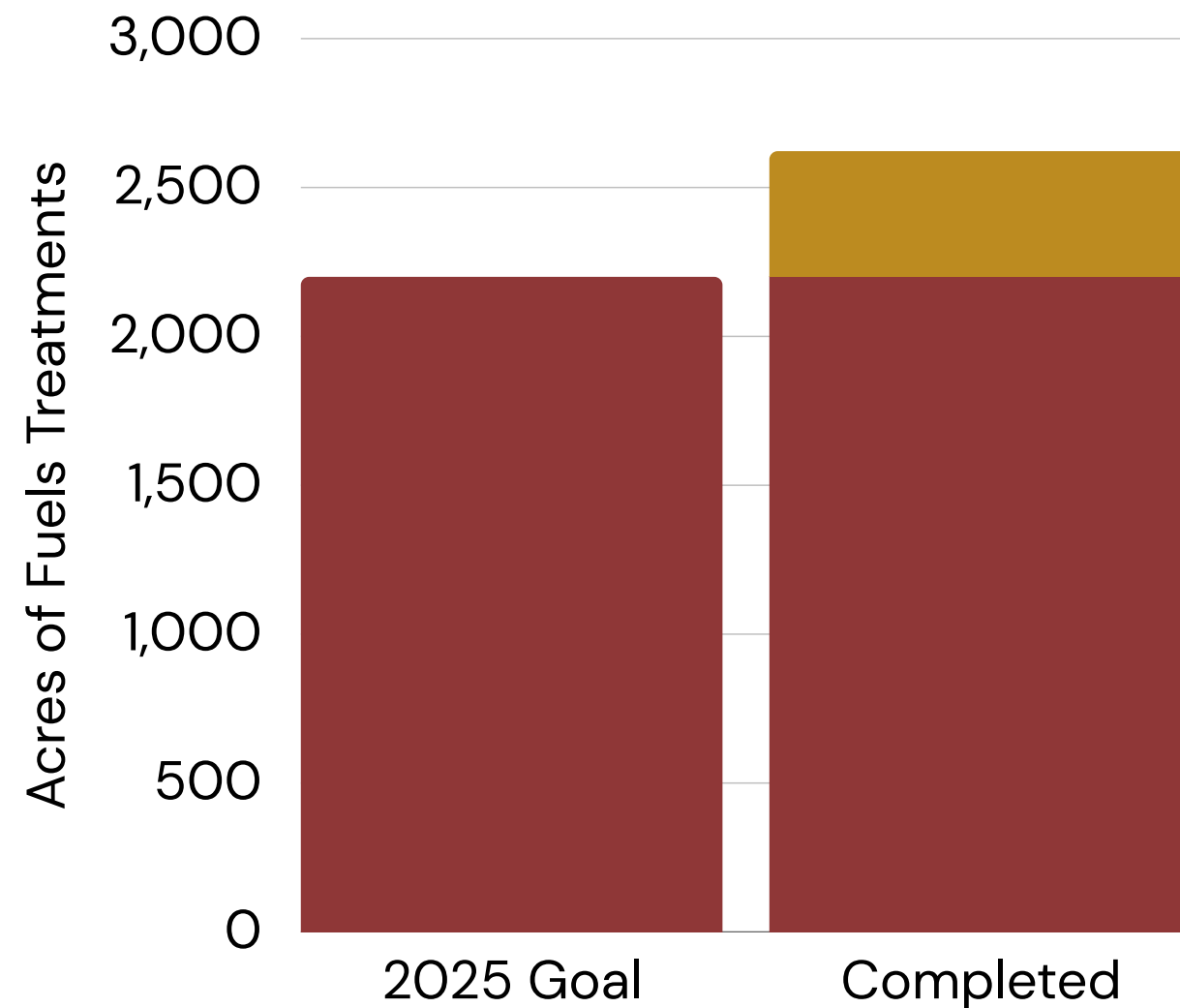
2025 Highlights

- First Foods Workshops with Nch'i Wana Housing
- Carbon and Culture Symposium with Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Government-to-Government Summit with Oregon Governor and federally recognized tribes in Oregon

Climate Action Priority: Fire Risk

 **Goal:** By 2025, combined efforts on public and private lands result in at least 2,200 acres of fuels reduction treatments in the National Scenic Area.

 **Status:** 2,622 acres of fuels reduction (thinning and prescribed burning) completed from 2023-2025



2025 Highlights

- 437 acres of fuels reduction completed in 2025 on National Forest System lands
- Defensible Space for Your Home brochure available for NSA residents, county planning departments, and wildfire partners
- Community preparedness event in Spanish with Hood River All Lands Partnership and Comunidades

