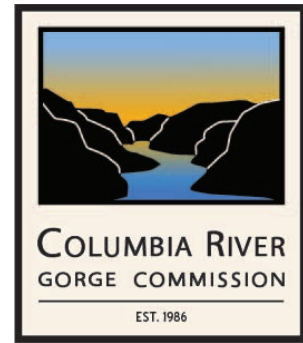


**TO:** Columbia River Gorge Commission

**FROM:** Krystyna U. Wolniakowski, Executive Director  
 Connie Acker, Finance and Administration Manager

**DATE:** March 10, 2026

**RE:** ANNUAL "BEST PRACTICES SURVEY" OF THE  
 COMMISSION FOR CY 2025



One of the Gorge Commission’s **Key Performance Measures (KPM)** is the “Percentage of Best Practices Met by the Board/Commission.” Oregon maintains a list of 15 Best Practices, and each year, Connie sends a survey link for Commissioners to complete, evaluating how well the Commissioners and the agency followed the best practices in the previous calendar year. It is essentially the Commission’s “report card” on how well we follow state board and commission requirements.

Connie will provide the link to the SurveyMonkey Best Practices Survey for the 2025 Calendar Year in a separate email. Please complete the survey by March 31, 2026. The purpose of using SurveyMonkey is to allow Commissioners to complete the survey while keeping their responses anonymous and confidential. Some Commissioners prefer to complete a score sheet by hand and return it to Connie. Once the CY2024 responses are received, I review them and prepare our Annual Report on KPM outcomes.

**Best Practices Calendar Year 2024 Scores**

	<b>Met</b>	<b>Not Met</b>
<b>Best Practices CY 2024 Data</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>

Best Practices Criteria	Yes	No
1. Executive Director’s performance expectations are current.	9	1
2. Executive Director’s receives annual performance feedback.	10	
3. The agency’s mission and high-level goals are current and applicable.	9	1
4. The board reviews the <i>Annual Performance Progress Report</i> .	10	
5. The board is appropriately involved in review of agency’s key communications.	5	5
6. The board is appropriately involved in policy-making activities.	8	2
7. The agency’s policy option packages are aligned with their mission and goals.	8	2
8. The board reviews all proposed budgets.	10	
9. The board periodically reviews key financial information and audit findings.	10	
10. The board is appropriately accounting for resources.	9	1
11. The agency adheres to accounting rules and other relevant financial controls.	9	1
12. Board members act in accordance with their roles as public representatives.	9	1
13. The board coordinates with others where responsibilities and interests overlap.	8	2
14. The board members identify and attend appropriate training sessions.	10	
15. The board reviews its management practices to ensure best practices are utilized.	9	1
<b>Total Number</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Percentage of Total</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>11%</b>

The fifteen best practices for Oregon are listed below with a narrative of their interpretation, specifically to assist Commissioners with definitions. I have included my perspective, but you may choose a different answer based on your experience:

1. Executive Director's performance expectations are current: The Commission has developed a performance evaluation framework that clearly states expectations and deliverables for the ED, so this best practice should be a yes. The Commission began the ED Evaluation process in December 2024, completing it in February 2025.
2. Executive Director receives annual performance feedback: I will receive formal feedback in March 2026 for the CY 2025. However, I often receive feedback during Commission meetings throughout the year.
3. Agency's goals are current and applicable: It is clear what the Commission's workplan goals are: Implementing the Climate Change Action Plan, finishing the Access Database Replacement Project Phase 2, obtaining monitoring data for implementing Vital Sign Indicators, applying for and receiving funding for the agency's operations and programs, improving communications and outreach and focusing on how to improve implementation of the economic vitality goals. This best practice should be a yes for 2025.
4. Commission reviews Annual Performance Progress report: This is an annual report of Key Performance Measures submitted to the states. We track Key Performance Measures approved by the states of OR and WA and report on them through an Annual Performance Progress Report that is part of our Oregon and WA budget process. Each year, we prepare "scores" on how well we achieved those KPMs and then must submit them. Best Practices is one of those KPMs as well as number of public presentations, etc. We completed this report as part of our budget submission documents, so this best practice should be a "yes" in CY 2025.
5. Commission is appropriately involved in agency's key communications: The Commission established a Communications Committee that produced several "key accomplishments" press releases that resulted in articles, radio talk shows, information summaries for legislators, and establishing social media so this can be a "yes" for CY 2025.
6. Commission is involved in policy making: The Commission was involved in policy making during Commission meetings, especially the most recent Plan Amendment, so this best practice should be a "yes" for CY 2025.
7. Policy Option Packages are aligned with mission and goals: I reviewed the proposed budget with the Commission, which included the policy option package for the Access Database Replacement Project – Phase 3. The Washington State Governor and Oregon State Governor recommended funding Phase 3 of the project for the short session in 2026. This best practice should be a "yes" in CY 2025.

