Director's Decision

Summary of Application

FILE NUMBER:	C26-0006
PROPOSAL:	The Columbia River Gorge Commission has received an application to replace multiple buildings destroyed by the Burdoin Fire.
APPLICANTS:	Brenda and Kenneth Sorensen and David Sauter
LANDOWNER:	Brenda and Kenneth Sorensen
SIZE and LOCATION:	The subject parcel is approximately 150 acres in size and located at 37 Pitman Road and is described as Tax Lot Number 03-12-3400-0001/00 in the northeast quarter of Section 34, and includes portions of 23, 26, and 27 of Township 3 North, Range 12 East, Willamette Meridian, Klickitat County, Washington.
LAND USE DESIGNATION:	General Management Area (GMA) – Large-Scale Agriculture (160)

Decision

Based upon the findings of fact and conclusions of law in the staff report accompanying this decision and the conditions of approval in this decision document, the land use application by Brenda and Kenneth Sorensen and David Sauter, for the replacement of a dwelling and two agricultural buildings destroyed by the Burdoin Fire, is consistent with Commission Rules chapter 350, division 082, and thus consistent with the *Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area* and the standards of Section 6 and the purposes of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, Pub. L. 99-663, 100 Stat. 4274 (1986), and is hereby **APPROVED**.

Conditions of Approval

The following conditions of approval are given to ensure that the subject request is consistent with Commission Rules chapter 350, division 082. Compliance with these conditions of approval is required. The Gorge Commission may take one or more enforcement actions at any time to ensure compliance with these conditions of approval.

1. In accordance with Commission Rule 350-082-0150(3), the applicant shall record the Executive Director's decision and conditions of approval and approved site plan and elevation drawings in county deeds and records (at the Klickitat County Auditor's

Office) to ensure notice of the conditions to successors in interest. The record shall be associated with all tax lots and parcels that constitute the subject property. The applicant need not record the separate staff report document containing the relevant findings and conclusions. Once recorded, the applicants shall submit a copy of the recorded documents to the Executive Director.

2. This decision does not exempt the proposal from other non-National Scenic Area rules and regulations. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the use complies with all other applicable federal, state, and county laws and to obtain necessary approvals, including utility easement approvals.

3. A post-completion inspection is required. Please contact the Gorge Commission office when all construction is complete to schedule this inspection. The applicant may request interim inspections and Gorge Commission staff may at its discretion conduct interim inspections.

4. Any new land uses or structural development, alterations, or grading not included in the approved application or site plan will require a new application and review.

5. The replacement dwelling shall be constructed as shown on the approved project description, site plan and elevation drawings. The replacement dwelling shall be built within the existing footprint and in the same location as the dwelling it is replacing. The proposed replacement residence will include 1,584 sq ft of living space, a 576 sq ft (24 ft x 24 ft) attached garage and 160 sq ft (10 ft x 16 ft) covered deck. The height of the building shall be 20 ft tall. The walls of the building shall be 8 ft tall.

6. The replacement shipping container shall be constructed as shown on the approved project description, site plan and elevation drawings. The replacement shipping container shall be 320 sq ft (40 ft x 8 ft), and 9 ft tall. The replacement shipping container shall be built within the existing footprint and in the same location as the building it is replacing.

7. The replacement "equipment storage building" shall be constructed as shown on the approved project description, site plan and elevation drawings. The replacement "equipment storage building" shall be 2,200 sq ft (44 ft x 50 ft) and 20 ft tall. The walls shall be no taller than 12 ft tall. The replacement "equipment storage building" shall be built within the existing footprint and in the same location as the building it is replacing.

8. All exterior building materials for the dwelling, including roof, doors, siding, trim, window casings and sashes, decks, and railings shall be dark earth-tone colors. Only approved dark earth-tone colors for exterior materials shall be used. The following colors submitted by the applicant are consistent with this condition and hereby approved:

   Dwelling Siding: Sherwin Williams: Carnelian (SW7580) and Rookwood Dark Brown (SW2808)

   Dwelling Roofing: ASC Building Products Forest Green

Shipping Container: Sherwin Williams: Carnelian (SW7580) and Rookwood Dark Brown (SW2808)

Equipment Building Color: Sherwin Williams: Carnelian (SW7580) and Rookwood Dark Brown (SW2808)

Equipment Building Roofing: ASC Building Products Forest Green

Any changes to these colors shall be submitted to the Gorge Commission for consistency review with this condition of approval. The color of the development shall be maintained by painting and staining as necessary to maintain the approved color.

9. All exterior building materials including roofs, doors, siding, trim, window casing and sash, decks, and railings shall be nonreflective or have low reflectivity. Any exterior metal materials shall be painted with low-gloss black colored finish and maintained as necessary to ensure that the material is non-reflective.

10. All exterior lighting shall be hooded or shielded at a 90-degree angle to the ground. Hoods/shields should be made of a non-reflective, opaque material, which does not allow light to pass through.

11. Except dead trees or other dead vegetation that may pose a safety hazard, existing mature vegetation shall be retained and maintained for screening purposes and so the overall visual character and appearance of the landscape is retained.

12. The lilac shrubs located to the southeast of the destroyed dwelling shall be retained for screening purposes. The lilac shrubs may be relocated up to 20 feet from the dwelling and shall be maintained consistent with defensible space standards.

13. If cultural resources are discovered, all activities within 100 feet of the cultural resources shall immediately cease and the applicants shall notify the Gorge Commission within 24 hours of discovery and the State Physical Anthropologist, Dr. Guy Tasa at (360) 586-3534 or guy.tasa@dahp.wa.gov. The cultural resources shall remain as found and further disturbance is prohibited until permission is granted by the Executive Director of the Gorge Commission.

14. If human remains are discovered, all activities shall cease immediately upon their discovery. Local law enforcement, the Executive Director and Indian Tribal governments shall be contacted immediately. Further disturbance is prohibited until permission is granted by the Executive Director of the Gorge Commission.

DATED THIS 7 day of July 2026 at White Salmon, Washington.

Krystyna U. Wolniakowski

Krystyna U. Wolniakowski
Executive Director

Expiration of Approval

Commission Rule 350-082-0160 governs the expiration of this Director's Decision.

Expiration of this Director's Decision is automatic. The Executive Director does not notify applicants or landowners of decisions that are expired or may be close to expiring.

This decision of the Executive Director becomes void on the 7 day of July 2028 unless construction has commenced in accordance with Commission Rule 350-082-0160(4).

Commission Rule 350-082-0160(4) specifies that commencement of construction means actual construction of the foundation or frame of the approved structure.

Construction must be completed within two years of the date the applicant commenced construction. Commission Rule 350-082-0160(5) specifies that completion of the structure means completion of the exterior surface(s) of the structure and compliance with all conditions of approval in the National Scenic Area approval.

Once the applicant has commenced construction of one element in this decision, the applicant must complete all elements in this decision in accordance with Commission Rule 350-082-0160. The Gorge Commission does not use different commencement of construction dates for different elements in this decision.

The applicant may request one 12-month extension of the time period to commence construction and one 12-month extension to complete construction in accordance with Commission Rule 350-082-0160(6). The applicant must submit the request in writing prior to the expiration of the approval. If the applicant requests an extension of time to complete construction after commencing construction, the applicant shall specify the date construction commenced. The Executive Director may grant an extension upon determining that conditions, for which the applicant is not responsible, would prevent the applicant from commencing or completing the proposed development within the applicable time limitation. The Executive Director shall not grant an extension if the site characteristics or new information indicate that the proposed use may adversely affect the scenic, cultural, natural or recreation resources in the National Scenic Area.

Appeal Process

The appeal period ends on the 6 day of August 2026.

The decision of the Executive Director is final unless the applicant or any other person who submitted comment files a Notice of Appeal with the Commission within thirty (30) days of the date of this decision. Commission Rule chapter 350, division 70 governs appeal of this decision. This rule is available on the Gorge Commission's website and at the Gorge Commission office. You may contact the Gorge Commission office is you have questions about appealing this decision.

