

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

**BI STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
OREGON AND WASHINGTON**

ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, December 15, 2020

****** 10:00 A.M. ******

ZOOM Meeting ID: 817 9283 2074

Passcode: 989967

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Economic Vitality in 2021

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Estimated Time</u>	<u>Item</u>
Call To Order/Welcome/Introduction <i>Anita Gahimer</i>	2 minutes	Information
Community Welcome <i>Kevin Waters</i>	3 minutes	Information
Overview of Bi-State Advisory Committee <i>Jessica Metta</i>	5 minutes	Information
Fund Updates Jill Amery – <i>OIB</i> <i>Kathy McKenzie WIB/MCEDD</i>	5 minutes	Information
OIB /WIB <i>Post COVID Economic Revitalization</i>	20 minutes	Discussion
OIB / WIB Collaboration <i>& Federal Appropriations</i>	20 minutes	Discussion
Partner Updates MCEDD / EDC / CRGC /USFS <i>*Status of vitality plan</i> <i>*Funding Appropriations</i>	15 minutes	Discussion
Other New Business 2021 Strategic Plan	10 Minutes	Discussion
Adjournment		

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA
BI-STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2019
12:00 P.M.
Bridgeside Restaurant, 699 NW Wanapa Street
Cascade Locks, OR 97014

ATTENDANCE:

OIB MEMBERS: Jack Miller, Chair (Hood River County), John Kasberger, Vice Chair (Hood River County), Jill Amery, Secretary/Treasurer (Wasco County), Jorge Barragan (Wasco County), Doug Roof, Amanda Hoey (MCEDD staff) Jacque Schei (MCEDD staff), Tatiana Eckhart (MCEDD staff), Ami Trosley (MCEDD staff)

WIB MEMBERS: Jennifer Baker, Matt Masco, Wanda Scharfe (Skamania EDC staff)

GUESTS: Krystyna Wolniakowski (Columbia River Gorge Commission), Robin Grimwade (Columbia River Gorge Commission), Joanna Kaiserman (Columbia River Gorge Commission), Lynn Burditt (USFS), Olga Kaganova (Port of Cascade Locks), Kevin Jeffries (Dept of Consumer Affairs), Michael Held (Business Oregon), Scott Clements (MCEDD Loan Administration Board), John Huffman (Oregon USDA), Bob Hamlin (Skamania County) Tom Schnell (Business Oregon), Nate Stice (Regional Solutions)

CALL TO ORDER:

Jack Miller called the meeting to order at 12:09 p.m. Round table introductions took place.

COMMUNITY WELCOME:

Olga Kaganova gave a community welcome. She provided an overview of economic issues facing the community, including the unemployment rate, fire recovery, and both the bridge traffic project and pFriem production facility project. Kaganova welcomed the council and offered tours of the town and port.

OVERVIEW OF BI-STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL:

Amanda Hoey gave an overview of the Bi-State Advisory Council including its history and the roles of its members which include the OIB, WIB, MCEDD, Skamania EDC, Gorge Commission, USFS, and State staff. She briefly summarized the purpose of the council which is to support bi-state economic development and encourage collaboration between the two investment boards. The annual meetings and sub-committee meetings provide an opportunity to discuss potential joint projects and adopt policies for managing funds. She provided an overview of the agenda for the afternoon, including fund activity updates, economic resilience after an economic shock and guest speaker John Huffman.

FUND UPDATES:

MCEDD Loan Administration Board: Scott Clements gave an overview of the MCEDD loan activity for the past year, including \$17.5 million loaned and over 40 million in wage growth generated since the inception of program. He stated this year, in excess of \$2 million dollars in loans were granted across a diverse portfolio.

Washington Investment Board: Matt Masco gave an overview of the Washington Investment Board activity for the past year. He stated loan balance is at \$945,000, which is the highest it has been.

Oregon Investment Board: Jack Miller gave an overview of the Oregon Investment Board activity for the past year. Key points included the expansion of the pilot loan program and that there is approximately \$800,000 available to loan.

RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT: ACCESS TO CAPITAL STRATEGY

Jacque Schei gave a presentation on the Local Economic Opportunity Fund (LEOF) supported economic resilience project, in which staff conducted interviews, analyzed past activities and reviewed best practices in economic resilience. Additional deliverable included development of new toolkits/resources that MCEDD and other regional partners can deploy to support businesses differently in the face of future shocks.

Discussion:

Amanda Hoey proposed conversation around how the tools are used and noted they are nicely aligned with national preparedness month. She asked what it also means for business resilience and business preparedness and noted we are much more resilient when we are prepared. Nate Stice said he was glad to see it is moving forward and institutionalized by MCEDD. He noted one thing done in preparation for this year's fire season was getting partners on the phone and cataloging tools available across the state and region. He noted LEOF is not something Oregon's legislature funded this year, but said he anticipated the governor will recommend it get funded in the future. Kevin Jeffries noted the disaster recovery subcommittee of the governor's office deals with a lot of financial resiliency pieces and dollars are available to business especially on the insurance side. He noted the insurance gap and recommended providing some financial support in that gap that insurance doesn't cover. He identified that businesses should understand how their growth and future depends on firm financial foundation. Kevin Jeffries noted that in the report those interviewed indicated communication was scattered and would have preferred information through local resources and asked what were the limitations and how the state can be more helpful in the future. Olga Kaganova said it was also a coordination issue – during the Eagle Creek fire, evacuees didn't know where to look for information. Lynn Burditt added that what was difficult for Cascade Locks was that everyone was evacuated to different communities. Nate Stice said that one gap they have been filling is addressing how once everyone rolls out how we communicate about recovery. Amanda Hoey identified that resources are available at MCEDD.org/ready and asked how to design it to be responsive in a recovery stage. She also asked for other thoughts on what could be done to be better prepared. John Huffman said that rural development has an arm out for disaster relief - they are still putting the pieces together but that may be a future source of funding or support. Amanda Hoey reviewed the recommended actions from the resiliency report; build/grow Business Recovery/Emergency loan fund, further streamline application process, convene local lenders, enhanced community based business recovery programs and provide technical assistant to navigate federal programs and support businesses in securing capital. John Kasberger said it was important to get folks together to do pre-planning and noted there are ways to do insurance both privately and publicly. He noted SBDCs can educate on the strong foundation necessary in business planning. He said meetings like this are hugely important and noted it is usually after an event that it gets

addressed but that it should be done on the front end. Tom Schnell said that in looking at multiple disasters throughout the state, the area that they see problems is between the time when the disaster happens and funding is received – how do you keep doors open for 30-90 days until funding arrives. John Kasberger noted the report does address quick response piece and said it was important to continue to talk the talk. Jack Miller said that an emergency fund that covers 6 months to a year is important for businesses to start looking at. Kevin Jeffries said every board or commission he has worked with has had a reserve and we should be asking these questions – do you have the right insurance, do you have an emergency fund – of businesses. He noted lack of preparedness can be attributed to normalcy bias. Jennifer Baker said we each have different roles of leadership capacity and said encouraging people to upload receipts and take photographs of their assets doesn't bridge the gap but it does assist with piece of mind. She said all have the opportunity to be encouragers and to nudge in our spheres of influence. Amanda Hoey noted that these are topics of conversation for annual check-ins with clients in our loan programs and asked how can we simplify application processes so that we do not need to put clients through steps that aren't necessary. John Huffman noted that it is a different world today and we need to cover disasters larger in scope.