Climate Action Priority: Fire Risk

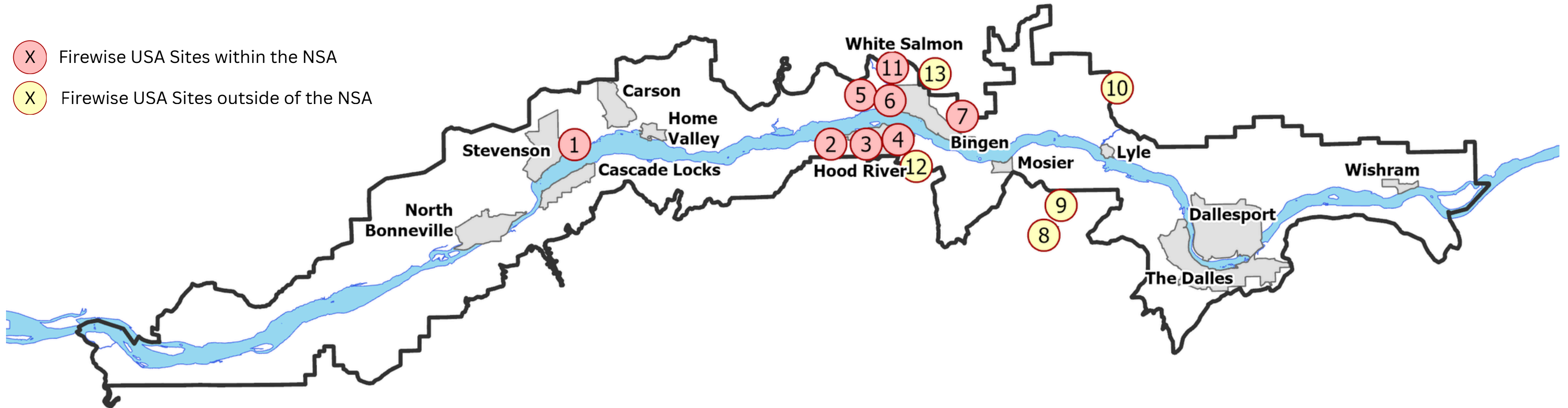


Goal: By 2030, at least six community-based groups in the National Scenic Area are leading community fire adaptation efforts to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfire.

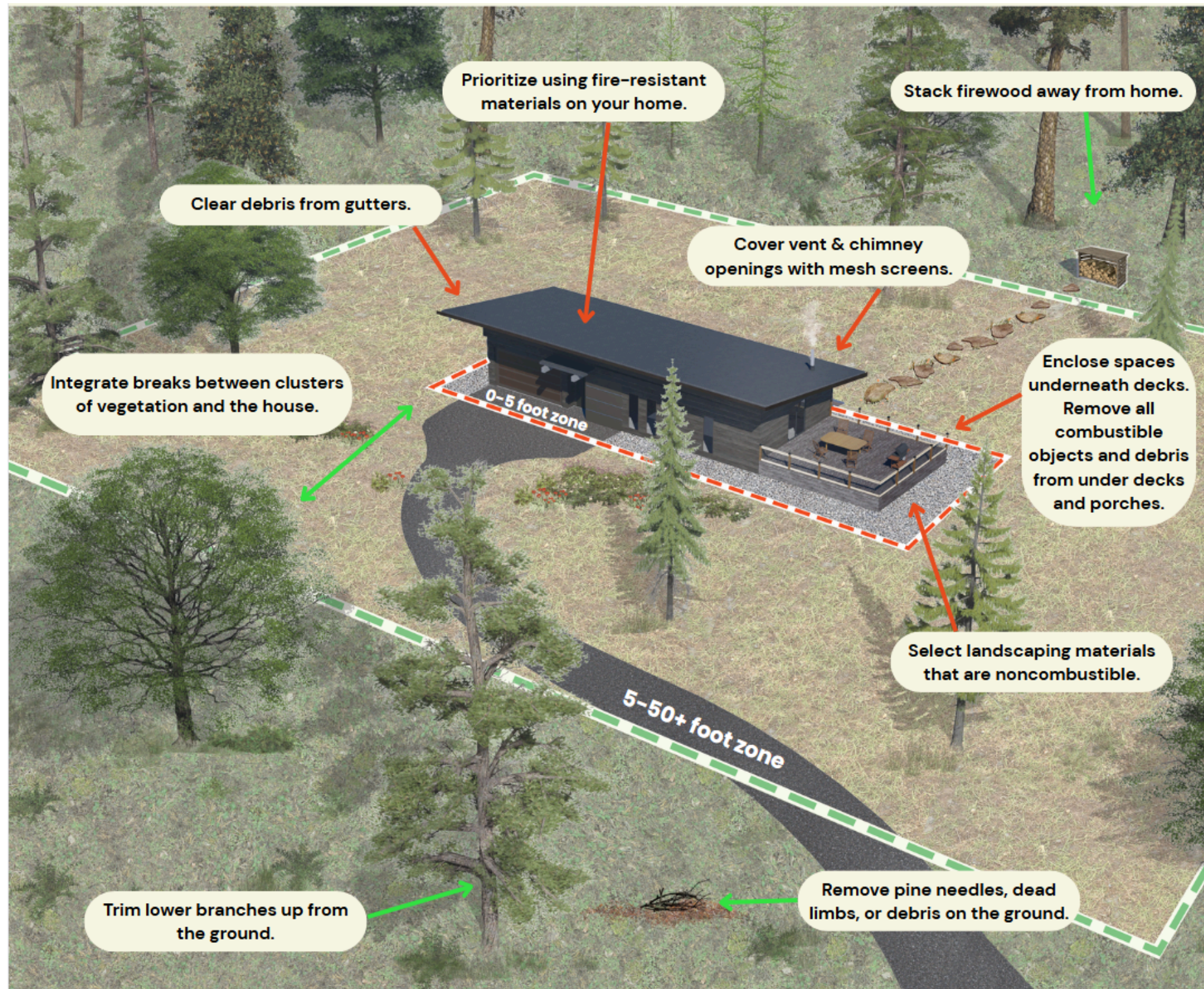


Status: 8 Firewise USA Sites are active in National Scenic Area in 2025 (shown in red)

- Firewise USA Sites within the NSA
- Firewise USA Sites outside of the NSA



Climate Action Priority: Fire Risk



Defensible Space in the NSA Handout

- Answers commonly asked questions about incorporating defensible space practices while meeting resource protection standards
- Provides visual examples specific to building considerations in the NSA
- Connects residents with local resources for defensible space assessments

Climate Action Priority: Oregon White Oak Woodlands



Goal: By 2025, comprehensive oak maps including critical habitat corridors are available and oak policy options are provided to the Commission.