Notes

1. Any new land uses or structural development such as driveways, parking areas, garages, workshops, fences or other accessory structures; or additions or alterations not included in the approved application or site plan will require a new application and review. New cultivation also requires a new application and review.
2. This decision does not address local, state, or federal requirements that may be applicable to the proposed development. The landowner is responsible for obtaining all applicable county, state, or federal permits required for the development.

In accordance with Commission Rule 350-082-0150(6), the Gorge Commission staff mailed notice of this decision to the following governments, agencies, and organizations and persons who provided comment on the application:

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
Nez Perce Tribe
U.S. Forest Service National Scenic Area Office
Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation
Klickitat County Planning Department
Klickitat County Building Department
Klickitat County Public Works Department
Klickitat County Health Department
Klickitat County Assessor
Washington Natural Heritage Program
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Steve McCoy, Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Attachments:
Staff Report for C26-0006
Approved site plans and elevation drawings
International Dark-Sky Association Acceptable Fixtures

Development Review Staff Report

Summary of Application

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LANDOWNERS:	Brenda and Kenneth Sorensen
SIZE and LOCATION:	The subject parcel is approximately 150 acres in size and located at 37 Pitman Road and is described as Tax Lot Number 03-12-3400-0001/00 in the northeast quarter of Section 34, and includes portions of 23, 26, and 27 of Township 3 North, Range 12 East, Willamette Meridian, Klickitat County, Washington.
LAND USE DESIGNATION:	General Management Area (GMA) – Large-Scale Agriculture (160)

Notice of Application Mailed to:

In accordance with Commission Rule 350-082-0110, the Gorge Commission staff mailed notice of this application to property owners within 200 feet of the subject parcel and sent email notice of this application to the following governments, agencies, and organizations:

Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation Oregon (CTWSRO)
Nez Perce Tribe
U.S. Forest Service National Scenic Area Office (USFS CRGNSA)
Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP)
Klickitat County Planning Department
Klickitat County Building Department
Klickitat County Public Works Department
Klickitat County Health Department
Klickitat County Assessor
Skamania County
Washington Natural Heritage Program
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Written Comments Received From:

Friends of the Columbia Gorge (Steve McCoy, Staff Attorney)
USFS CRGNSA (Luciano Legnini, Archaeologist)

Findings of Fact

A. Land Use

1. Brenda and Kenneth Sorensen and David Sauter are proposing to replace a dwelling and two agricultural buildings that were destroyed during the Burdoin Fire in July 2025. The subject parcel is 150 acres in size and is located at 37 Pitman Road off of Canyon Road.

   The applicants originally applied to replace three agricultural buildings. However, one of the agricultural buildings does fit within the guidelines for the replacement of existing structures that are damaged or destroyed by disaster and requires additional survey work. The building has been removed from this application and will be included in a forthcoming application. The applicants are therefore only applying for a replacement dwelling and two replacement agricultural buildings.

2. All buildings and structures on the Sorensen's property were destroyed during the Burdoin Fire, except for a pump house.

3. Management Plan Existing Uses Guideline 3[1] allows for the replacement of existing structures that are damaged or destroyed by disaster. It states:

   > *Replacement of Existing Structures Destroyed by Disaster: An existing structure destroyed by fire, flood, landslide or other similar disaster may be replaced in accordance with the following standards:*
   > *A. If the replacement structure does not comply with guidelines 3.C through 3.E below, then it shall be subject to guideline 2 above and the time period in guideline 3.G.*

   Compliance with guidelines 3.C through 3.E follows below.

   > *B. As used in guidelines 3, 4, and 5, the term "original structure" or "original dwelling" means the structure or dwelling that was destroyed and was an existing structure or dwelling as defined in the Management Plan.*

   Commission Rule 350-082-0070(73) defines *existing use or structure* as:

[1] References to the Management Plan in this staff report refer to the Management Plan as amended by PA-2025-01 (January 13, 2026). The Gorge Commission specified that the plan amendment became effective upon concurrence by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture (February 24, 2026). As of the date of this staff report, the Gorge Commission has not yet amended its land use ordinance to incorporate the amendment.

Existing use or structure: Any use or structure that was legally established and that has continued to operate lawfully and has not been discontinued. "Legally established" means:
(a) The landowner or developer obtained applicable land use and building permits and complied with land use regulations and other laws that were in effect at the time the use or structure was established, or that were in effect at the time the landowner or developer corrected an improperly established use or structure;
(b) The use or structure was initially operated or constructed according to those applicable permits, land use regulations and other laws, or has been operated or constructed according to permits obtained to correct an improperly established use or structure; and
(c) Any changes to the original use or structure must comply with all applicable permit requirements, land use regulations and other laws that were in effect at the time the change was established.

Mr. Sauter contacted the Commission shortly after the Burdoin Fire to inquire about replacing the dwelling and multiple agricultural buildings. The Sorensens and Mr. Sauter applied for the replacement dwelling and agricultural buildings in March 2026; within two years of the date the original building was destroyed. The application was complete when submitted.

The original dwelling was approved in 2001 by Decision C99-0017 and constructed with Klickitat County Building Permit BLD2001-00002. The dwelling being replaced was a legally established existing structure.

It is unknown when one of the original agriculture buildings, the "equipment storage building" was constructed. Staff identified the building in aerial imagery dating back to 1935. Thus, the building was constructed before Klickitat County began issuing building permits and the date of the National Scenic Area Act.

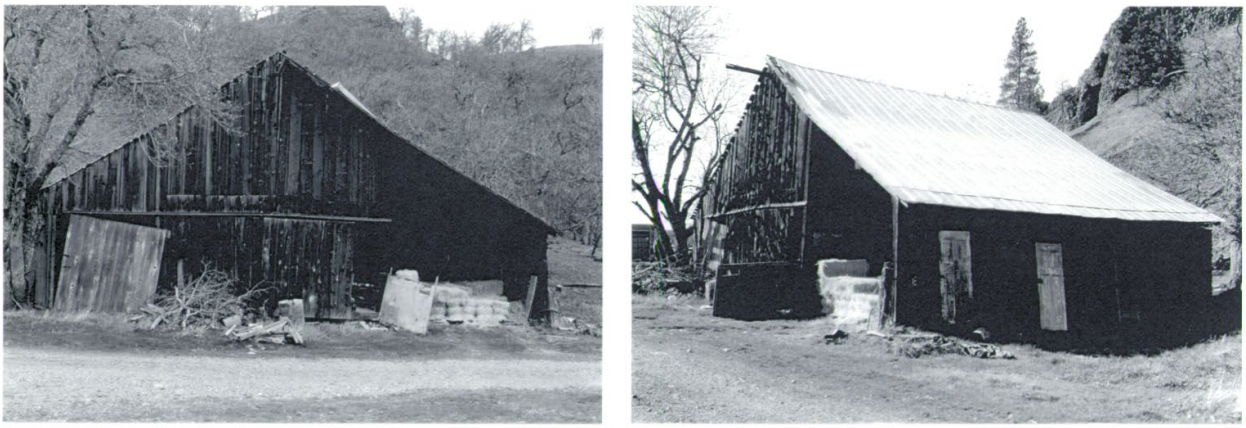


Figure 1 Original Equipment Storage Building

The 648 sq ft (36 ft x 18 ft) "machine shed" will be replaced by a 320 sq ft (8 ft x 50 ft) storage container. The storage container is 9.5 ft tall and will be in the same location

and in the same footprint as the machine shed which it is replacing. The original machine shop was built in 1979 with Klickitat County Permit Number 1756.

C. The replacement structure shall have the same use as the original structure. An existing manufactured home may be replaced with a framed residence.

The Sorensens and Mr. Sauter propose replacing a dwelling and two agricultural buildings that were destroyed by the Burdoin Fire. The original dwelling was a framed residence, and the proposed replacement dwelling will also be a framed residence. One of the agricultural buildings, the "equipment storage building, " was originally a framed building and will be replaced with a framed building. The other agricultural building, the "machine shed," was a framed building, and will be replaced with a shipping container.

D. The replacement structure and utilities shall be in the same location as the original structure and utilities. The same location means that the footprint of the replacement structure is centered on the footprint of the original structure using the same orientation as the original structure or rotating the orientation by up to 10 degrees. The footprint of the replacement structure may extend no more than 10 percent beyond any one or more sides of the original footprint. The footprint of a structure includes any covered decks and porches, attached garages, and breezeways that share a wall with the structure.