LONG TERM FUNDING:

John Huffman, Oregon State Director of the USDA, gave a presentation on access to capital. He noted that many years ago he was an investment board member and he has an appreciation for the role. He noted there is one regional economy that is dynamic and not always understood in legislature. He said he has done the same thing at the federal level that he did at the state level – get people out to the Gorge to make them aware of what's going on. He noted there are road blocks in the rural development budget with many programs on the chopping block but said Senator Merkley got language in the senate agriculture appropriation budget that asks for the \$1.9 million dollars. He noted the agriculture budget is largely in good shape but noted the political challenges.

Discussion:

Lynn Burditt said she appreciates John's willingness to listen to challenges and noted his perseverance has gotten us as far as we are. Amanda Hoey identified that there is community support as community organizations continue to say this is a priority. She noted the immediate need for funds as there is a limited amount available to loan. She noted the number of Oregon partners at the table but stated we developed the materials to be useful in our five county, bi-state region, recognizing our businesses are bi-state and our employees are bi-state. Kevin Jeffries noted that often times you go through the steps of posting a sign at the library, advertise, spend money and no one shows up. He said the Department of Consumer Affairs is always willing to come out and do trainings if people are willing to listen. Michael Held suggested creating a system which utilizes business ambassadors (local business helping local business) rather than having someone perceived as a bureaucrat do it. Olga Kaganova noted there are supports in cities and information is spread largely through word of mouth. Scott Clements said there are few incubator facilities and said incubator businesses are perfect candidates to be educated – it is a stage and then you can move out on your own. Amanda noted previous incubator and the challenges they faced. Olga Kaganova noted the port (Cascade Locks) will have a small space that will be available next year.

UPDATES FROM AGENCIES:

Krystyna Wolniakowski (Columbia River Gorge Commission) said they are organizing the next vitality work group meeting at The Dalles public library 4-6 on September 24 and noted she is also looking forward to reporting back to full commission. She introduced Robin Grimwade, the newest gorge commissioner. He shared that he has a background in natural resource management and transformation management of organizations.

Lynn Burditt (USFS) said the Forest Service is trying to find resources and funding and encourage good vibes. She noted this is the furthest we've ever gotten to get language in budget. Michael Held (Business Oregon) introduced himself as a front line connection to Business Oregon and noted he will be based out of The Dalles. He said he is still getting acquainted with the 70 plus Business Oregon programs.

ADJOURNMENT: 1:29 p.m.

MEMORANDUM

Date: December 8, 2020
To: Bi-State Advisory Council
From: Jessica Metta, MCEDD Executive Director
Re: Oregon and Washington Economic Development Plan

Overview

In 2010, the Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Advisory Council began a process to consolidate the Oregon and Washington Economic Development Plans into a single document. The Council included a process for future updates and required review of the plan at least once every five years. That plan was approved in 2011, updated in 2016, and is therefore on schedule for review this year. An update to the plan is generally initiated by the Investment Boards through the Bi-State Advisory Council, with support from the Commission and approval through the respective states.

The plan provides overall guidance in acceptable uses for funds and acts as a guideline for the Boards. The plan is a broad document referencing a Memorandum of Understanding with the states, which further references Board-adopted loan/grant policy and bylaws. The 2010 process incorporated the Oregon and Washington updates into one plan. While economic development funds are administered separately by each state, the coordinated plan reflects the status of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act as one geographic region. It creates a similar look between the two states' plans, includes a process for future revisions and timeframe and was strategically designed to allow us to administer new funds if appropriated.

The work done in 2010 sets us up for a more seamless review. There are few elements that need to be changed and reviewed:

- Reaffirm or revise the joint mission (highlighted on page 6);
- Confirm the commitment to seeking appropriations (Funding Request, page 9-10);
- Review the Program Administration Goals (page 11);
- Update the Economic Outlook. Staff revised the language to integrate with the last (2017) regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, reflecting a coordinated approach (beginning on page 17); and
- Establish the timeline for review. A conservative timeline is provided. Language incorporating a "by" date allows the timeline to advance if progress is made early (page 27).

A copy of the plan, using track changes, is provided. Staff has incorporated minor updates and proposed language on the economic outlook section. The Investment Boards independently adopt their individual sections on program management, so those portions are not included.

Request

Staff is seeking the Council's review of the general criteria under which we are working on the draft. Staff also seeks input from the Council on the elements laid out in the bullet points above.

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA Oregon and Washington

Economic Vitality Plan
~~2016~~ 2021 UPDATE

State of Oregon
Business Oregon
775 Summer Street N. E.
Salem, Oregon 97301

Oregon Investment Board
Mid-Columbia Economic
Development District
[515 East Second Street](#)
[802 Chenoweth Loop Road](#)
The Dalles, Oregon 97058

State of Washington
Department of Commerce
1011 Plum Street SE
PO Box 42525
Olympia, Washington 98504-2525

Washington Investment
Board
Skamania County Economic
Development Council
P.O. Box 436
Stevenson, WA 98648

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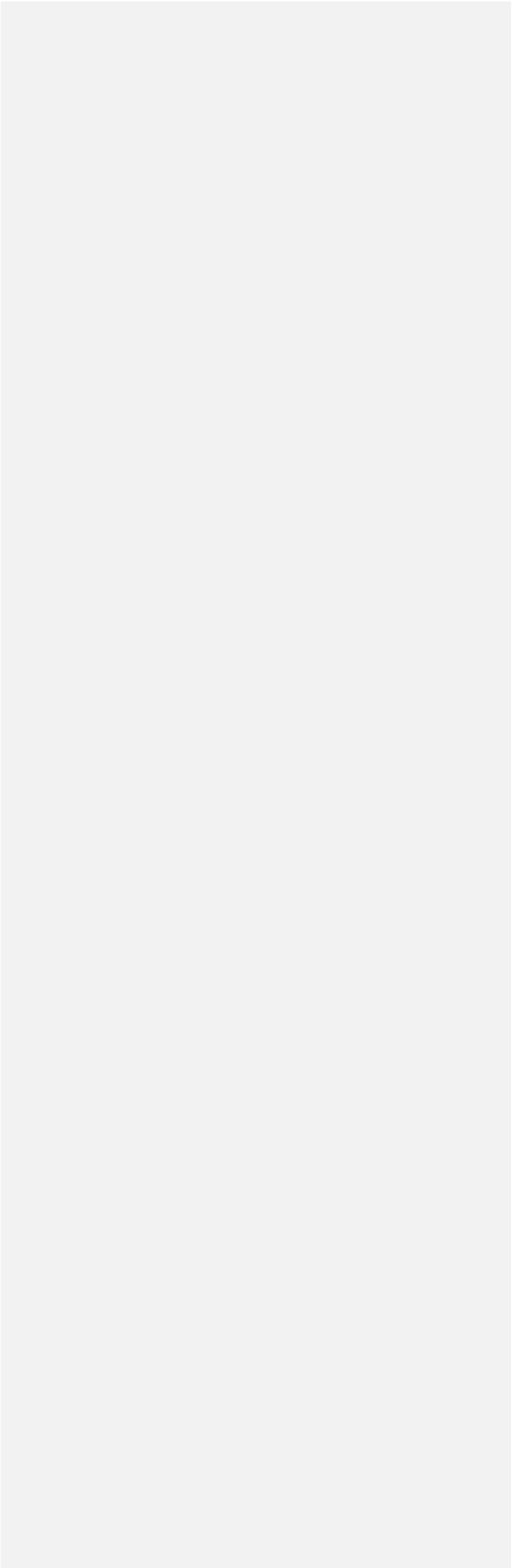
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Executive Summary

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, which was enacted into federal law in 1986 when President Ronald Reagan signed into effect Public Law 99-663, has two purposes: (1) to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge, and (2) to protect and support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with purpose one.