Status: Comprehensive oak map available and policy issues assessment complete



Oak planning panel discussion with East Cascades Oak Partnership

2025 Highlights

- Presented oak policy issues assessment to Commission to inform work planning and priority topics for next Management Plan reviews
- Developed oak planning map and development review checklist for NSA county planners

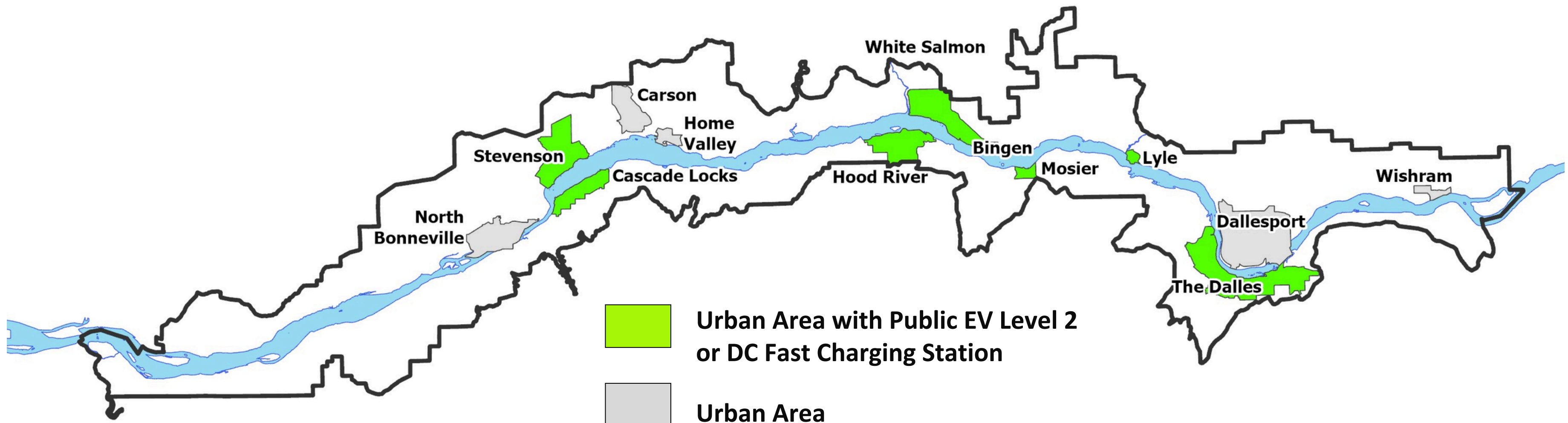
Climate Action Priority: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure



Goal: 50% of Urban Areas have public electric vehicle (EV) Level 2 or direct current (DC) fast charging stations



Status: 6 of 13 Urban Areas have Public EV Level 2 or DC Fast Charging Stations (shown in green)



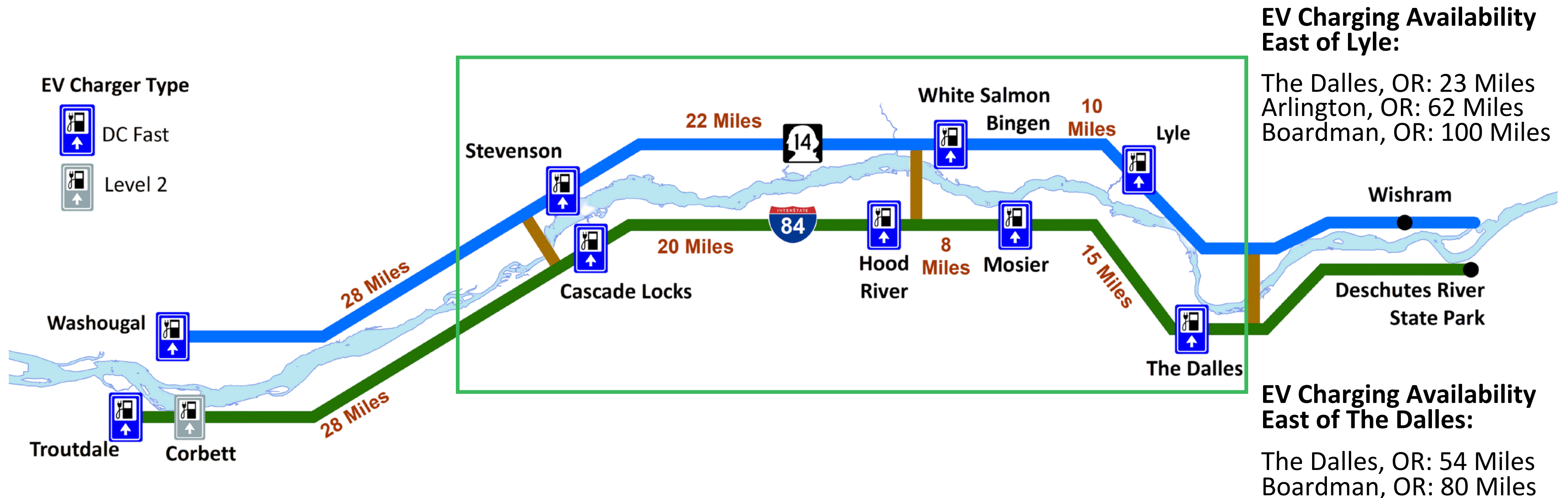
Climate Action Priority: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure



Goal: Public direct current (DC) fast charging stations are available every 25 miles on I-84 in Oregon and SR-14 in Washington (shown with blue icon)

Status: I-84: Available at least every 25 miles from Cascade Locks to The Dalles

SR-14: Available at least every 25 miles from Stevenson to Lyle



Climate Action Priority: Electric Vehicle Infrastructure



Goal: By 2025, the Gorge has a strategy for the desired locations and types of charging stations.

Status: No regional strategy spanning different communities across the Gorge. Draft conceptual study of potential EV charging locations in Hood River County, developed by Hood River County Energy Council.