The replacement dwelling will be constructed within the footprint of the existing dwelling, in the same location and orientation. The equipment storage building will be located in the same location as the agricultural building it is replacing. The storage container is smaller than the machine shed it is replacing and will fit within the machine shed footprint. No utilities are proposed for the machine shed or the agricultural building.

E. A replacement structure shall not exceed the same square foot size, footprint, and height as the original structure. The size, footprint, and height of a building include any covered decks and porches, attached garages, and breezeways that share a wall with the structure. The following adjustments to size, footprint and height are permitted for replacement structures:
(1) The square foot size of a replacement structure may be larger than the square foot size of the original structure only as follows:
(a) If the original structure was 1250 square feet or smaller in size, the replacement structure may be built up to 20 percent larger than the original structure.
(b) If the original structure was larger than 1250 square feet in size and no larger than 2000 square feet in size, the replacement structure may be built up to 1500 square feet in size or 10 percent larger than the original structure, whichever is larger.
(c) If the original structure was larger than 2000 square feet in size and no larger than 2850 square feet, the replacement structure may be built up to 2200 square feet in size or 5 percent larger than the original structure, whichever is larger.

(d) If the original structure was larger than 2850 square feet, the replacement structure may be built up to 3000 square feet in size or the same size as the original structure, whichever is larger.

Staff reviewed existing records from Klickitat County to review size and height of the destroyed building. The original dwelling was approved in 2001 by Decision C99-0017 with Klickitat County Building Permit BLD2001-00002. The destroyed dwelling was a single-story building that was 20 ft tall and included an attached garage. The original dwelling had 1,605 sq ft of living space, with a 576 sq ft (24ft x 24 ft) attached garage and 160 sq ft (10 ft x 16 ft) covered porch. The proposed replacement residence will include 1,584 sq ft of living space, a 576 sq ft (24 ft x 24 ft) attached garage, and 160 sq ft (10 ft x 16 ft) covered deck. The replacement dwelling will not exceed the size of the dwelling it is replacing.

The original machine shop had a footprint of 648 sq ft (36 t x 18 ft). The replacement buildings, a shipping container has a footprint of 320 sq ft (40 ft x 8 ft), smaller than the footprint of the building it is replacing.

The 2,000 sq ft (40 ft x 50 ft) "equipment storage building" will be replaced by a 2,200 sq ft (44 ft x 50 ft) building, consistent with section (1)(c) of this criterion.

(2) Notwithstanding the allowance for larger replacement structures in paragraph (1) above, the footprint of a replacement accessory building or buildings shall not exceed the footprint permitted for accessory buildings in the applicable land use designation, except, if the footprint of an original accessory building or buildings exceeded the footprint permitted for accessory buildings in the applicable land use designation, the replacement accessory building or buildings shall not exceed the original footprint of the accessory building or buildings.

Commission Rule 350-082-0240(3)(f) contains guidelines for accessory buildings on parcels that are larger than 10 acres in size or larger.

Accessory building(s) larger than 200 square feet in area or taller than ten feet in height for a dwelling on any legal parcel larger than ten acres in size are subject to the following additional standards:
(A) The combined footprints of all accessory buildings on a single parcel shall not exceed 2,500 square feet in area. This combined size limit refers to all accessory buildings on a parcel, including buildings allowed without review, existing buildings and proposed buildings.
(B) The footprint of any individual accessory building shall not exceed 1,500 square feet.
(C) The height of any individual accessory building shall not exceed 24 feet.

No accessory buildings are being replaced. A dwelling and two agricultural buildings are proposed. Management Plan Existing Uses Guideline 3 (E)(2) does not apply to the proposal.

(3)The walls of the replacement structure shall not exceed the height of the walls of the original structure unless an increase is required to comply with standards in the current jurisdictional building code. Wall height is the greatest vertical distance between the lowest finished grade and the lowest wall-to-roof connection of each wall. For a manufactured dwelling, the interior wall height may be up to 9 feet as measured from the finished floor to the finished ceiling.

The wall height of the original dwelling was eight feet, and the proposed wall height of the replacement home is also 8 feet. The wall height of the original "equipment storage buildings" was unclear, but based on pictures and tax accessory records, it appears likely that the wall height was approximately 11 or 12 ft tall. The proposed barn is 12 ft tall. A condition of approval is included to make sure the wall height is no taller than 12 feet. The wall height and roof height of the shipping container is nine and half feet, which is smaller than the height of the original machine shop, which had a wall height closer to 12 feet, according to photographic evidence.

(4) The overall height of the replacement structure as measured from the lowest finished grade to the highest point of the roof shall not exceed the height as of the original structure. The roof of the replacement structure shall be the same style (e.g., hip, gable, flat) and the same or lower slope as the roof of the original structure to keep the same height. The slope and height of the roof of a replacement structure may exceed the slope and height of the original structure only as required to comply with applicable building codes. Where an original structure protruded above the skyline, the replacement structure shall not protrude farther above the skyline. Where the height of a replacement structure protrudes farther above the skyline than the original structure, a different roof shape shall be used to reduce the protrusion to the original amount of protrusion.

The roof height of the original dwelling was 20 ft tall, and the replacement dwelling will also have a roof height of 20 feet. The original dwelling had a multi-pitch gable roof, and the replacement dwelling has the same roof design. The proposed "equipment storage building" has a roof height of 24 feet. After reviewing photographic evidence and tax records, staff and the applicants decided that the original building had a roof height closer to 20 feet tall. A condition of approval is included in the decision to ensure the proposed replacement "equipment storage building" has an overall height of no more than 20 feet. The original "equipment storage building" had a gable roof, and the proposed replacement building uses the same style of roof. The "machine shop" had a roof and wall height of closer to 12 feet. The proposed shipping container will only have a roof height of nine and half feet. The shipping container has a flat roof, and the machine ship also has a flat shed roof design.

(5) If, after applying guidelines 3.E(1) through 3.E(4), an applicant demonstrates that the size, footprint, or height of a replacement manufactured dwelling that is closest in size, footprint, or height of the original manufactured dwelling is not reasonably available (e.g., considering time to manufacture, distance to manufacturer, cost to customize, and similar factors), then the

applicant may place a manufactured dwelling that is closest in size, footprint, and height to the original manufactured dwelling, even if it exceeds the standards in guidelines 3.E(1) through 3.E(4).

The Sorensens and Mr. Sauter are not proposing a manufactured home, this rule does not apply.

G. An original structure shall be considered discontinued if development of a replacement structure approved under these guidelines for replacement of an existing structure destroyed by disaster has not commenced within ten years of the date the structure was destroyed. Each replacement structure on a parcel is separately subject to this ten-year period. Commencement of development in this provision is determined in accordance with the guidelines for expiration of approvals.

The original buildings were all destroyed by the Burdoin Fire in July 2025. The Sorensens contacted the Commission shortly after to inquire about a replacement. The Sorensens and Mr. Sauter applied for the replacement buildings in March 2026; within two years of the date the original building was destroyed. The application was complete when submitted.

Land Use Conclusion:

The proposed development is an allowed review use, subject to Commission Rules 350-082-0600 through 350-082-0720 that protect scenic, cultural, natural, and recreation resources.

B. SCENIC RESOURCES

1. Existing Uses Guideline 3(F) in the Management Plan states:

   In addition to the standards in guidelines 3.B through 3.E above, the replacement structure shall only be subject to the following scenic and cultural resources standards (and not other standards in Part I and Part II of the Management Plan). These standards apply to all replacement structures, including replacement structures for original structures that existed prior to the National Scenic Area Act.

2. Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(1)(a) in the Management Plan states:

   The replacement structure shall comply with the scenic resources guidelines regarding color and reflectivity (Part I, Chapter 1: Scenic Resources). These guidelines shall be applied to achieve the applicable scenic standard (visually subordinate or not visually evident) to the maximum extent practicable.

   Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(h) states:

   Unless expressly exempted by other provisions in 350-082-0600, colors of structures on sites visible from key viewing areas shall be dark earth-tones found at the specific site or in the surrounding landscape. The specific colors approved by the reviewing agency shall be included as a condition of approval.

The proposed development has been designed to achieve visual subordinance using the following dark earth-tone colors:

Dwelling Siding: Sherwin Williams: Carnelian (SW7580) and Rookwood Dark Brown (SW2808)

Dwelling Roofing: ASC Building Products Forest Green

Shipping Container: Sherwin Williams: Carnelian (SW7580) and Rookwood Dark Brown (SW2808)

Equipment Building Color: Sherwin Williams: Carnelian (SW7580) and Rookwood Dark Brown (SW2808)

Equipment Building Roofing: ASC Building Products Forest Green

These colors are dark earth-tones found at the site in the bark and foliage of existing trees and vegetation. The exterior paint selected by the applicants, Carnelian and Rockwood Dark Brown, both have a Light Reflectivity Value (LRV) of 8. The color selected for the metal roof, Forest Green, also has an LRV value of 8. A **condition of approval** is included in the Director's Decision requiring all elements of the proposal to be these colors, consistent with Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(h).

Commission Rules 350-082-0600(2)(i) states:

> *The exterior of buildings on lands visible from key viewing areas shall be composed of non-reflective materials or materials with low reflectivity. Continuous surfaces of glass shall be limited to ensure visual subordinance. The Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook includes a list of recommended exterior materials and screening methods.*

The proposed exterior materials for the replacement dwelling and the attached garage are fiber cement siding, which has low reflectivity and is fire resistant. The dwelling does not include continuous surfaces of glass. The dwelling has modest window glazing, which is a reflective material. **A condition of approval** is included requiring window glass to have a reflectivity rating of 11 percent or less, consistent with this rule.

The roofs of the house and attached garage are gable style. The roofs will be metal, which is reflective. The two sides of the house's roof are angled east and west, which is not in the direction of KVAs to the south. The roof of the attached garage is angled north and south, in the direction of KVAs, however the garage is located behind the house, which helps substantially screen the roof of the attached garage from view. The owners have chosen a dark brown color with a Light Reflectivity Value (LRV) under 10 to ensure the metal roofing has low reflectivity, consistent with this rule.

A condition of approval is also included requiring all exterior surfaces of the proposed development, including doors, siding, trim, window casing and sash, decks, and railings, to be composed of non-reflective materials, consistent with this rule.

The storage container is a metal structure, which can be a reflective material. The storage container will be treated with a matte, low-reflectivity paint in dark brown, consistent with this rule.

The equipment storage building will be a roof-only structure with no enclosed or exterior walls. The roof will be metal, which is reflective. The roof is a gable style roof, and the two sides are angled east and west, not in the direction of KVAs to the south. The owners have chosen a dark brown color with a Light Reflectivity Value (LRV) under 10 to ensure the metal roofing has low reflectivity, consistent with this rule.

Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(j) states:

> *Any exterior lighting shall be sited, limited in intensity, shielded, or hooded in a manner that prevents lights from being highly visible from key viewing areas and from noticeably contrasting with the surrounding landscape setting, except for road lighting necessary for safety purposes.*

No outdoor lights are shown on the applicants' plans. If the applicants decide to install outdoor lights, a **condition of approval** is included in the decision requiring lights are directed downward, hooded, and shielded such that they are not highly visible from KVAs, consistent with this rule. Staff are also providing the applicants with examples of acceptable light fixtures from the International Dark-Sky Association as an attachment to this decision.

3. Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(1)(b) in the Management Plan states:

> *(b) Decks, verandas, balconies and other open portions of the original structure shall not be rebuilt as enclosed (walls and roof) portions of the replacement structure.*

The original home had a 160 square foot (10 ft x 16 ft) covered deck on the east side of the building. The proposed replacement dwelling will have the same 160 square foot covered deck on the east side of the building. The original equipment storage building was semi-enclosed, and the replacement equipment storage building will have no walls and only a roof. The replacement shipping container will be open on one side, consistent with the original machine shed it replaces, which was similarly open on one side. No portions of the original structures will be rebuilt as enclosed portions of the replacement structures, consistent with this rule.

4. Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(1)(c) in the Management Plan states:

> *(c) In the General Management Area, the replacement structure shall comply with the GMA scenic resources guidelines regarding landscaping. These guidelines shall be applied to achieve the applicable scenic standard (visually subordinate) to the maximum extent practicable, and may take into account recommendations for defensible space in the Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook.*

Commission Rule 350-082-0070(202) defines *visually subordinate* as follows:

. . . A description of the relative visibility of a development, structure, or use where that development, structure, or use does not noticeably contrast with the defining landscape setting characteristics, as viewed from a specified vantage point (generally a key viewing area, for the Management Plan) and the setting appears only slightly altered (distinctive characteristics of that setting remain dominant). As opposed to development, structures, or uses that are fully screened, structures that are visually subordinate may be partially visible but would be difficult to discern to the common viewer. Visually subordinate development, structures, or uses as well as forest practices in the SMAs shall repeat form, line, color, or texture common to the natural landscape, while changes in their qualities of scale, proportion, intensity, direction, pattern, etc., shall not dominate the natural landscape setting.

Staff determined the subject parcel is topographically visible from four KVAs: Columbia River, Historic Columbia River Highway (HCRH), and I-84 and Rowena Plateau. The proposed development is visible from KVAs at the following distance zones:

	Distance Zone		
	Foreground	Middle ground	Background
Key Viewing Area (KVA)	0 -1/4 mile	1/4 – 4 miles	Over 4 miles
Columbia River		**X**	
Historic Columbia River Highway		**X**	
Interstate-84		**X**	
Rowena Plateau		**X**	

Commission Rule 350-082-0200(4)(d)(C) requires development to comply with the GMA guidelines regarding landscaping to achieve the standard of visually subordinate to the maximum extent practicable. The building sites are set back significantly from the bluff, limiting their exposure to KVAs. The dwelling is located at an elevation of 485 feet and set back from the bluff 450 feet. The shipping container site is located at an elevation of 490 feet and set back from the bluff 415 feet. The agricultural building site is at an elevation of 500 feet and set back from the bluff 530 feet.

Additionally, Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(c) requires that the extent and type of conditions applied to achieve the scenic standard of visually subordinate be proportionate to the building's degree of visibility from KVAs. The proposed development follows the standards for replacement of existing structures damaged or destroyed by disaster, consistent with this rule. Factors contributing to the visual subordinance of the development include location, size, shape, dark earth-tone colors, low-reflectivity building materials, distance from KVAs, and screening provided by existing topography and vegetation. With conditions of approval requiring dark earth-tone colors, low-reflectivity building materials, and retention of existing vegetation on the parcel, the proposed development will be visually subordinate to its landscape setting to the maximum extent practicable, consistent with Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(1)(c) in the Management Plan and Commission Rule 350-082-0200(4)(d)(C).

5. Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(1)(e) in the Management Plan states:

   A significant historic structure that was destroyed by disaster and that is preserved, rehabilitated, restored, or reconstructed in accordance with the National Register of Historic Places guidelines (for structures in the SMA) or the National Park Service regulations for structures included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places (for structures in the GMA) shall not be subject to guidelines 3.F(1) through 3.F(4) above.

   One of the original agricultural buildings, the "equipment storage" building, on the parcel was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This exemption applies to significant historic structures reconstructed in accordance with National Park Service regulations. Because the applicant has chosen not to reconstruct the agricultural building in a manner consistent with those regulations, the exemption does not apply. Consistency with Guidelines 3(F)(1) through 3(F)(4) is addressed in the findings above.

6. Commission Rule 350-082-0600(1)(c) states:

   Landowners shall be responsible for the proper maintenance and survival of any planted vegetation required by 350-082-0600.

   The existing vegetation on the parcel consists mostly of oaks and grass, although much of it was destroyed by the Burdoin Fire. No additional planted vegetation is required to achieve visual subordinance as viewed from KVAs. Accordingly, the ongoing maintenance provision of this rule does not apply to the proposal. However, **a condition of approval** requires retention of existing vegetation not killed by the fire, including the lilac hedge and black walnut tree, and the applicant remains responsible for the maintenance and survival of those retained plantings consistent with this rule.

7. Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(b) requires that a determination of potential visual effects and compliance with the visual subordinance standard in subsection (a) above include consideration of the cumulative effects of proposed development. Commission Rule 350-082-0070(50) defines cumulative effects as:

   The combined effects of two or more activities. The effects may be related to the number of individual activities, or to the number of repeated activities on the same piece of ground. Cumulative effects can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

   The proposal is for the replacement of a dwelling and two agricultural buildings destroyed during the Burdoin Fire. The replacement structures will be sited in the same locations and footprints as the original structures, with no increase in building footprint, height, or number of structures. Because the proposal results in no net increase in development on the parcel, there are no cumulative visual effects beyond those already present in the landscape prior to the fire.

8. Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(b) states:

A determination of the potential visual impact of a new development shall include written findings addressing the following factors:
(A) The amount of area of the building site exposed to key viewing areas;
(B) The degree of existing vegetation providing screening;
(C) The distance from the building site to the key viewing areas from which it is visible;
(D) The number of key viewing areas from which it is visible;
(E) The linear distance along the key viewing areas from which the building site is visible (for linear key viewing areas, such as roads); and
(F) Other factors the reviewing agency determines relevant in consideration of the potential visual impact.

The area where the farm is located is relatively flat. The dwelling site is located at an elevation of 485 feet. The dwelling is set back from the bluff 450 feet. The shipping container site is located at an elevation of 490 feet and set back from the bluff 415 feet. The agricultural building site is at an elevation of 500 feet and set back from the bluff 530 feet.

The distance from the applicant's building site to the Rowena Plateau and Tom McCall Trail is approximately one and three-quarter miles. The area is clearly visible from the Rowena Plateau KVA at an elevation of 700 feet. The site is set back from the southern edge of the plateau by approximately 400 feet.

The site is only visible from one higher-elevation KVA: Tom McCall Viewpoint, at approximately 1,700 feet elevation, which is part of Rowena Plateau. From the top of the Tom McCall Trail, the parcel is lower in elevation than the KVA and the topography visible from that vantage point.

Along the Historic Columbia River Highway, the project is visible to the north for three and a half miles at elevations ranging from 400 to 500 feet. The site comes into view along the HCRH at approximately one and a quarter mile east of the site and approximately three miles to the west. Existing topography and trees along the HCRH screen the proposed development from view for a portion of this linear distance.

From the Columbia River, the project is intermittently visible directly south of the development for one and a half miles at an elevation of 80 feet. The project is similarly visible from I-84, due south of the development site, at an elevation of 100 feet for approximately two miles. From these lower KVAs -- the Columbia River and I-84 -- only very small portions of the buildings will be visible. Because the buildings are set back from the bluff, topography helps to obscure them from view at lower elevations.

The replacement dwelling, equipment storage building, and shipping container will occupy the same locations and footprints as the original structures. The dwelling is sited in the same location approved in the 2001 decision. Existing vegetation consists primarily of oaks, although most vegetation was destroyed by the Burdoin Fire. The original decision for the house destroyed in the fire (C99-0017) required retention of a lilac hedge. Most of the lilac hedge was burned in the fire, though signs of regrowth were observed by staff during a site visit on April 28, 2026. A condition of approval

requiring retention of the lilac hedge for screening purposes is included in this decision; the hedge may be relocated no closer than 10 feet from the house. The original hedgerow was approximately 10 feet tall and 40 feet long. No new landscaping is required to screen the development from KVAs. The remaining oaks will provide some screening and help soften the hard edges and clean lines of the buildings. No additional vegetation is required to ensure the development is visually subordinate to its surrounding landscape when viewed from KVAs.

Considering the factors discussed above, the building sites are highly visible from Rowena Plateau and the Historic Columbia River Highway. To ensure the buildings are visually subordinate to their setting as seen from KVAs, conditions are applied governing building materials and colors. Together with the retention of existing oak trees and other vegetation that survived the fire, including the lilac hedge near the dwelling, the buildings will be visually subordinate to the surrounding landscape.

9. Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(c) states:

> *The extent and type of conditions applied to a proposed development to achieve visual subordinance to its landscape setting shall be proportionate to its potential visual impacts as visible from key viewing areas. Conditions may include, and shall be applied using the following order of priority, with (A) being the first condition to require and (F) being the last condition to require if the prior conditions do not achieve visual subordinance:*
> *(A) Screening by existing topography.*
> *(B) Siting (location of development on the subject property, building orientation, and other elements).*
> *(C) Retention of existing vegetation on the applicant's property.*
> *(D) Design and building materials (color, reflectivity, size, shape, height, architectural and design details and other elements).*
> *(E) New landscaping on the applicant's property.*
> *(F) New berms or other recontouring on the applicant's property, where consistent with other applicable provisions.*

Commission Rulle 350-082-0200(4)(d)(C) requires the development to comply with the GMA guidelines regarding landscaping to achieve the standard *visually subordinate* to the maximum extent practicable. The site is visible from four KVAs all located in the middle ground from the subject parcel. The primary contributing factors to the visual subordinance of the development include distance from KVAs, screening by topography from lower elevation KVAs, existing vegetation, and building materials with dark earth tone colors and low reflectivity. Given the viewing distance from KVAs over a mile away, the building will be difficult to discern in the landscape. The Sorensens have chosen dark earth-tone colors and low reflectivity building materials which are included as **conditions of approval**. On the Sorensen's property, it appears that most of the vegetation burned during the Burdoin Fire, but most of the oak survived. Consistent with the landscape settings design guidelines, a **condition of approval** requires existing vegetation on the parcel be retained except for safety. With these conditions included in the Director's Decision, the proposal will be visually subordinate,

as viewed by KVAs and consistent with the design guidelines for the Oak-Pine Woodlands Landscape Setting. Given that the development is visible only from the middle ground and background KVAs at distances exceeding one mile, staff finds that conditions requiring dark earth-tone colors, low-reflectivity materials, and retention of existing vegetation are proportionate to the development's potential visual impact and sufficient to achieve visual subordinance without new landscaping or recontouring.

10. Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(d) states:

> *New development shall be sited using existing topography and/or existing vegetation as needed to achieve visual subordinance from Key Viewing Areas. The following guidelines shall apply to new landscaping used to screen development from key viewing areas:*
> *(A) New landscaping (including new earth berms) shall be required only when application of all other available guidelines in 350-082-0600 is not sufficient to make the development visually subordinate from key viewing areas. Alternate sites shall be considered prior to using new landscaping to achieve visual subordinance. Development shall be sited to avoid the need for new landscaping wherever possible.*
> *(B) If new landscaping is required to make a proposed development visually subordinate from key viewing areas, existing on-site vegetative screening and other visibility factors shall be analyzed to determine the extent of new landscaping, and the size of new trees needed to achieve the standard. Any vegetation planted pursuant to this guideline shall be sized to provide sufficient screening to make the development visually subordinate within five years or less from the commencement of construction. If after five years the vegetation has not achieved a size sufficient to screen the development, the Executive Director may require additional screening to make the development visually subordinate.*
> *(C) Unless as specified otherwise by provisions in 350-082-0600, landscaping shall be installed as soon as practicable, and prior to project completion.*
> *(D) Applicants and successors in interest for the subject parcel are responsible for the proper maintenance and survival of planted vegetation, and replacement of such vegetation that does not survive.*
> *(E) The Scenic Resources Implementation Handbook includes recommended species for each landscape setting consistent with 350-082-0600(3) and minimum recommended sizes of new trees planted (based on average growth rates expected for recommended species).*

The replacement buildings will be in the same location and footprint as the original structures. Alternative sites were not considered because the buildings are replacements in kind. The dwelling is sited in the same location approved in the 2001 decision. No new landscaping is required to screen the development from KVAs. Existing topography, the setback of the buildings from the bluff, and retention of existing oaks and the lilac hedge provide sufficient screening to achieve visual subordinance as viewed from KVAs. Because visual subordinance can be achieved through topographic screening, siting, retention of existing vegetation, and conditions

on building materials and colors, new landscaping is not required. Accordingly, sections (B) through (E) do not apply.