To support and protect the economy of the area, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act directs the states of Oregon and Washington to submit economic development plans to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Approval for the plans in 1992 qualified the states to receive \$5 million each to make loans and grants for economic development purposes.

This ~~2016~~2021 update reflects how each state is currently allocating and administering its program resources in the Scenic Area and defines the relevant governing structures. It also affirms core features of prior plans, such as the mission and regional approach.

This Economic Vitality Plan provides a framework for utilization of funding to support the economic development purpose of the National Scenic Area. The Oregon and Washington Investment Boards and their respective staffs worked cooperatively in the development of this plan, to ensure a cohesive regional document to support what is truly a regional economy, crossing between the states of Oregon and Washington.

This plan was developed to be flexible in meeting both the current needs and addressing current funding use, as well as providing for future funding accommodation. It is to be used as a policy framework and guide.

Introduction

Overview

The purpose of the National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan is to set forth a vision and strategies for enhancing the economy and quality of life of Oregon and Washington communities located within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Each plan also describes how funding from the federal government to each state and other funding sources will be used to fund economic development grants and loans within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

The shared mission for economic development in the National Scenic Area is to:

Work collectively as a regional entity in Oregon and Washington to strengthen and diversify the economy of the National Scenic Area to increase economic prosperity and job opportunities, while protecting and enhancing quality of life.

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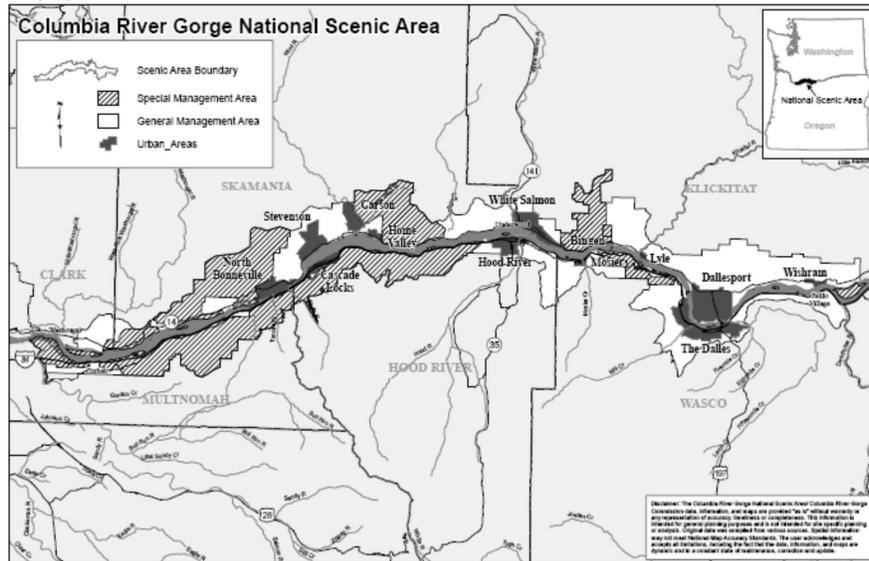
The mission focuses on a shared regional approach to economic development in the Columbia River Gorge. This approach facilitates linkages between Oregon and Washington communities in the National Scenic Area and is described in further detail in the Program Administration section.

Coverage Area

The Columbia River Gorge is a river canyon cutting the only sea-level route through the Cascade Mountain Range. It is 80 miles long and up to 4,000 feet deep with the north canyon walls in Washington State and the south canyon walls in Oregon. This plan covers the geographic region encompassing the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, as defined in the Act, Public Law 99-663 and 16 U.S.C. § 544b. Economic development funding applies to the geographic region for those counties with land use ordinances in effect, pursuant to the Act. The National Scenic Area is categorized into three areas:

- Special Management Areas.
- Urban Areas, which Congress designated to be exempt from Scenic Area regulations. These are: Cascade Locks, Hood River, Mosier and The Dalles, Oregon; and Bingen, Carson, Dallesport, Home Valley, Lyle, North Bonneville, Stevenson, White Salmon, and Wishram, Washington.
- General Management Area, a term used by National Scenic Area planners to describe all of the non-designated area, and which include a mixture of historic land uses such as farming, logging and cattle grazing. The Columbia River itself is currently part of the General Management Area as well.

Map of Service Area



Act and the Charge

The 1986 Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act established the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, a bi-state, six-county region shared by the states of Oregon and Washington. The purposes of the Act are:

- “to establish a national scenic area to protect and provide for enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge; and
- to protect and support the economy of the area by encouraging growth to occur in existing urban areas, and by allowing future economic development in a manner that is consistent with paragraph (1).”

Specific guidance for the economic development purpose, and uses for funds appropriated under the Act, is provided in Section 11, Economic Development. “Based on the Economic Opportunity Study and other appropriate information, each State, in consultation with the counties and the Commission, shall develop a plan for economic development projects for which grants under this section may be used in a manner consistent with this Act.” It further states that: “Each State making grants under this section shall require as a condition of a grant that-

- 1) all activities undertaken under the grant are certified by the Commission as being consistent with the purposes of the Act, the management plan, and land use ordinances adopted pursuant to this Act;
- 2) grants and loans are not used to relocate a business from one community to another;
- 3) grants and loans are not used for program administration; and
- 4) grants and loans are only used in counties which have in effect land use ordinances found consistent by the Commission and concurred on by the Secretary pursuant to section 8 of this Act.”

Relationship to the Management Plan

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan is a separate document prepared by the Columbia River Gorge Commission (Commission) and US Forest Service (USFS). It outlines goals, policies, and guidelines for recreational, commercial, residential, agricultural and forest land use. It identifies land use guidelines and boundaries, and describes the role of the Commission in economic development project decisions. The Commission has adopted rules that define the process used to certify that economic development activities undertaken under the federal grant are consistent with the Scenic Area Act, the Management Plan and land use ordinances adopted pursuant to the Scenic Area Act.

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Oregon and Washington Economic Vitality Plan ~~2016~~2021 Update describes the processes for utilization of economic development funding. It relates to the management plan in understanding and defining the certification process and providing for a specification of overall uses of funds in a manner to ensure consistency with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act.