Photo credit: www.plugshare.com

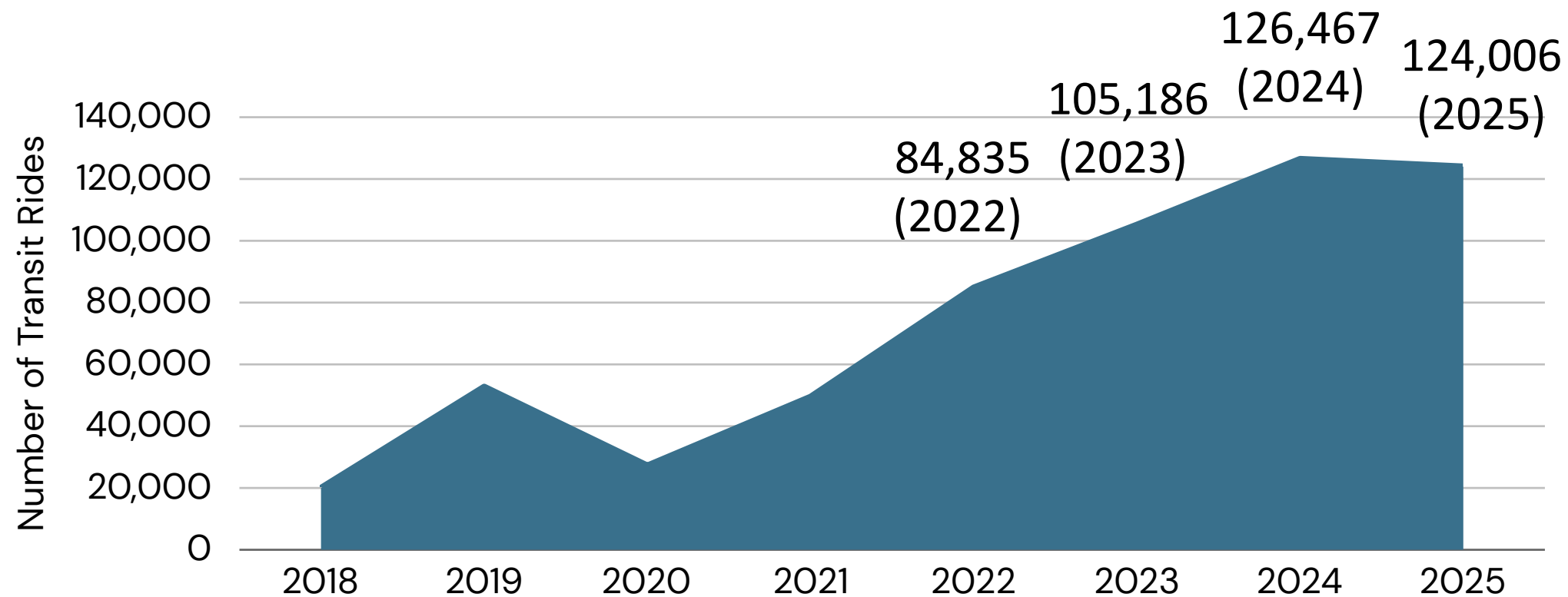
Climate Action Priority: Regional Transportation



Goal: Transit ridership increases annually from 2022-2025

Status: Annual transit ridership has increased from 2020-2024 with slight decrease in 2025.

Annual Number of Fixed-Route Transit Rides



Data Source: Gorge Transit

2025 Highlights

- Gorge Transit Summit
- New route in Lyle with access to more in-lieu fishing sites
- Accessibility information for all Gorge Transit bus stops

Growing a community of Climate Stewards since 2023

Columbia Gorge Climate Stewards

25

Participants

24

Community Contributors

21

Capstone Projects

5

Gorge Counties Represented

Climate Stewards learn about climate impacts in the Gorge and ways to communicate across different backgrounds, while getting involved in local community projects.

Since the 2023 pilot, 25 community members from 5 Gorge counties have led 21 projects that help support climate priorities in the Climate Change Action Plan.



Fire Adapted Communities



Climate Resilient Agriculture



Cold Water Refuges and Tribal Treaty Rights



2026 Next Steps



Continue work with tribes to develop strategies for First Foods protection and access.
Coordinate work sessions with PEAR Team and Commission to discuss approaches for integrating climate equity recommendations in the Commission's work plan.



Lead a field tour with NSA county planners and fire professionals to explore examples of local residents' defensible space projects and opportunities for risk reduction efforts.



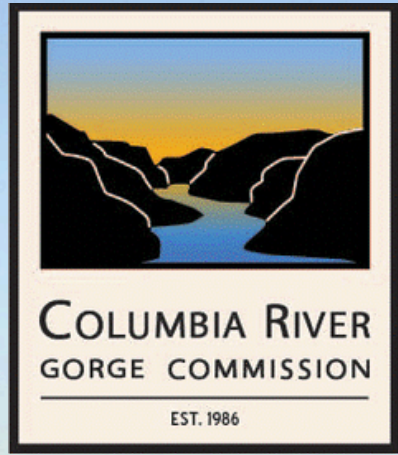
Operationalize oak planning checklist and mapping tools for NSA county planners and prioritize recommendations in the oak policy issues assessment for Commission action.



Host a Fall 2026 Climate Stewards course to continue growing community-based efforts toward shared climate resilience goals for the region.

Thanks to all we have worked with in 2025

- Columbia Gorge Community College
- Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- Columbia Riverkeeper
- Comunidades
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs
- Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakama Nation
- East Cascades Oak Partnership
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- Friends of the White Salmon River
- Gorge Transit and Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
- Hood River All Lands Partnership
- National Scenic Area County Planning Departments (Clark, Skamania, Klickitat, Multnomah, Hood River, and Wasco)
- Nch'i Wana Housing
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Oregon Climate Change Research Institute
- Oregon Department of Forestry
- Oregon Department of the State Fire Marshal
- Oregon State University Extension Service
- The Next Door, Inc.
- Underwood Conservation District
- University of California, Climate Stewards Program
- USDA Forest Service, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
- US Geological Survey
- Washington Department of Ecology
- Washington Department of Natural Resources
- Washington Fire Adapted Communities Learning Network
- Washington Gorge Action Programs
- West Klickitat Fire Adapted Communities



Climate Equity Recommendations to the Gorge Commission

Presented by the Commission's PEAR Team

March 10, 2026

Climate Action Priority: Inclusive Climate Action



Goal: By 2025, climate equity goals and actions are shared with Commission and included in its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan.