11. The Commission Rule 350-082-0600(2)(e) states:

    Existing tree cover screening proposed development from key viewing areas shall be retained as specified in 350-082-0600(3).

    The subject parcel is in the Oak-Pine Woodland landscape setting. Most of the low-lying vegetation on the parcel was destroyed by the Burdoin Fire; however, most of the existing oak trees survived and will be retained. A condition of approval requires retention of existing vegetation on the parcel except for safety purposes. Findings for the Landscape Settings Design Guidelines, including applicable tree retention standards under 350-082-0600(3), are addressed below.

12. The Landscape Settings map in the Management Plan classifies the landscape setting for the subject parcel as Oak-Pine Woodland. Commission Rule 350-082-0600(3)(c) contains guidelines for new development in this landscape setting. It states:

    Oak-Pine Woodland
    (A) Structure height shall remain below the tree canopy level of the dominant vegetation types of this setting.
    (B) In portions of this setting visible from key viewing areas, the following guidelines shall be employed to achieve visual subordinance for new development and expansion of existing development:
    (i) At least half of any tree species planted for screening purposes shall be species native to the setting. Examples of native species are identified in the Scenic Implementation Handbook as appropriate to the area.
    (ii) At least half of any trees planted for screening purposes shall be coniferous to provide winter screening.
    (iii) For substantially wooded portions: Except as is necessary for construction of access roads, building pads, leach fields, etc., the existing tree cover screening the development from key viewing areas shall be retained.
    (iv) For treeless portions or portions with scattered tree cover:
    (I) Structures shall be sited on portions of the property that provide maximum screening from key viewing areas, using existing topographic features.
    (II) Patterns of plantings for screening vegetation shall be in character with the surroundings. Residences in grassy, open areas or savannahs shall be partly screened with trees in small groupings and openings between groupings.
    (III) Accessory structures, outbuildings, and access ways shall be clustered together as much as possible, particularly towards the edges of existing meadows, pastures, and farm fields.

    The proposed dwelling, equipment storage building, and shipping container are replacement structures in kind, sited in the same locations and footprints as the original structures. Because they are in-kind replacement structures, the proposal is subject to landscaping, color, and reflectivity standards only. No trees are proposed to be removed except those killed by the Burdoin Fire, and no additional vegetation is required for

screening purposes. The applicant has chosen dark earth-tone colors and low-reflectivity building materials, which are included as conditions of approval. A condition of approval also requires retention of all existing vegetation not killed by the fire, including the lilac hedge and black walnut tree. With these conditions, the proposed development is consistent with Commission Rule 350-082-0600(3)(c).

Scenic Resources Conclusion:

The proposed development is consistent with Existing Uses Guideline 3(F) in the Management Plan that allows the replacement of existing structures destroyed by disaster.

C. CULTURAL RESOURCES

1. The proposed development Existing Uses Guideline 3(F) in the Management Plan states:

   In addition to the standards in guidelines 3.B through 3.E above, the replacement structure shall only be subject to the following scenic and cultural resources standards (and not other standards in Part I and Part II of the Management Plan). These standards apply to all replacement structures, including replacement structures for original structures that existed prior to the National Scenic Area Act.

2. Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(2)(b) in the Management Plan states:

   In the General Management area, if the structure is replaced in the identical location, orientation, and footprint, and is the identical or smaller size and height as the original structure, then the structure shall not require review for cultural resources.

3. Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(2)(c) in the Management Plan states:

   In the General Management Area, if the structure is replaced in accordance with the standards in 3.D or 3.E, then the structure shall not require review for cultural resources, except, if the replacement structure is within 500 feet of known cultural resources or is within 100 feet of an area that has a high probability of containing cultural resources, then the structure shall be reviewed for consistency with the GMA Guidelines in Part I, Chapter 2: Cultural Resources.

   Luciano Legnini, U.S. Forest Service Archeologist, reviewed the land use application and determined in a Cultural Resources Survey Determination letter, dated June 29, 2026, that pursuant to Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(2)(b) in the Management Plan, neither a Cultural Resource Reconnaissance Survey nor a historical survey is required because the proposed use is to replace existing structures destroyed by a disaster.

4. Commission Rule 350-082-0620(6) protects cultural resources discovered during construction. It requires that if cultural resources are discovered after construction begins, all construction activities within one hundred feet of the discovered cultural

resource shall cease; further disturbance is prohibited, and the Gorge Commission shall be notified within 24 hours of the discovery. A **condition of approval** is included in the director's decision consistent with this rule.

5. Commission Rule 350-082-0620(7) contains provisions addressing discovery of human remains during construction. A **condition of approval** is included in the director's decision consistent with this rule.

Cultural Resources Conclusion:

The proposed development is consistent with Existing Uses Guideline 3(F)(2) that protects Cultural Resources in the Management Plan for the replacement of existing structures destroyed by disaster.

D. NATURAL RESOURCES

1. The proposed development must only meet the criteria identified in Existing Uses Guideline 3 in the Management Plan which allows the replacement of an existing structure destroyed by disaster. There are no guidelines for natural resources.

Natural Resources Conclusion:

The proposed development is consistent with Existing Uses Guideline 3 in the Management Plan that allows the replacement of existing structures destroyed by disaster.

E. RECREATION RESOURCES

1. The proposed development must only meet the criteria identified in Existing Uses Guideline 3 in the Management Plan which allows the replacement of an existing structure destroyed by disaster. There are no guidelines for the protection of recreation resources in Existing Uses Guideline 3 in the Management Plan and there are no recreation sites adjacent or nearby the subject parcel.

Recreation Resources Conclusion:

The proposed development is consistent with Existing Uses Guideline 3 in the Management Plan which allows the replacement of an existing structure destroyed by disaster.

F. TREATY RIGHTS PROTECTION

2. The proposed development must only meet the criteria identified in Existing Uses Guideline 3 in the Management Plan which allows the replacement of an existing structure destroyed by disaster.

3. Existing Uses Guideline 3(H) in the Management Plan states:

> *An application for a replacement structure that complies with guidelines 3.B through 3.F above shall be reviewed using the Procedural Guidelines for the expedited development review process and Resource and Treaty Rights Protection Guideline 2.B for the expedited development review process.*

Procedural Guidelines 2(B) for Expedited Development Review Processes in the Management Plan states that:

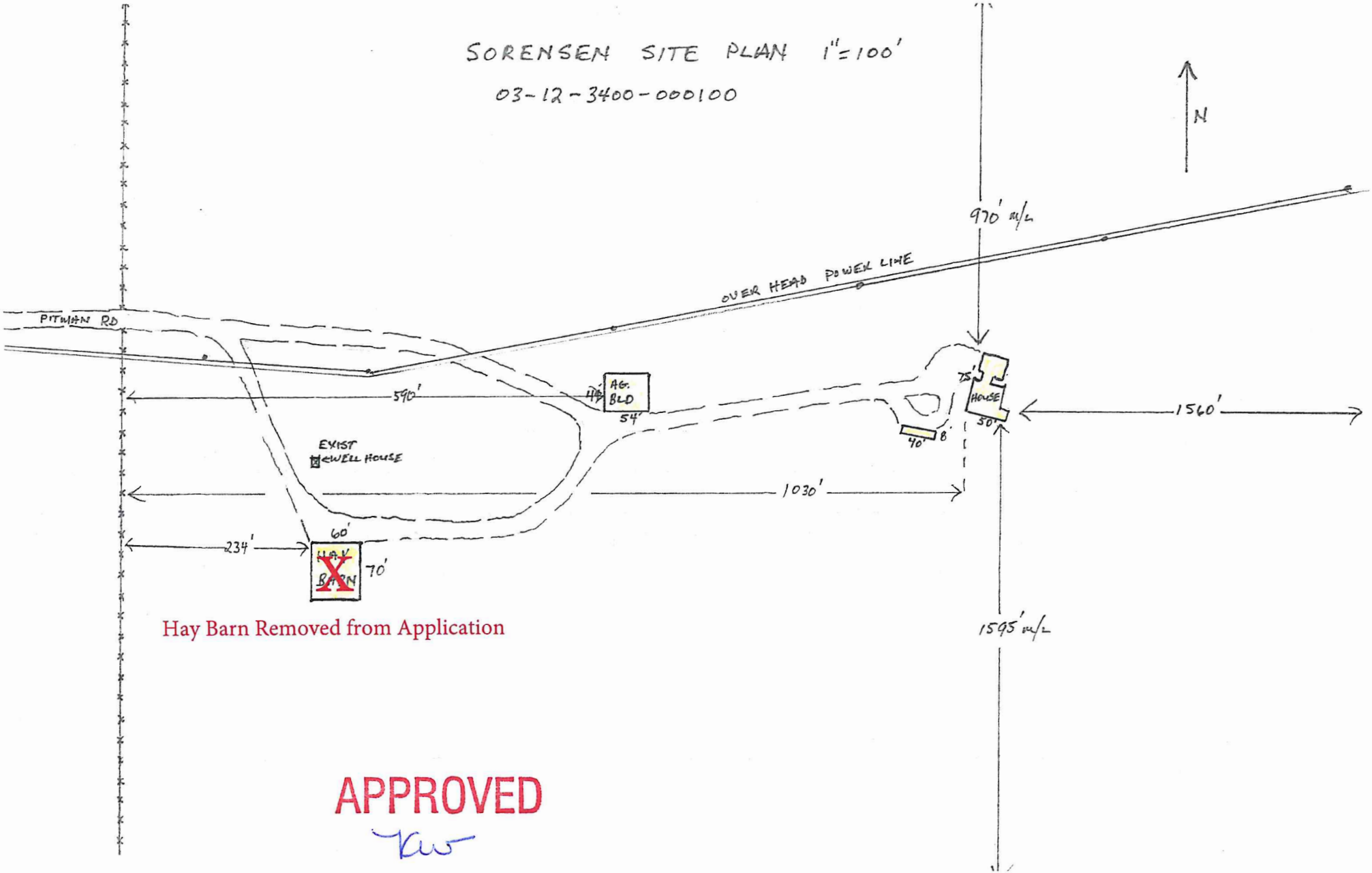
> *Reviewing agencies shall allow the tribal governments, the Gorge Commission, and the Forest Service at least 10 days from the date a notice is sent to submit written comments on the proposed development.*

Consistent with Procedural Guidelines 2(B) for Expedited Development Review Processes in the Management Plan and corresponding Commission Rule 350-082-0120(2), notice of the proposed development was provided to the tribal governments on March 25, 2026.

Treaty Rights Conclusion:

The proposed development is consistent with the guidelines Existing Uses Guideline 3 in the Management Plan which allows the replacement of an existing structure destroyed by disaster.

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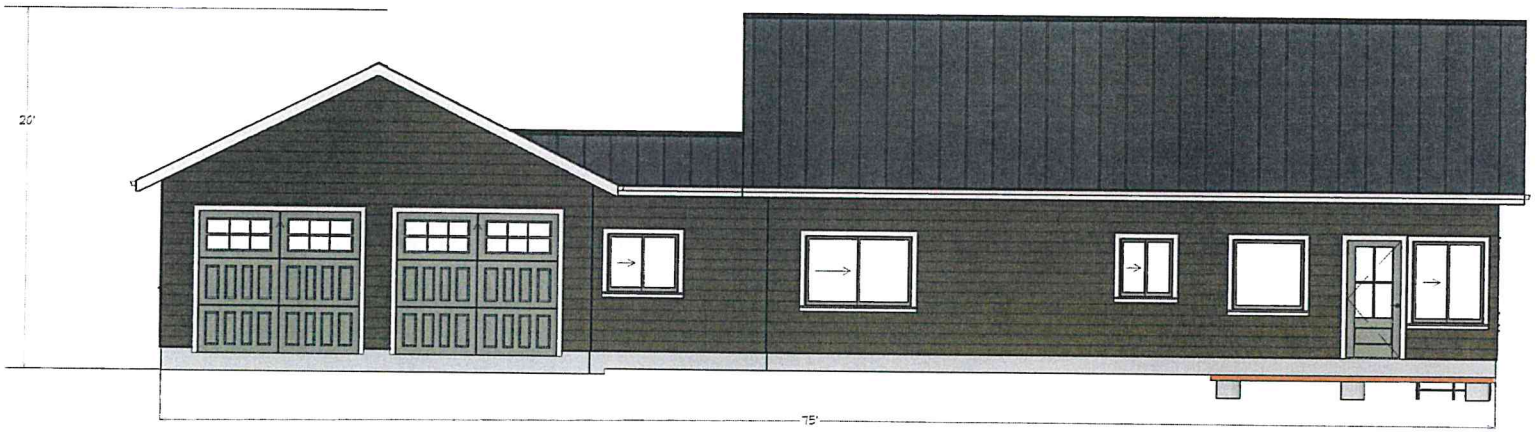