Funding

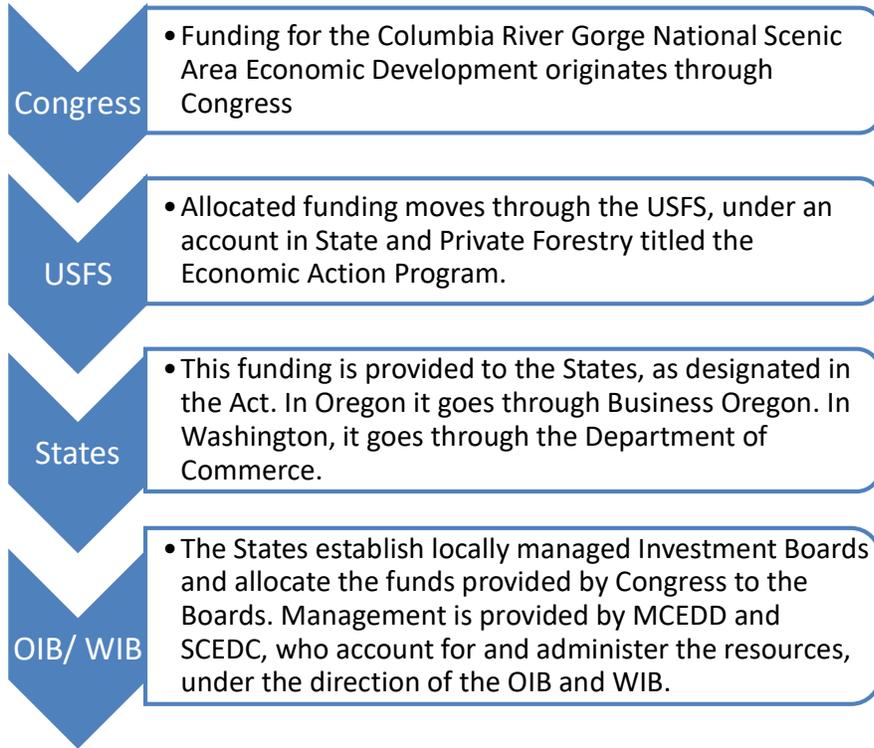
Funding History

In 1986, as part of the in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, Congress authorized \$10 million to be divided evenly between Oregon and Washington, for the purpose of making economic development loans and grants in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. To date, the States have received four appropriations totaling just over \$8 million. Resources were allocated over the course of many years, with portions of the funding provided in 1994, 1996, 1997 and 2001.

Federal Funding Model (1994-2001)

Funding allocations from 1994-2001 were provided by Congress and designated through the USFS to the States of Oregon and Washington through their respective economic development departments (Business Oregon and Washington Department of Commerce). The States transferred these resources to the management of the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards for the purpose of making economic development loans and grants in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Management and administration of the funds for the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards (OIB and WIB) is through Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) and Skamania

County Economic Development Council (SCEDC). These entities then coordinate efforts through the Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Advisory Council.



Future Funding Requests

The balance of the authorized, not yet appropriated funding totals approximately \$1.9 million. The Economic Action Program account under USFS State and Private Forestry is no longer active, so the funding model will require shifting to a new federal account in order to facilitate allocation of the remaining resources. The Oregon and Washington Investment Boards, through the Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Advisory Council, are seeking a pathway for appropriation of the remaining funds authorized, to be divided evenly between the Boards. The Boards are further seeking additional authorization of federal funding and new funding sources to recapitalize funding to support economic development loans and grants. This plan is designed to cover the management and purpose for those new economic development resources as well.

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Impact of Additional Funding

Since the Act authorizes special funds to promote the economic health of the 13 Gorge urban areas; a new infusion of federal funds is urgently needed to capitalize on the interest of new and developing business. Both Oregon and Washington Investment Boards have a proven track record for job creation and investments that result in long-term economic impact. Through wise use of funds the Boards have generated sustained economic stimulus in rural communities.

- Received federal funding totaling approximately \$8 million.
- Approved grants and loans, by utilizing revolved funds, totaling more than \$14 million.
- Investments directly resulted in the creation or retention of over 1,250 jobs.
- Projects receiving funding through the Investment Boards have leveraged non-federal contributions of over \$34 million in private and public funds.

The Investment Boards have established the framework for successful investment, providing resources to businesses, governments and nonprofits for business assistance, infrastructure assistance and workforce development through a revolving loan fund. The Investment Boards seek funding to be in a position to fulfill their duties under the NSA. View a sample of funded projects here: <http://mcedd.org/oibwibmap/index.html>

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The Columbia River Gorge is considered a national treasure and both purposes of the Act must be met in order for the intent of the Act to be realized. Business development is necessary, as recognized by the Act, in order to sustain a viable population in the Scenic Area that can support all the goals of the Act. While the revolving loan funds will continue to allow some support of small business, the cost of doing business and developing needed infrastructure has risen so that the Investment Board aid is a diminishing percentage of the need. Lack of available funding means that infrastructure and business needs in the Columbia River Gorge are going unmet ~~because of the lack of available funding~~. Simultaneously, development is restricted, for the most part, to the Urban Areas, yet the infrastructure in the Urban Areas is not adequate to support business development.

The establishment of the Scenic Area resulted in unique needs and approaches to economic development, restricting some of the traditional approaches to economic development. Funding to the Investment Boards would recognize the importance to balance both resource protection and economic vitality in the National Scenic Area.

Program Administration

Regional Approach

A regional approach to economic development in the Gorge encourages synergistic, creative projects. A regional approach facilitates communities helping other communities, to capitalize on the comparative advantages of the Gorge, while coping with constraints imposed by the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act.

Regular consultation and coordination of activities in each state will be accomplished through several means:

- A Bi-State Advisory Council for Oregon and Washington will convene at least annually to plan and carry out activities designed to foster coordination between the respective state programs.
- The staff for the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards in each state will routinely exchange information with one another about the status of activities and programs.
- Members and staff for the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards will provide support for joint projects to provide technical and financial resources for regional activities.
- Staff for the Boards and/or members of the Bi-State Advisory Council will seek to meet with regional entities, including the Columbia River Gorge Commission and Mid-Columbia Economic Development District, at least annually to provide an update on the activities of the Boards and the status of the economy in the National Scenic Area.

The Program Administration Goals

The program administration goals are as follows:

- Create an ongoing, bi-state partnership dedicated to economic development projects and strategies;
- Facilitate local and regional participation;
- Encourage creative and regional thinking that promotes communities working together;
- Ensure public accountability;
- Provide expert investment analysis of proposals;
- Strive for simplicity and quick turnaround on proposals;
- Make funding decisions that deliver maximum economic benefits;
- Maximize leverage of other private and public resources;
- Engage in efforts to sustain and expand funding levels and,
- Create a linkage with the Columbia River Gorge Commission, the USFS, MCEDD, and the states' governors and economic development officials.

