

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

General Management Areas (149,400 acres including 31,500 acres of the Columbia River)

The Act allows for a variety of land uses and activities in the General Management Areas including most uses and activities that existed as of the date of the Act, such as compatible residential and commercial development, forestry activities, and compatible mineral exploration and development. New industrial development is prohibited. Specific land-use designations and lists of allowed uses are given in the Management Plan.

Special Management Areas (114,600 acres)

Because the Special Management Areas are generally the most environmentally or visually sensitive lands, activities are more restricted here than in other parts of the Scenic Area.

The Act allows: most current uses and activities as of the date of the Act, compatible residential construction on land parcels 40 acres or more, recreational facility construction, agricultural uses and compatible forest management activities.

The Act prohibits: new land divisions, most commercial facilities, new industrial facilities, residential construction on parcels less than 40 acres, and most development and use of mineral resources.

MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Act required that the Forest Service and the Gorge Commission prepare a comprehensive Management Plan to achieve the purposes of the Act. The Management Plan was adopted by the Columbia River Gorge Commission on October 15, 1991 and concurred with by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on February 13, 1992.

This planning effort extended over a four-year period. Government agencies at all levels, American Indian tribal governments, residents and landowners, and all other interested groups together developed goals and objectives, development guidelines and non-regulatory strategies for protecting and enhancing the Gorge's resources.

The development guidelines in the Management Plan include land-use designations that control minimum parcel sizes and allowable uses, and guidelines to protect the scenic, cultural, natural and recreation resources of the Gorge. The non-regulatory part of the Management Plan is an array of programs and specific projects for enhancing the Gorge

resources, increasing public recreation opportunities, and fostering economic development. These protection and enhancement mechanisms are carried out by all of the National Scenic Area partners.

LAND-USE ORDINANCES

All new development and land uses must be reviewed in the National Scenic Area to determine if they are consistent with the Act and the implementing land-use ordinances. The development guidelines of the Management Plan are implemented through land-use ordinances which must be consistent with the Management Plan. The Act requires counties to adopt and enforce land ordinances that are consistent with the Management Plan. For counties that do not yet have a consistent land-use ordinance, the Gorge Commission must adopt and enforce ordinances.

Many uses that were once unregulated (such as new cultivation) now require permits in the National Scenic Area. Landowners are encouraged to check with their county or the Gorge Commission before initiating any new land use or development.

LAND ACQUISITION AND EXCHANGES

The Act authorized the Forest Service to acquire and exchange lands in the Special Management Area to achieve the purposes of the Act if the owners wish to sell or exchange their lands.

The land with the highest priority for acquisition or exchange includes: parcels designated as open space in the Management Plan, parcels less than 40 acres in size with no beneficial or economic use, sensitive resources, quarries inconsistent with the Management Plan, sites for new recreation, and sites for enhancement projects.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES

The Act authorizes \$10 million in economic development grants and loans for projects consistent with the National Scenic Area objectives. Another \$10 million is authorized for an interpretive center in Oregon and a conference center in Washington; and another \$10 million is authorized for recreation facilities. The Oregon Department of Transportation is authorized \$2.8 million to restore portions of the Historic Columbia River Highway. Economic

opportunity and development studies have been prepared by both the Gorge Commission and the two states to determine suitable projects for the grants and loans. A number of these projects are underway.

WILD AND SCENIC RIVER STUDIES

The Act designated 11.1 miles of the Lower Klickitat River as a National Recreation River, and 7.7 miles of the Lower White Salmon River as a National Scenic River. The Act directed the Forest Service to develop management plans for these portions. In addition, the Act calls for completion of Wild and Scenic River Suitability Studies on other segments of the Klickitat and White Salmon Rivers. These studies and management plans have been completed.

MONITORING

Monitoring is an important part of the National Scenic Area Act. The Gorge Commission is directed to develop and carry out a comprehensive monitoring program in conjunction with all of the Scenic Area partners. This monitoring program must determine if the resources of the Gorge are, in fact, being protected and enhanced. The focus of the program will be changes in the Gorge resources and county implementation of land-use ordinances.