Status: PEAR Team and staff developed climate equity goals and actions and are presenting for Commission consideration at the March 10, 2026 meeting.

Work Plan Timeline for Climate Equity Goal



Pro-Equity, Anti-Racism “PEAR” Team



Washington State
**OFFICE OF
EQUITY**

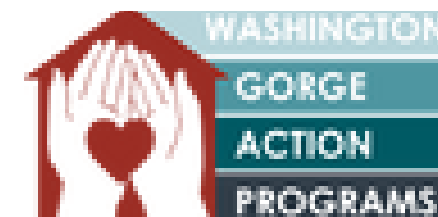
Why “PEAR”?

The Pro-Equity, Anti-Racism (PEAR) Team follows a model set forth by the State of Washington in 2020 for state agencies. Each agency was tasked with developing a PEAR Plan and establishing a PEAR Team to advise on implementing that Plan. The Washington State Office of Equity no longer uses the term “PEAR”, changing it to “Impact” instead. To align with the state, we will transition this year to using the term “Impact Team”.

PEAR Team

Purpose:

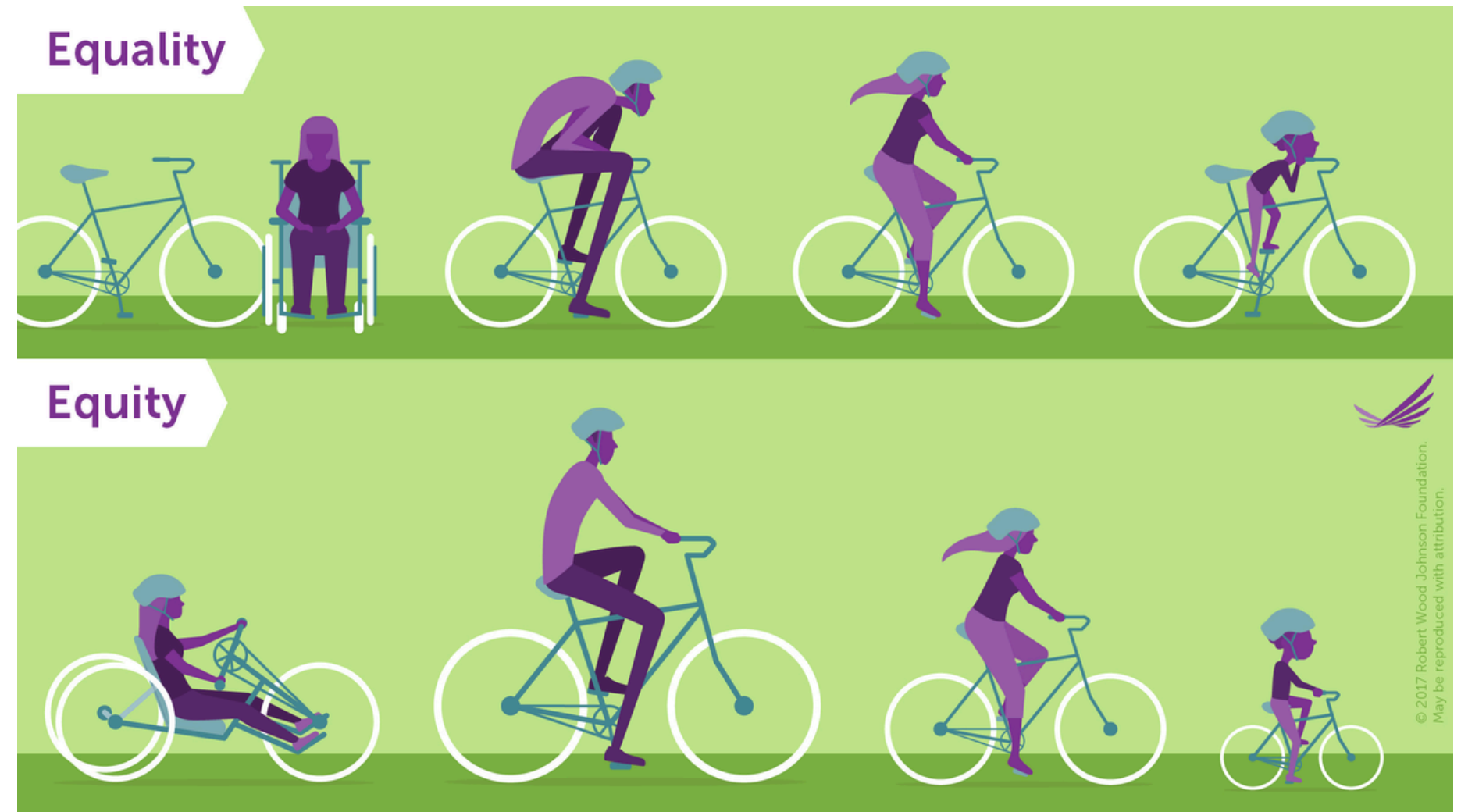
- Facilitating conversations with community members to provide the Commission with guidance on developing and implementing the Commission's DEI Strategic Plan while building trust and strengthening relationships with community groups.
- PEAR Team advises Commission staff on developing its DEI Plan by helping to define specific goals, strategies, and actions.



Background: What is Equity?

Equity:

The act of promoting fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution. It aims to ensure equitable (not equal) opportunities for everyone. Equality treats everyone the same, while equity considers the unique needs of each individual. Equity focuses on removing barriers that keep historically and currently oppressed groups from fully participating.



Background: What is Climate Equity?

Climate equity: All people have access to and benefit from climate solutions, regardless of race, income, identity, or disability.



Elaine Harvey, Yakama Nation Member and Columbia Inter-Tribal Fish Commission Watershed Department Manager, describes cultural connections to the sacred First Foods of the Columbia River region.