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The Program Administrative Structure

A joint Oregon/Washington administrative structure encourages regional approaches to economic development that emphasize strategic thinking, innovation, partnerships and regional participation of entities. The roles of the following entities in the administrative structure are described in this plan:

- Bi-State Advisory Council
- States of Oregon and Washington
- Investment Boards
- USFS
- Gorge Commission
- Administrative Support

Bi-State Advisory Council

The Bi-State Advisory Council is the joint structure designed to coordinate efforts of the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards, States of Oregon and Washington, MCEDD, USFS, Columbia River Gorge Commission and local partners in support of economic development in the National Scenic Area. The Council assesses economic development issues, markets the economic development program and identifies potential joint projects. The Bi-State Council also initiates ideas for economic development that emphasize creative thinking, partnerships and linkages among Gorge communities.

Governance

The Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Advisory Council is comprised of Oregon and Washington members. Voting members of the Bi-State Advisory Council include the following representatives from each county with conforming ordinances in place:

- The seven members of the Oregon Investment Board, including two from Wasco County, two from Hood River County, two from Multnomah County, and one at-large member appointed by the Governor's Office for the State of Oregon.
- The members of the Washington Investment Board, including two from each County with conforming Scenic Area ordinances in effect, two at-large members appointed by the State and the Governor's appointee.

Non-voting representatives include:

- a representative of Business Oregon
- a representative of the Washington Department of Commerce
- a representative of the USFS
- a representative of the Columbia River Gorge Commission
- a representative of MCEDD

Roles and Responsibility

The Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Advisory Council is responsible for the following:

- Representing local, state, and federal perspectives on economic conditions, resources, and trends in the National Scenic Area;

- Providing overall vision and strategy for promoting regional economic vitality in the National Scenic Area;
- Developing linkages between Columbia River Gorge communities and metropolitan areas in order to expand the resource base;
- Identifying additional market and investment opportunities and funding resources;
- Presenting projects and ideas for consideration for joint funding;
- Developing outreach strategies and communications tools to discuss the activities of the economic development purpose of the National Scenic Area and the Investment Boards; and
- Seeking additional resources to support the functions of the Boards.

The Advisory Council may suggest proposals for planning and professional expertise and may call together special task forces on specific issues and project ideas, drawing upon broad local participation from citizens and business representatives.

States

Governance

The states of Oregon and Washington were authorized to receive funding pursuant to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act of 1986 for the purposes of making grants and loans for economic development projects. Each State created an Investment Board to meet the purpose of these funds.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities evolve over time as funding changes and currently include the following:

- Support the Investment Boards and the purposes of the Act;
- Appoint members to the Investment Boards;
- Manage federal funds appropriated under the Act; and
- Develop and engage in intergovernmental contracts for staffing services for the Investment Boards.

Investment Boards

An Investment Board in each state provides policy direction, establishes funding criteria, and makes investment and funding decisions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities of the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards are as follows:

- The Boards are authorized to implement the provisions of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act and the Economic Vitality Plan within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, subject to certification of consistency by the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

- The Boards are responsible for updating the established Bylaws which are consistent with the Act and the Plan.
- The Boards establish fund management policies and performance standards.
- The Boards are responsible for investment decisions for the federally appropriated funds authorized under the Act and consistent with the Plan, made available to it by the State.
- The Boards may approve sales of the Fund's debt or equity positions in the second market.
- The Boards advise the States on administration and staff needs.

Governance

Each Investment Board is governed independently.

Oregon Investment Board

The Oregon Investment Board consists of seven members. The membership is composed of county-specific interests, including two from Multnomah County, two from Hood River County, and two from Wasco County, based on nominations made by the boards of commissioners of the three counties, for terms prescribed by the Oregon Governor. The Governor also appoints one at-large member.

Washington Investment Board

Voting membership of the Washington Investment Board include two representatives from each county with conforming ordinances in place, two at-large members appointed by the state and the Governor's appointee. For example, if only one county has conforming ordinances in effect then only five (5) members are entitled to vote, namely the member appointed by the county, the member appointed by the Associate Development Organization for the county (or in the case of Klickitat County, the Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce), and the two at-large members appointed by the state. If two counties have conforming ordinances in effect there will be seven (7) members entitled to vote. And if all three counties have conforming ordinances adopted and in effect there will be nine (9) members entitled to vote. Currently, two Washington counties, Clark and Skamania, have adopted conforming ordinances.

US Forest Service

Roles and Responsibilities

The USFS consults with Oregon and Washington economic development officials as they prepare economic vitality plans. These plans are submitted to the Secretary of Agriculture through the States of Oregon and Washington. The USFS also receives annual reports from Investment Boards through the States of Oregon and Washington, on the use of federally appropriated economic development funds in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, as outlined in 544i Section 11 (d) of the Act.

Columbia River Gorge Commission

Roles and Responsibilities

The Columbia River Gorge Commission consults with Oregon and Washington economic development officials as they prepare economic vitality plans. This consultation occurs between staff of the Investment Boards and staff for the Commission on the timeline described in the “Process of Update” section of this plan.

The Commission also ensures compliance with the provisions with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan. The Act requires the Commission must certify projects approved for funding by the boards for consistency with the Act, the management plan and land use ordinances adopted. Columbia River Gorge Commission Administrative Rules Chapter 350, Division 120 details the certification process. In the event of an adverse decision by the Executive Director, the decision would be appealed to the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

The Gorge Commission appoints an individual (staff or Commissioner) as a liaison to the investment boards and supports the investment boards’ requests to Congress to provide the remaining authorized monies and other actions. The investment boards periodically report their activities to the Commission.

Administrative Support

The states, in cooperation with the region, have responsibility for economic development funding appropriated to them under the Act. The programs have the flexibility to allow for local administration, through a development corporation or other entity, as appropriate, to manage the funds, analyze and evaluate project proposals, and advise the Boards.

Oregon Administrative Support

Business Oregon fulfills the State of Oregon’s role in the National Scenic Area by reviewing contracts for local administration. Business Oregon contracts with MCEDD to provide staff services to the Oregon Investment Board, and shared staff services with the State of Washington staff to the Bi-State Advisory Council. This contract is negotiated and updated on a bi-annual basis, based upon recommendations from the Oregon Investment Board. Based on a USFS legal and policy determination, as of July 1, 1999, a portion of the interest earnings generated by repayment of loans will be used by the State of Oregon to offset the cost of the contract with MCEDD.

Washington Administrative Support

The State of Washington’s Department of Commerce receives federal funding to implement the Washington Economic Vitality Plan and has transitioned management of the program to a local administrative entity, the Skamania County Economic Development Council. The goal is to make the Investment Fund a regional asset that is managed with significant autonomy at the local level. It is the policy of the Washington Investment Board to use interest repayments to recapitalize the Investment Fund. Any

fees and interest earnings generated from loan repayments and investments of unexpended fund balances will be made available to either augment the Investment Fund or to support administration of the fund.

Economic Outlook

Background

The following economic outlook is reflective of the most recent regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, produced annually by MCEDD. As a single region, and since the National Scenic Area is a portion of the larger economic zone, our outlooks and strategies are aligned. For a current status of the regional economic outlook, visit mcedd.org for a current copy of the regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, as well as information on demographic and data profiles.

