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**Columbia River Gorge Commission Rules Committee
Meeting Summary
February 25, 2026 12:00 pm via Zoom**

Attendance: Commissioners Laura Brennan-Bissell, Valerie Fowler, Rodger Nichols
Absent: Pah-tu Pitt

Staff Present: Jeff Litwak, Counsel

Public Attendees: Edward Peak Keith Cleveland, Hood River County, Lynn Burditt Madison Kenney

Review Summary of December 8, 2025, Meeting

The Rules Committee approved the meeting summary of the December 8, 2025, committee meeting.

Update on Division 11, 12, 14, and 16 Rules

Jeff gave an update on the revisions to divisions 11, 12, 14, and 16, which the Rules Committee reviewed over past year and has forwarded a recommendation to the full Gorge Commission to initiate rulemaking. Jeff stated that the rules are ready and he will present the rules and the Rules Committee's recommendation at the Gorge Commission's March meeting. If the Gorge Commission initiates rulemaking, Jeff will prepare the notices of proposed rulemaking and a hearing on the rules would likely be in the summer. Jeff said that he is watching bills in the states' short sessions for any revisions to state law that would need to be worked in to the drafts before filing the proposed rules. If there are any state law changes that would significantly change the drafts, he'll be in touch with the Rules Committee and suggest a quick meeting to go over those.

Discussion of Draft Amendments to Division 82 (Land Use Ordinance) to incorporate the recent disaster relief plan amendment text

Jeff showed the Rules Committee the draft amendments to the Gorge Commission's land use ordinance that incorporate the recent disaster relief plan amendment. There is still not concurrence from the Secretary of Agriculture, but as soon as there is, Jeff will files the proposed rules with the states. Jeff reminded the Rules Committee that the plan amendment can be applied without the rules in place, but he still wants to get these codified as soon as possible.

The draft rules are nearly verbatim to the plan amendment. Staff had to change the cross-references in the draft dules to refer to land use ordinance sections, not to plan amendment sections.

There is one section that is new—Commission Rule 350-082-0150(9). This rule specifies the requirements for an Executive Director decision. This is the section where staff chose to house

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the standards for approving a temporary RV and accessory building. The plan amendment did not specify the form of the Executive Director's decision, so staff created that. Staff will not require an application from a landowner, but will issue a site plan with an approved envelope for placing a temporary structure and a letter with the conditions of approval. The letter will require the landowner's signature acknowledging the conditions. Upon that signature, the approval will be final and staff will send it to the normal list of people who receive notice of a development application and will include an appeal period.

The Rules Committee voted to recommend the draft amendments to division 82 to the full Commission to authorize staff to start the rulemaking process.

Discussion of Amendments to the Gorge Commission's Bylaws

Jeff showed the Rules Committee a number of non-substantive style changes to the bylaws that he recommended. These update the bylaws to be consistent with the style of the draft divisions 11, 12, 14, and 16.

In addition, Jeff included a new section on authority and process for cancelling Gorge Commission meetings where there is not an emergency. Commissioner Fowler stated that she is concerned that "insufficient time" is not clear enough, and recommended changing the text to if "an emergency exists and thus there is insufficient time . . ." Commissioners Brennan Bissell and Nichols support Commissioner Fowler's suggestion.

The Rules Committee recommended that the bylaws include a statement encouraging each commissioner to visit the Gorge Commission office at least once a year.

Jeff explained that the definition of quorum is included to make clear that the majority constituting a quorum is counted using the number of positions in the National Scenic Area Act, not the number of bodies occupying a seat. Jeff explained that this the rule in the states and that he believed the manner of the commissioners' appointments under state or local standards would make the states' laws applicable in this situation. The Rules Committee asked for additional discussion on this point and the package of bylaw updates should wait until this occurs.

Other Business

Commissioner Fowler stated that this is her last meeting on the Rules Committee; she wants to spend more time focusing on her farm.

Public Comment

None of the public attendees had comments.

Follow Up

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Jeff will present the draft revisions to divisions 11, 12, 14, 16, and 82 at the March Gorge Commission meeting. Jeff will schedule a follow-up Rules Committee meeting to continue discussion of the bylaws.

The meeting ended at approximately 12:50 pm.