Background: What is Climate Equity?

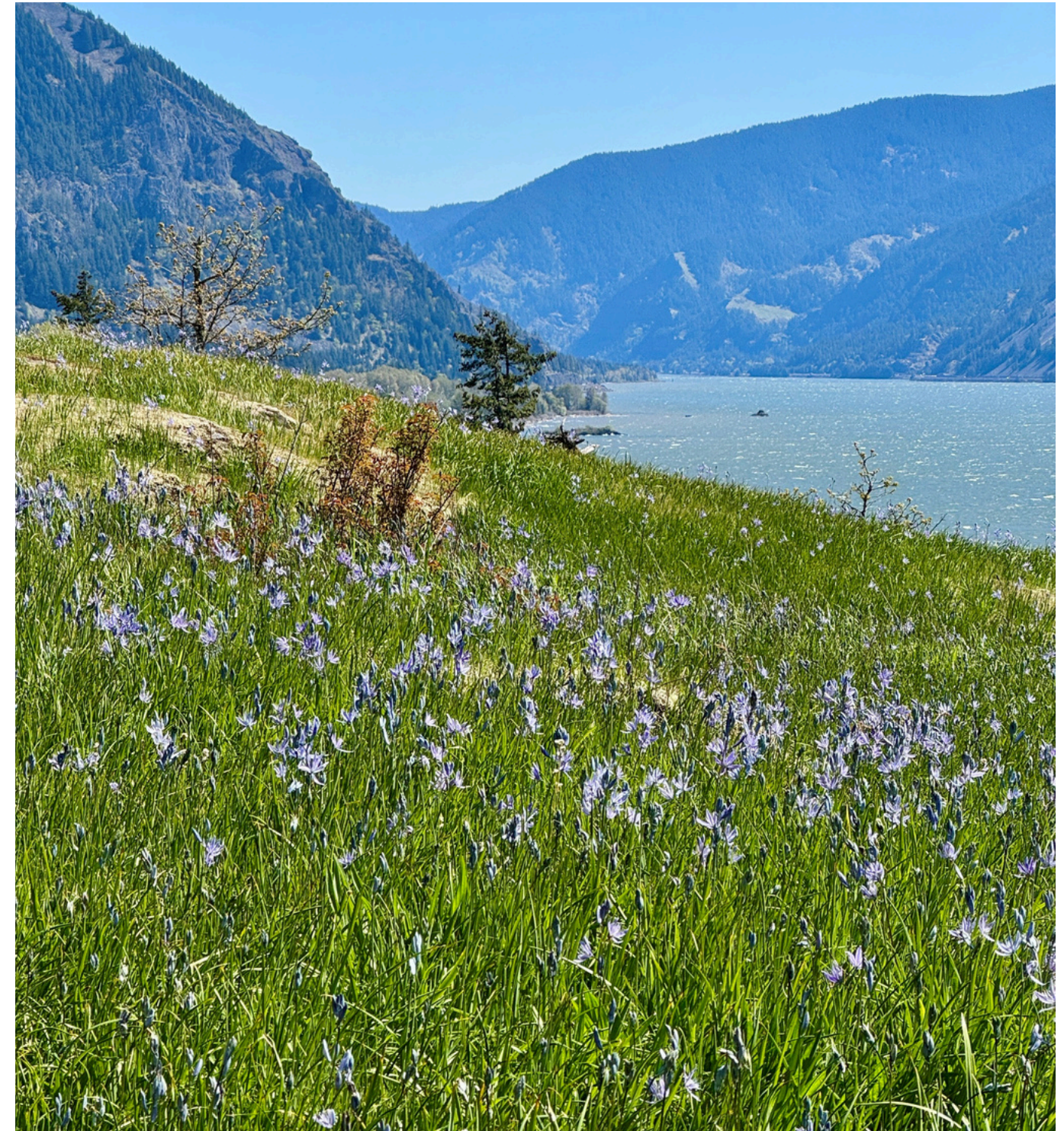
- Understanding that communities most impacted by climate change are often least responsible for the emissions causing it
- Highest-impacted communities have accessible, meaningful opportunities to participate in decision-making
- Focused resources and strategies remove barriers for and invest in those who have historically been left out of decision-making
- Systemic changes address long-standing inequities in land use, water and planning processes, ensuring that policies, decision-making structures, and resource distribution benefit everyone

Climate Action Priorities and Tribal Sovereignty

Climate Change Action Plan Priorities (below)	Warm Springs IRMP Draft Update	Umatilla Climate Adaptation Plan	Nez Perce Tribe Priority Climate Action Plan	Yakama Nation Climate Action Plan
Cold water refuge streams and riparian habitats	●	●	●	●
Wetlands and wetland species	●	●	●	●
Tribal treaty rights, focus on native plants and wildlife	●	●	●	●
Oregon White Oak woodlands	●			●
Regional transportation, including transit	●	●	●	●
EV infrastructure		●	●	
Carbon sequestration in natural and working lands		●	●	
Fire risk	●	●	●	●

Climate Equity and the Commission's Work

- Historically, many communities most affected by land use policy decisions were not included in decision-making processes.
- Integrating equity helps ensure that land use policies are more effective, better informed by lived experience, and more resilient to climate change impacts.
- Inclusive engagement leads to policies that are more responsive to community needs, reduced conflict, and improved stewardship outcomes.



PEAR Team Recommendations: Climate Equity Priorities

Community Engagement

Goal: The Commission's community engagement efforts for climate action priorities are shaped by, and responsive to, the needs and interests of diverse communities most impacted by climate change in the Gorge.

Strategy: Work together with communities most impacted by climate change to develop engagement strategies for specific climate priorities.

Action Examples:

- Co-host community wildfire outreach workshops that offer resources to landowners, renters, farmworkers, and unhoused individuals.