Overview

The **Columbia Gorge region** is a transitional economy and the regional economic profile has improved dramatically over the past **few** decades. The region has experienced growth in a number of key industry sectors (high tech, fermentation businesses, renewable energy and light manufacturing) over the past **ten-fifteen** years and has a combined low unemployment rate. However, there are still pockets of severe economic distress in communities in the region, an overriding concern with underemployment and challenges with per capita wage growth and income disparity. Overall, the region also faces struggles with adequate and affordable housing, providing sufficient infrastructure for business development and transportation issues. Despite these challenges, the economy is growing. The opportunities presented by the Columbia Gorge are accelerated by location advantages which support trade within and outside the region, offering options for expanded export opportunities.

Assets

The Columbia Gorge is made stronger by having a region that crosses state boundaries and recognizes the role the Columbia River has played as a connecting body for the region for centuries. We have an increasing number of partners and degrees of connection that cross public, private, local, state and federal interests. This strong network creates opportunities for the region to enhance access to resources through our bi-state status, leverage our developing regional strategy as a catalyst for action and seek tools to further increase connections between one another.

Collaboration
The region is historically connected and is unique in working across state boundaries, forging partnerships between Oregon and Washington.
Collaborative human networks exist within the region and agencies exhibit a willingness to partner across sectors. The tendency of our rural communities is for residents to be active in multiple organizations, wearing “many hats.” The region offers ample opportunities for leadership and civic engagement.
A strong sense of community exists throughout the region. Community pride is evident and lends itself to having residents working hard to maintain economic viability. This sense of community helps create a strong local economic base.

Strong local leadership and regional organizations encourage greater collaboration.

Transportation and Location Advantages

The region has a distinct geographic advantage in being centrally located in the Pacific Northwest. We are described as the “Center of the Hub.”

We have direct access to metro areas: Portland/Vancouver, Tri-Cities, Yakima, Bend, Boise, and Boardman/Hermiston. This proximity offers distribution options for products, increases cultural opportunities, and enhances workforce and business opportunities.

“World Clock”: Our region is uniquely positioned to do business with approximately a 6,000 mile area from the West Coast to the East Coast to Asia, all within one regular business day.

Accessibility: a variety of transportation options are available. The region offers market access through:

- **Interstates and Highways** both East/West and North/South with connecting bridges.
- **Airports:** Close proximity to Portland International Airport. Presence of regional and local airports. Life Flight services are also available from the regional airport.
- **Rail Service:** Burlington Northern and Union Pacific offer rail services for the movement of goods in Oregon and Washington. Currently, passenger rail service is only available on the Washington side.
- **River Access:** The Columbia River facilitates barge traffic. This is particularly important for transporting waste and agricultural products.
- **Bicycle/Pedestrian/Transit:** Collaboration between transit providers through the Gorge TransLink Alliance. An extensive trail system and reconnection project through the Historic Columbia River Highway.

Access to markets, including international markets for exporting materials. Our economy includes a focus on bringing in dollars from outside the community and minimizing leakages. We are an exporter of fruit, timber, wine, wheat, power and manufactured goods, among others.

Natural and Cultural Resources

The area is rich in natural resources, supporting timber, agriculture, recreation and tourism as well as lifestyle entrepreneurs attracted to the natural amenities.

Diverse climates exist within the region’s borders from the warm, arid eastern parts to the cool, damp western parts of the region. Generally, we enjoy a temperate climate with welcome seasonal changes and varying degrees of precipitation. The variation in both topography and climate leads to a diversity in economies, variations in crops and living opportunities. For example, the Columbia Gorge Winegrowers are able to characterize this region as “A world of wine in 40 miles” due to the variation in climate and soils.

Strong rural values and characteristics are present that the region seeks to maintain and protect.
The region has strong culture and history and has been a trading center for millennia. It has ongoing tribal relationships with four tribes as called out in the Act: Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation of Oregon, and Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation. The region also has additional evolving cultures as the demographics of the region continue to change.
Agriculture
There is a total of approximately 130,000 acres of prime farmlands in the region.
Agriculture forms a base for our economy and is a stabilizing force to moderate economic swings. Cherries, wheat, grapes, apples, pears, cattle, sheep, and a variety of other products are grown or produced in the region. There is both commercial-scale agriculture and a small farms network with support through Gorge Grown Food Network.
The region has enjoyed an increasing focus on value-added agricultural products through carefully cultivated strategies.
Scenic Beauty with Year-Round Recreation
In 2009, National Geographic Traveler ranked the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area 6 th internationally on its destination scorecard to the world's most iconic destinations.
Abundant recreational opportunities for all four seasons including cycling, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, camping, rafting, kayaking, canoeing, windsurfing, rock climbing, and a variety of snow sports.
Additional Regional Assets
Diverse foundational businesses alleviate peaks and troughs of economic cycles. These include historical strong businesses in the agriculture and forestry sectors as well as newer industry clusters in value-added ag, high tech, healthcare, and renewable energy.
Renewable energy assets include utilization of solar, wind, geothermal and biomass opportunities throughout the region. <u>Abundant clean and local power will help the region increase its resiliency. In addition, we are training the workforce for this need. Columbia Gorge Community College's Renewable Energy Technology program offers the west coast's first wind technician training.</u>
Higher education opportunities are currently available in the region through Community Colleges and OSU and WSU Extension. <u>Unique educational programs offered by Columbia Gorge Community College are supported by local businesses.</u>
Federal agency presence in the region, including a strong presence from the US Army Corps of Engineers, US Fish and Wildlife, and US Forest Service. Historically these have been stable jobs and resources infused to the region, but the region recognizes that there are additional opportunities for partnership.

Human capital and entrepreneurial spirit. Diverse range of skill sets from entrepreneurs to retirees.
Existing infrastructure has been developed in the region to support industrial and commercial development. It is also a challenge, though, in maintaining and expanding our region's infrastructure. Infrastructure includes:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable, reliable power
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available industrial sites
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telecommunication and broadband capacity that supports a high level of high tech and self-employed workers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water/sewer/community facilities

Challenges

The region faces a variety of challenges that currently hinder our economic development activities. We focus on the opportunity that is created through these challenges to design strategies which leverage our assets ~~to address the needs that arise through these challenges.~~

CHALLENGE: Skilled Workforce

The region recognizes the critical role already played by educational institutions serving the region, but has identified that additional resources are required for a fully trained workforce with the skills needed to support business growth and success. In meeting our challenge, the focus is to expanding educational and training services. In educational attainment, the region is keeping pace with the states and exceeding the nation in the percentage of the population with an Associate's degree, but falls behind in measurements of individuals with a Bachelor's degree or higher.

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Economic Vitality Plan response to this challenge: The primary avenue to address the need for a skilled workforce is via support to enhance and expand upon existing services, with a long-term vision for developing new resources. The OIB goals for investment of resources prioritize funding for projects that focus on workforce training and development and the WIB strategies list strengthening workforce skills and linkages to development opportunities.

CHALLENGE: Lack of Affordable Housing

Access to housing, particularly workforce housing, is an issue for the entire region. Without affordable options, individuals must commute or find work elsewhere and businesses may elect not to move into or expand in our communities.