FOR INFORMATION

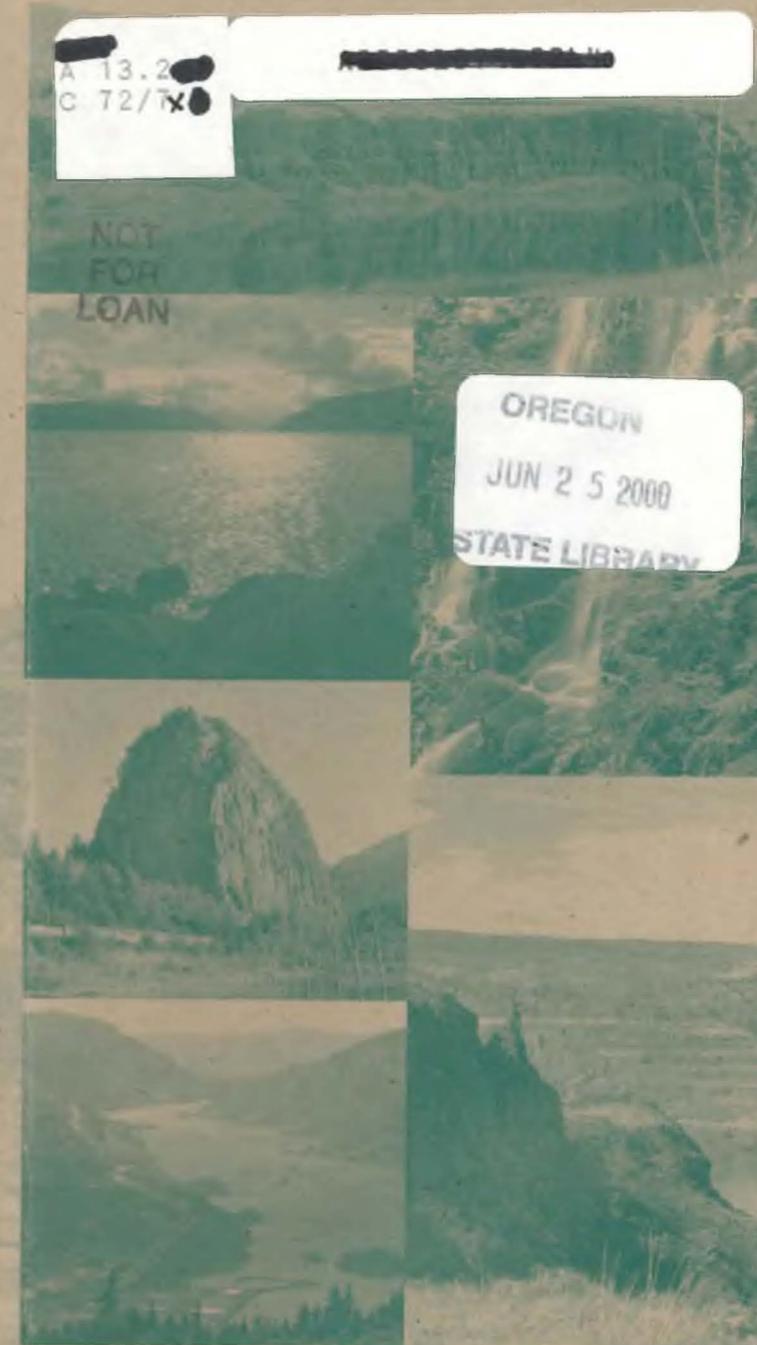
This brochure is designed to provide an overview of the National Scenic Area Act. If you wish more detailed information, refer to Public Law 99-663, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act.

The USDA Forest Service and the Gorge Commission offices for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area have been established to implement the Act. Their staff can answer your questions and provide copies of the legislation, maps, and the Management Plan.

For additional information, contact:

USDA Forest Service, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, 902 Wasco Avenue, Suite 200, Hood River, OR 97031, phone (503)386-2333

Columbia River Gorge Commission, P.O. Box 730, White Salmon, WA 98672, phone (509)493-3323.



Columbia River
Gorge National
Scenic Area

The Columbia River Gorge is a spectacular river canyon, 80 miles long and up to 4,000 feet deep, cutting the only sea level route through the Cascade Mountain Range. It is more than a natural wonder; the Gorge is a critical transportation corridor and is home to 50,000 people, resource dependent industries, farms, and schools.

For many years there has been concern about who should manage the Columbia River Gorge and in what way. A turning point for the Gorge was marked on November 17, 1986. President Ronald Reagan signed into law an Act creating the 292,500 acre Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. This date does not mark the end of concern over management of the Gorge; rather, it signals a beginning filled with new opportunities.

The National Scenic Area Act does not create a wilderness or park. Instead, it allows for the existing rural and scenic characteristics to be retained, and at the same time, encourages compatible growth and development.

PURPOSES OF THE ACT

The National Scenic Area Act has two purposes:

1. To protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Gorge; and
2. To protect and support the economy of the Gorge by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development outside these areas if it is compatible with Gorge resources.

THE PARTNERSHIP

To achieve these purposes, the National Scenic Area Act called for a new partnership between the USDA Forest Service, a bi-state regional planning agency (the Columbia River Gorge Commission), the states of Oregon and Washington, and the six counties with land in the Scenic Area. The Act also called for interagency and tribal cooperation and coordination.

The Columbia River Gorge Commission was created by an inter-state compact. Twelve voting members are appointed by the governors of Oregon and Washington and the six counties within the National Scenic Area. One non-voting

Forest Service member represents the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

The Columbia River Gorge Commission has several responsibilities under the Act, including planning for the Scenic Area, implementation of the National Scenic Area's Management Plan, monitoring, and hearing appeals of land-use decisions. The Forest Service administers recreation facilities, assists in resource protection programs, provides technical assistance and manages National Forest lands.

The local counties and the Gorge Commission are responsible for drafting and enforcing land-use ordinances to implement the Management Plan.

THE AREAS

Urban Areas (28,500 acres)

Thirteen Oregon and Washington communities within the National Scenic Area are designated as Urban Areas. Although these areas are exempt from the land-use control aspects of the legislation, they are the focus of most economic development activities implementing the second purpose of the Act.

The legislation encourages industrial and commercial development in the Urban Areas by prohibiting or limiting new such uses outside of Urban Areas. As in the past, local jurisdictions are responsible for regulating and administering lands in the Urban Areas.