Latino Conservation Week
Photo by Comunidades



Climate Stewards Agriculture Field Trip

PEAR Team Recommendations: Climate Equity Priorities

Capacity Building

Goal: The Commission cultivates relationships, shares resources, and supports collaborative learning with diverse partners to build resilience for communities impacted by climate change in the Gorge.

Strategy: Collaborate with community partners to share resources, information, and learning opportunities that help impacted communities benefit from climate solutions.

Action Examples:

- Develop a relationship map of the Commission's existing community relationships to shape outreach strategies that improve engagement and representation.
- Coordinate a "community of practice" climate action forum for community partners to share information, resources, and collaboration opportunities.



PEAR Team Recommendations: Climate Equity Priorities

Policy Focus: First Foods

Goal: First Foods, and the habitats that sustain them, are healthy, abundant, and accessible for Tribal communities in the National Scenic Area.

Strategy: Support Tribes in their work to improve First Foods availability and access on public and private land in the National Scenic Area. Respect Tribes' need to maintain confidentiality and culturally sensitive information.

Action Examples:

- Develop potential Management Plan language or policies to support Tribal access agreements.
- Promote the use of native plants through work with residents to re-vegetate development sites with native seeds and plants.



Climate Equity Spotlight: First Foods Workshops



An Elder once had a dream that her children and people would continue the way of life that we have been given from the Creator to take care of the gifts he has given us to sustain our life and to fulfill the promise we made to the foods and the land to take care of them, as they have taken care of us.



And then the dream is being fulfilled, by the offering of funding to do the Camas Project.

We hope to continue to do these type of first foods projects and continue to monitor the way our foods are changing due to climate change and the infringement of our sacred gathering places.













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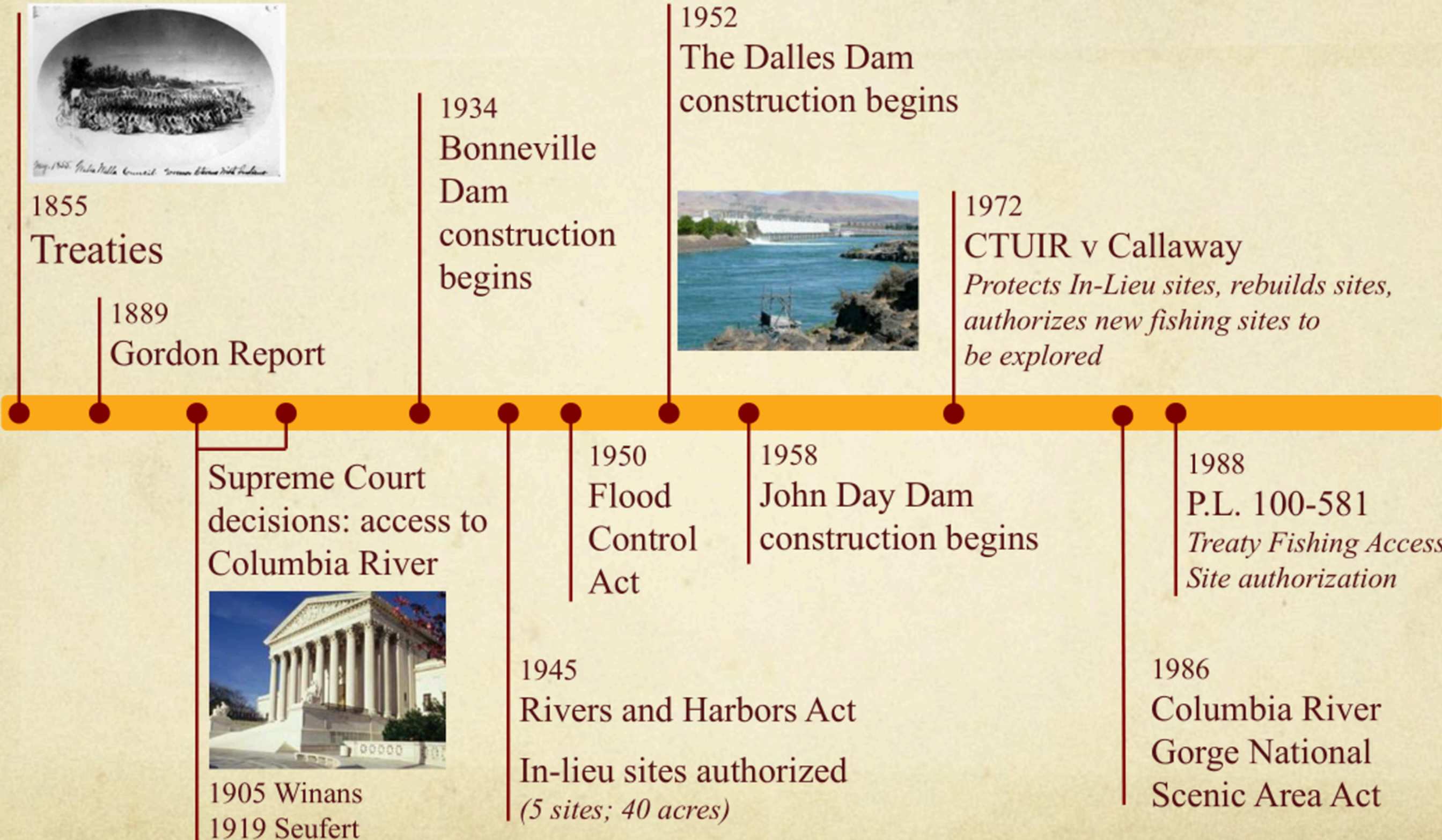






Background on In-Lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Sites

Project History



1855 Treaty



1905 Winans
1919 Seufert



1952 The Dalles Dam construction begins

Columbia River In-lieu/Treaty Fishing Access Sites and Amenities



PEAR Team Recommendations: Climate Equity Priorities

Policy Focus: Tribal Housing

Goal: Tribal communities have safe and affordable housing that honors their relationship with and stewardship of the lands and waters within the National Scenic Area since time immemorial.