Economic Vitality Plan response to this challenge: Capital resources are limited through the OIB/WIB funds, but the boards have funded selected projects that address key gaps in the attainable housing market and also prioritize providing support for adequate public infrastructure to support developments. Primarily, we will partner with housing advocates and agencies in addressing this challenge.

CHALLENGE: Shortage of Capital

The shortage of capital in the region crosses a number of areas, relating to both capital for businesses and funding for infrastructure.

Economic Vitality Plan response to this challenge: This is the primary challenge the plan is designed to address. The plan identified management of economic vitality resources through the revolving loan fund programs in the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards which fundamental increases access to capital.

CHALLENGE: Regulatory Environment

With two states, a National Scenic Area overlay and high percentages of federal land ownership, the level of regulations affecting development activities in the region is a significant concern. All five counties in the Mid-Columbia region have zoning ordinances and land use comprehensive plans. Additional state and federal regulatory agencies also affect development activities in the region, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, and the Washington Department of Ecology. The regulatory environment can make it difficult to ensure an adequate supply of industrial land is available to support economic vitality.

Economic Vitality Plan response to this challenge: The Economic Vitality Plan response to the complex regulatory issues is largely limited to the ability to ensure effective OIB/WIB funding. As such, the plan outlines streamlined application processes between the Boards and the Gorge Commission. Meetings of the Bi-State Advisory Council provide an opportunity to review the application process on a regular basis and make improvements. Outside of the OIB/WIB funds, the strategies of the Boards have allowed for significant support to businesses, such as the Farmer's Conservation Alliance, which are working through regulatory processes for new products and for those adapting to new regulations, such as Opportunity Connections.

CHALLENGE: Telecommunications and Clearly Branded Regional Identity

This challenge is two part: first, telecommunications infrastructure. Increasing broadband access is critical to supporting our growing industry sectors. While pockets of our region are covered, access for all residents is necessary. Second, the region's image and brand. There are considerable differences in state funding for marketing and there are multiple entities which could take the lead in building our internal and external image and promoting our assets through regional branding.

Economic Vitality Plan response to this challenge: Telecommunications has long been a priority for funding as the OIB and WIB goals seek to providing support for adequate public infrastructure and expanding the economy. In the past, in order to enhance our region's image and brand, the WIB provided ~~recent~~ funding to support the Gorge Tourism

studio in order to enhance our region's image and brand. The WIB strategy includes efforts to capitalize on tourism potential and a similar OIB goal seeks to diversify the region's traditional economic base, such as tourism. The OIB has also recently invested in a video marketing project of its own to increase brand awareness about the fund.

CHALLENGE: Transportation

While market access and the mix of transportation modes available for the movement of goods and people are a distinct asset to the region, maintaining that infrastructure, and expanding it to meet growing industry and population needs, is a challenge, particularly when coupled with constrained financial resources and the rural/dispersed nature of the region. In addition, congestion in heavy use recreation sites and safety concerns are forefront. While public transportation options have increased recently to address this challenge, the need is still great. Limited rail options, particularly passenger rail ~~and limited public transportation options~~ are also a challenge. Data describing commuting habits in the Mid-Columbia by place of work show that workers in the Mid-Columbia region travel outside their state of residence to work to a greater extent than the average worker in Oregon, Washington, or the nation. Public transportation is necessary both from a human and social services standpoint but also from an economic standpoint to support the mobile workforce.

Economic Vitality Plan response to this challenge: Resources through the OIB and WIB prioritize public improvement loans and grants that are intended to include support for necessary transportation infrastructure serving key business development areas. Primarily, the OIB and WIB partner with MCEDD, Gorge Translink Alliance, SW Washington Regional Transportation Council, Area Commissions on Transportation and Departments of Transportation in addressing this challenge.

County Highlights

Skamania County, Washington, like its neighboring counties within the gorge, is rich in natural resources, recreation amenities and agriculture. A majority of the County's population is located in the south central portion of the county along the shores of the Columbia River. This core population is where a significant portion of the county's economic activity occurs in part due to the fact that 94% of Skamania County's land base surrounding its urban areas is in state or federal ownership. Within the economic core, light manufacturing continues to increase particularly in the industry areas of value-added agriculture, craft breweries and distilleries. Existing manufacturers that are continuing to show growth within the County include outdoor gear, commercial/industrial store interiors, and lumber manufacturers. The east and west ends of the County have minor commercial agricultural activities consisting of filbert and fruit orchards on the west end and vineyards and fruit orchards on the east end.

The tourism/recreation industry is a strong segment of Skamania County's economy and has surpassed government as the largest employer in the County. Tourism revenue is generated by several resorts within the County including Skamania Lodge, ~~North~~

~~Bonneville Hot Springs Resort~~, Carson Hot Springs Resort and various smaller lodges, hotels, and bed and breakfast inns. These resorts are supported by a multitude of recreational activities within the county such as hiking, biking, kite boarding, windsurfing, paddle boarding, fishing, cross-country skiing, kayaking, rafting, river cruises, berry picking and mushroom hunting. All of which are done in the incredible and world class scenic vistas of the Columbia River Gorge as well as in close proximity to the Mt. St. Helens National Volcanic Monument and the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

Klickitat County, Washington has three distinct economic regions. The western third of the County is dependent upon orchards, fruit packing, and wood products. The central third includes the county seat, the closed aluminum smelter, Maryhill Museum and beaches serving recreationalists. The eastern third includes vegetable farming and a growing number of wineries and windfarms, along with the regional landfill. The County continues to look towards efforts designed to reduce the long-standing unemployment created by reductions in forest products and aluminum smelter employment as well as the general downturn in agriculture. Central to Klickitat County's economic development strategy is strengthening the financial base of the county, including the agricultural sector. As one of the top wind resource areas in the Pacific Northwest, and with the adoption of a first-in-the-nation Energy Overlay Zone for wind and solar facilities, the county is a center for renewable energy projects. In addition to support for renewable energy projects, the county continues to actively support value added agriculture and has burgeoning high-tech growth centered around Boeing-owned Insitu that is powering strong industrial economic growth on both sides of the river. In the past few years, like most other areas, the County's medical facility, Skyline, expanded. Services at the Columbia Gorge regional airport, located in the County, also expanded. The site there includes Life Flight, an essential service for the region. The airport is a critical facility for the entire region and projects to expand and support the airport show predominantly in the regional priorities for development of the region.

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Clark County, Washington and Multnomah County, Oregon: The National Scenic Area encompasses 169,401 acres along the Columbia River in Washington State, however ninety-five percent of the Scenic Area's land mass in Washington is found in Klickitat and Skamania counties. The small portion of the Scenic Area that is located within Clark and Multnomah Counties has few businesses and residents, so few entities eligible to seek funding through the OIB and WIB.