Hay Barn Removed from Application

APPROVED

WEST ELEVATION

SORENSEN HOUSE

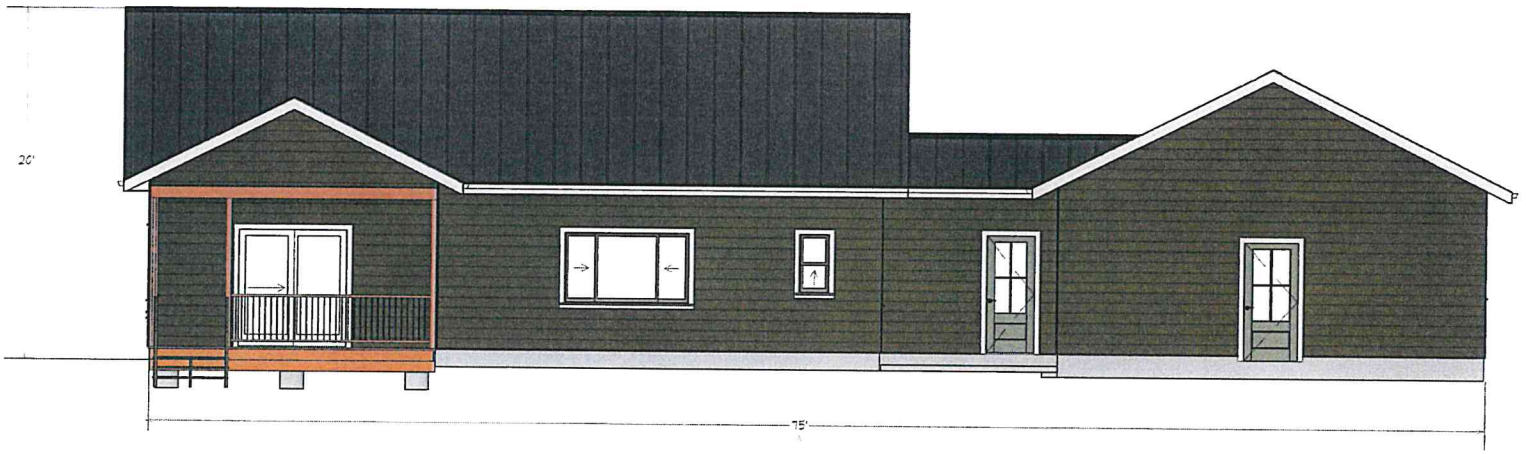


APPROVED

KW

EAST ELEVATION

SORENSEN HOUSE



APPROVED
KW

SOUTH ELEVATION

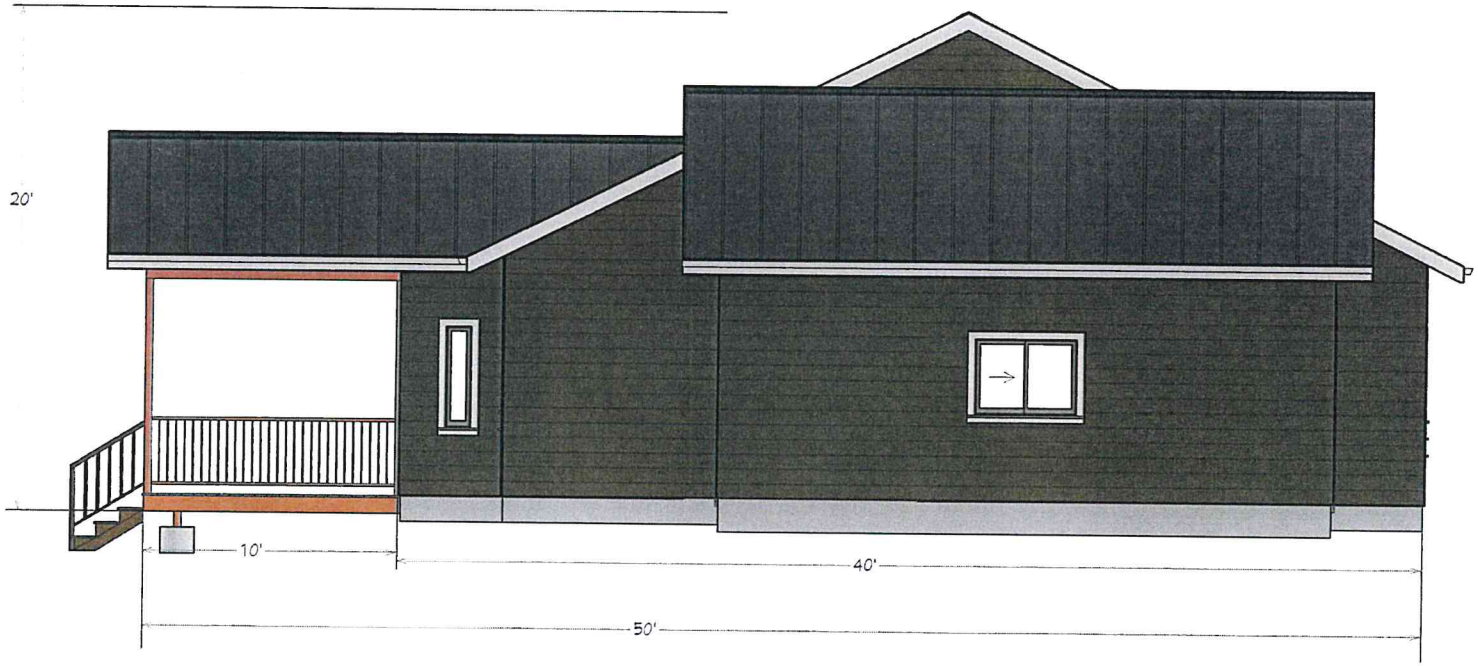
SORENSEN HOUSE



APPROVED

NORTH ELEVATION

SORENSEN HOUSE

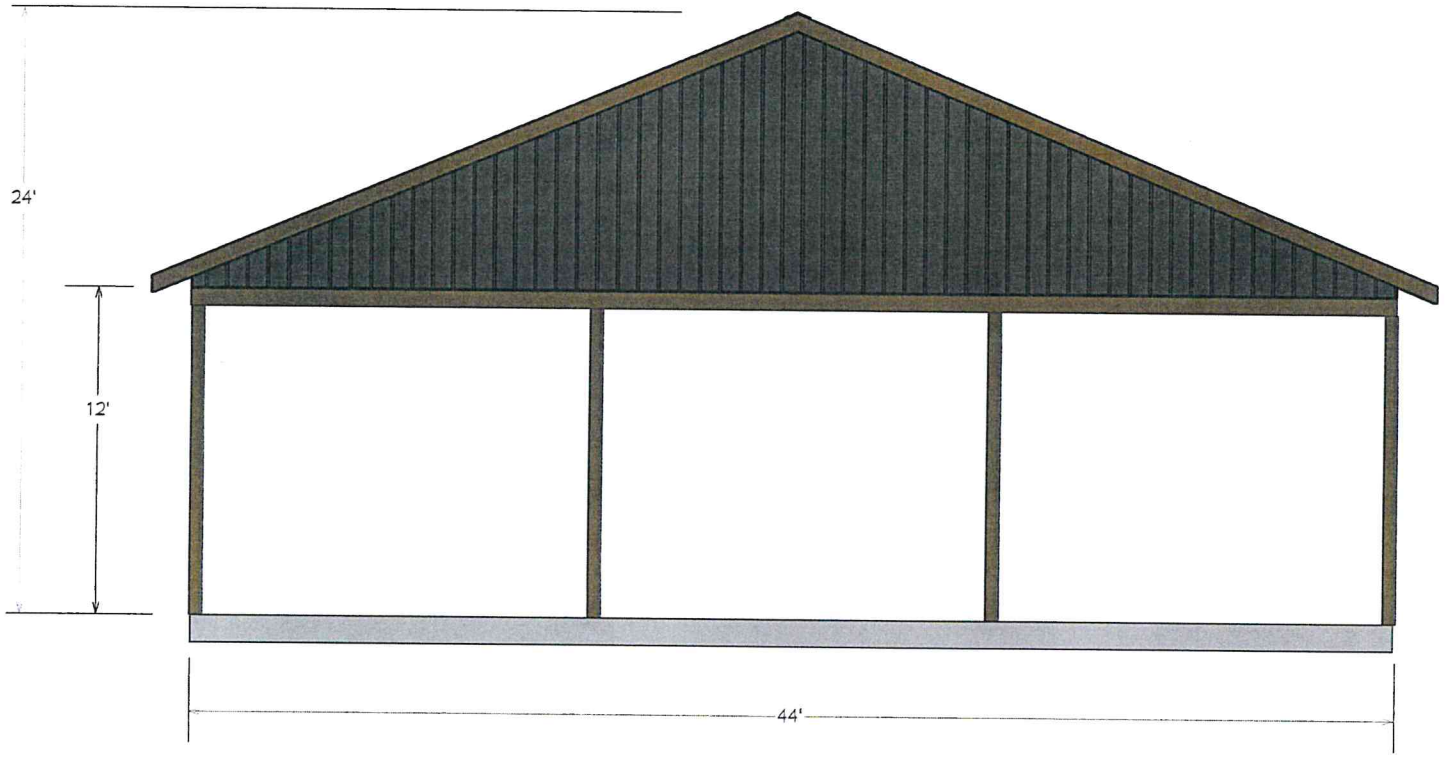


APPROVED

kw

EAST & WEST ELEVATION

SORENSEN AGRICULTURAL/EQUIPMENT BUILDING



APPROVED

KW

SOUTH / NORTH ELEVATION

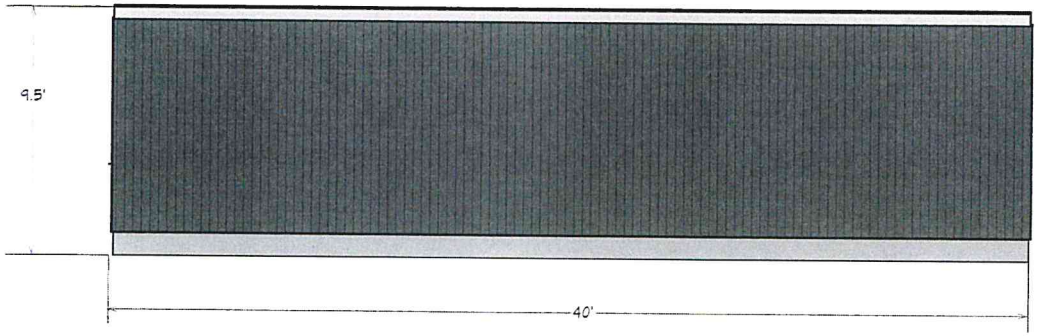
SORENSEN AGRICULTURAL / EQUIPMENT BUILDING



APPROVED

NORTH & SOUTH ELEVATION

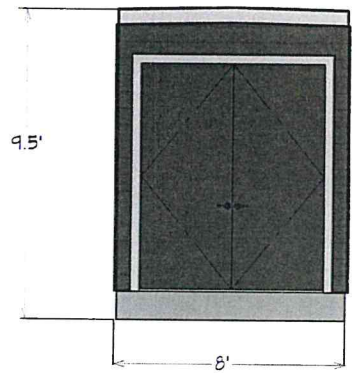
SORENSEN CONTAINER



APPROVED

WEST ELEVATION

SORENSEN CONTAINER



APPROVED