Strategy: Improve understanding of Tribal housing needs among National Scenic Area counties, the Commission, and other partners.

Actions:

- Review Nch'i Wana Housing's community needs analysis (2021) and support partners' work on an update.
- Coordinate with Nch'i Wana Housing and other interested organizations to present to NSA county planning directors and planning department staff.



Nch'i Wana Housing meetings began in 2018

PEAR Team Recommendations: Climate Equity Priorities

Policy Focus: Tribal and Low-Income Housing

Strategy: Review and revise the Management Plan as needed to improve housing affordability and access for Tribal and low-income communities.

Action Example:

- Work with Tribes, organizations serving Tribal communities (e.g., Nch'i Wana Housing), USDA Forest Service, and counties to develop policies that improve housing affordability and access, including multi-family and intergenerational housing options, with a focus on Tribal and low-income communities.



Tribal Villages and Fishing Sites
Destroyed by Dams and Reservoirs

Underwood, probably 1920s

PEAR Team Recommendations: Climate Equity Priorities

Policy Focus: Tribal and Low-Income Housing

Strategy: Improve funding for low-income and Tribal housing in the National Scenic Area.

Action Example:

Work with Tribes, organizations serving Tribal communities, and local governments to identify funding sources for low-income and Tribal housing in the Gorge (e.g., bond measures, local levies, or private funding).



Wishram Heights housing
built by Yakama Nation HA

PEAR Team Recommendations: Climate Equity Priorities

Policy Focus: National Scenic Area Management Plan Review

Goal: The Management Plan reflects the Commission's equity vision, values, and goals.

Strategy: Review the Management Plan with a focus on equity to identify inadequacies and opportunities for improvements.

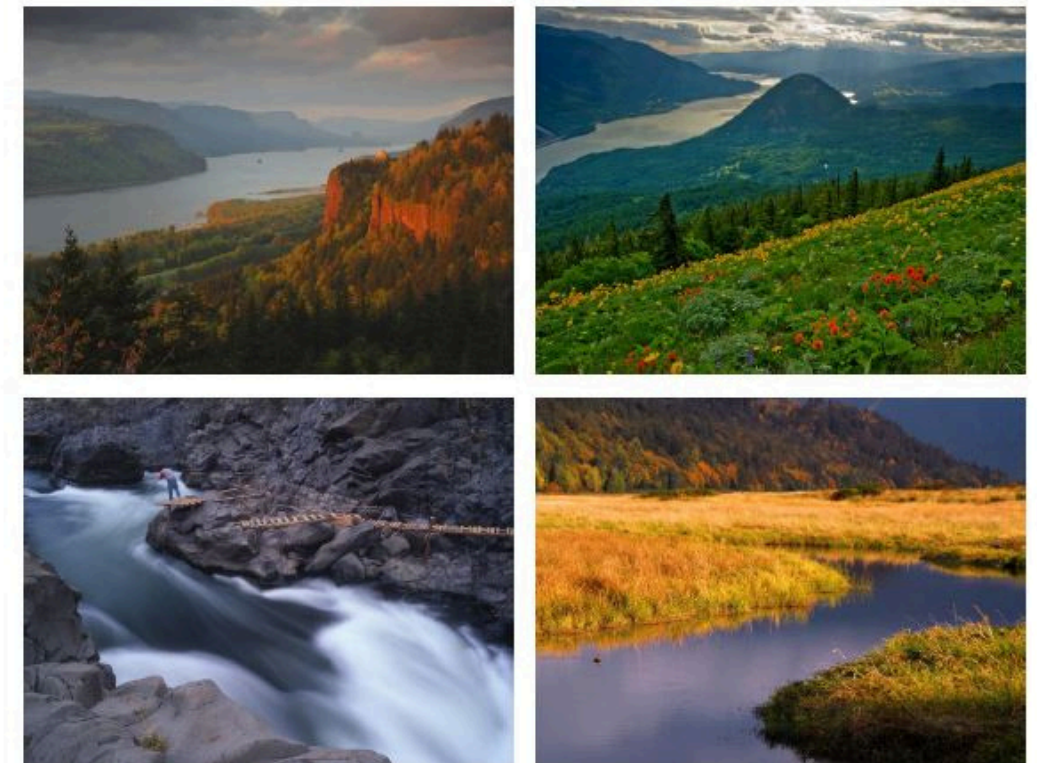
Action:

Review the Management Plan to identify policies that may cause disproportionate impacts to communities most impacted by climate change. (Note: Given the Commission's budget and staff reductions, staff will complete this equity review before the next Management Plan review process begins.)

MANAGEMENT PLAN

for the

Columbia River Gorge
National Scenic Area



OCTOBER 2020 REVISION

Thank you to our PEAR Team members

- **Lisa AbuAssaly George**, Columbia Gorge Community College
- **Sasha Bentley**, Washington Gorge Action Programs
- **D'na Chase**, Friends of the Columbia Gorge Board of Directors
- **Elaine Harvey**, Wanuxni, Kamiltpah Band member of the Yakama Nation, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- **Ubaldo Hernández**, Comunidades
- **Buck Jones**, Member of Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission
- **Dawn LeMieux**, The Next Door, Inc.
- **Lisa Muñoz**, Columbia Riverkeeper
- **Sofia Urrutia-Lopez**, former staff with Friends of the Columbia Gorge
- **Debra Whitefoot**, Lifelong traditional food gatherer, Nch'i Wana Housing

Closing Reflections



Celilo Falls photo provided by Faron Scissons

Topics for Commission Discussion

After hearing from the PEAR Team, what additional information and learning would be helpful for you to dive deeper into these climate equity recommendations during a future meeting?



Next Steps

- Are you interested in a work session to discuss a strategy and timeline for prioritizing policy-related actions in the Climate Change Action Plan as part of the work plan to prepare for the Management Plan review and update process?
- Are there climate action priorities that you would like additional updates on in 2026?