8. Commission reviews all budgets: The Commission reviewed the final legislatively approved budgets in summer 2025 that we submitted to OR and WA. The Commission was fully informed on agency budgets, so this best practice should be a “yes” for CY 2025.
9. Commission reviews financial and audit findings: The agency underwent a 5-year Accountability Audit in 2024, and the annual FY 2024 Financial Statement Audit. Both audits were clean with no findings. Commissioners were fully informed during the audits. The FY 2025 Financial Statement Audit results are not yet available.
10. Commission is appropriately accounting for resources: Need to better define what this means. What does the Commission need from the ED on this topic? Connie and I balance the budget every month and review the allotments with both the OR CFO and WA OFM offices to make sure we are on target with planned spending. This should be a “yes” for CY 2025 unless there are any improvements the Commission needs to be better informed about regarding our budget spending plan.
11. Agency adheres to accounting rules and other relevant financial controls: We have had clean Financial Statement Audits every year. Does the Commission feel the need to better understand how we implement internal financial controls? The most recent audit confirmed that we adhere to the best accounting principles, so the answer should be “yes” for CY 2025.
12. Commissioners act in accordance with their role as public representatives: This needs to be better defined, and Commissioners need to evaluate themselves on this best practice.
13. The Commission coordinates with others where responsibilities and interests overlap: This needs to be better defined, and Commissioners need to evaluate themselves on this best practice.
14. The Commission members identify and attend appropriate training sessions: Several commissioners requested training on public meeting rules, and this training was provided in July 2025. In addition, training on governance was requested, but the 2025 budget cuts did not include an allocation to pay for this training.
15. The Commission reviews its management practices to ensure best practices are utilized: Each year, we review these best practices to be more intentional, so this should be a “yes.”

For purposes of review, we can also group these into eight distinct categories of responsibilities:

1. **Selecting, Reviewing, and Supporting the Commission’s Executive Director**
  - Best practices 1 & 2

2. **Providing strategic guidance by setting vision, mission goals, strategic direction, and risk management**
  - Best practice 3
3. **Governing the Commission by setting broad organizational policies**
  - Best practices 6 & 7
4. **Monitoring and oversight of financial resources**
  - Best practices 8, 9, 10, 11
5. **Monitoring Commission's performance and management practices**
  - Best practices 4, 11 & 15
6. **Acquiring resources to ensure the organization's ability to operate**
  - Best practice 7
7. **Self-assess, self-regulate, and uphold fiduciary responsibilities**
  - Best practices 12 & 14
8. **Exercising accountability to key stakeholders**
  - Best practices 5 & 13

**Next Steps:** Commissioners should review these 15 best practices. Connie will send a SurveyMonkey link to Commissioners for Calendar Year 2025. Please complete the online survey or email a copy to Connie as an attachment. Responses submitted via the online survey are anonymous, and those submitted as an attachment are kept confidential. These best practices survey results are required and will be submitted to the Oregon and Washington state legislatures as part of the budget submission process.