Hood River County, Oregon is rich in natural resources with agriculture, lumber and recreation as sources of revenue and industry. Important sectors include technology, agriculture, outdoor gear manufacturing and tourism. Agriculture is a big part of both the economy and community in Hood River County, both within the Scenic Area and the surrounding portions of the County. The major crops, including pears, apples, and cherries, bring in about \$60 million dollars per year. Value added agriculture also plays an economically significant role with a potential for additional future growth. In addition to agriculture, forestry is also significant. Unique to Hood River County is County ownership

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and maintenance of forest lands. A burgeoning tech sector also defines the economy of the County with primary employers supporting this industry, and in particular unmanned systems development. In Hood River County, outdoor gear and activewear companies have flourished. Innovation in product design, green design and sustainability has positioned Hood River County to be a global leader in outdoor gear and activewear. The diverse landscape of Hood River County supports outdoor tourism. The many recreational attractions bring thousands of visitors to the County each year. On the water, Cascade Locks is a world-class sailing destination and Hood River is a kite boarding and windsurfing destination, each attracting visitors from around the world. The mountainous terrain boasts beautiful vistas and waterfall for hiking and cycling, and snowboarding and skiing in the winter.

Wasco County, Oregon. The County's economic base is agriculture and the processing of agricultural products, particularly cherries, wheat and livestock. County farm-gate sales were nearly \$88 million in 2010, mostly from sweet cherries and wheat (\$48 million and \$20 million, respectively).¹ Other traditional industries have included forestry, manufacturing, electric power generation and transportation. Wasco County's economy has diversified from its traditional natural resources base to include a stronger focus on technology and manufacturing. The rapid growth of renewable energy industries is driving additional employment through support industries and related manufacturing. ~~The world's largest Internet firm, Google,~~ established a major operational center in The Dalles ~~in 2005 and has continued to grow its campus since then.~~ As the largest community in the County, The Dalles serves as a retail and service hub for many surrounding counties, resulting in strong employment in these industries as well as government. Further expansion of the healthcare sector, with the expansion of Mid-Columbia Medical Center, has also positively impacted job growth in the County.

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Key Economic Trends and Opportunities

Key economic trends which are emerging for the National Scenic Area economy include the following:

- The greatest opportunity for growth in agriculture, forest products, and fisheries lies in increased value-added manufacturing. These industries are already a significant economic driver for the region, however, so equal attention to funding and policies that continue to secure their economic future is critical.
- Growth in the number, size, and diversity of emerging niche-manufacturing firms requires appropriately-sized, fully-serviced sites and facilities available for their use. Continued growth in the unmanned systems supply chain has set the region up to be a national leader, but addressing the challenges noted in this plan is necessary to support the businesses.
- Tourism ~~has become~~ is a primary industry in the region and is anticipated to increase with growing visitor interest in heritage and eco-tourism opportunities. However, tourism is a tertiary sector and therefore efforts to support tourism

¹ (2011 research for the Wasco County Extension Service by Bruce Sorte).

must also ensure that it is being done in a manner which does not negatively impact core manufacturing industries and primary agriculture/ forest products/ fisheries industries.

- Despite growth in retail and services sectors, Klickitat and Skamania counties continue to experience significant sales leakage from these sectors to Oregon. Simultaneously, the Oregon counties have opportunity to continue to operate and grow in these areas.
- Investment in public infrastructure and facilities, within downtown business cores and on port and industrial properties, is critical to tourism and industrial/ manufacturing business development and expansion.
- Careful planning is required to maximize economic potential of available business sites in the urban areas while preserving or enhancing quality of life.
- The lack of available capital to assist small emerging or expanding businesses that require higher risk, non-traditional financing is a major obstacle to Gorge business development.
- The ability of local economic development organizations to positively impact the economy will be inextricably tied to actions taken to address planning, infrastructure, and business financing needs.
- A trend towards local goods and services provides an opportunity to further development of the locally-based economy.

Key Regional Industry Development

Five key regional industries in the Mid-Columbia were identified through a process in 2005 as a new economic base in the region. These were updated with the 2016-2017 regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.

- High Tech: Represented through the Gorge Technology Alliance which now has over 100 members. In this region, high tech has a significant concentration centered particularly on unmanned systems development. The Mid-Columbia region is a national leading Unmanned Systems hub driven by a local industry heavy-weight and deep breadth in the local supply chain. The industry is a major job producer with a high average wage.
- Art/Culture/Tourism/Recreation: Tourism is a primary industry sector by virtue of the number of jobs it provides, but it does not yet meet wage goals. This sector encompasses initiatives to invest in the quality of tourism venues and visitor infrastructure and to ensure that trained workers are available in the field. Arts and Culture: Represented through the Columbia Gorge Arts and Culture Alliance, a collaboration of arts, culture and economic development interests within the Columbia River Gorge.
- Healthcare: Healthcare continues to be a major component of the economy of the Columbia River Gorge with both major hospitals and independent practitioners. Expansions to three major emergency healthcare providers: Providence Hospital in Hood River, Mid-Columbia Medical Center in The Dalles, and Skyline Hospital in

White Salmon, and Klickitat Valley Health in Goldendale) ensures that this cluster will continue to grow.

- ~~Manufacturing: Fermentation Science, Value Added: Manufacturing cuts across multiple related sectors and beyond the subset listed here. The sector focus subset ties directly to opportunities with our agriculture base and with growth in fermentation sciences, encompassing wine, beer, cider, cheesemaking and others..Value Added agriculture. A subset is fermentation businesses, encompassing wine, beer, cider, cheesemaking and others. This cluster has seen rapid growth in the past decade and expansion into new markets.~~
- ~~Renewable Energy: The renewable energy cluster is represented through the Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Renewable Energy Zone. While much of the development has occurred in the area surrounding the Scenic Area, support industries are located in the Gorge.~~
- ~~Forest/Wood Products: While the sector has been in decline, innovation processing, new products and utilization of byproducts industry will drive growth of this sector.~~

~~In addition, there is broad Oregon-Washington cluster effort and new emerging clusters:~~

- ~~In 2015, the region was included in the Pacific Northwest Manufacturing Partnership (PNMP) and received designation as Investing in Manufacturing Partnerships Community. PNMP efforts support many of the clusters listed above. In addition, there is a focus on innovative forest products, including exploration of Cross Laminated Timber.~~
- ~~Emerging Clusters: The clusters highlighted above continue to emerge as leading industries for the region. Outdoor sports and recreation, manufacturing, and construction continue to create strongholds of cluster-based economic development activities for parts of the region with a growing number of businesses operating in the region.~~

Process of Update

Planning Process

To support and protect the economy of the area, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act directs the states of Oregon and Washington to submit economic development plans to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Approval for the plans in 1992 qualified the states to receive \$5 million each to make loans and grants for economic development purposes. The 1992 plan was revised in 1999, 2010, 2012 and again in 20122016. This 20162021 update reflects how each state is currently allocating and administering its program resources in the Scenic Area and defines the relevant governing structures. It also affirms core features of the original plans, such as the mission and regional approach.

Timeline

The timeline for the 20162021 update consisted of the following:

- ~~September 2015~~December 2020: Bi-State Advisory Council reviews key elements of the 2016 2021 plan update.
- Through March 20162021: Oregon and Washington Investment Board staff consults with impacted agencies on a draft revised plan. Oregon and Washington Investment Boards review their independent sections.
- By June 20162021: Oregon and Washington Investment Boards review draft plans, providing opportunity for public meetings.
- By July 20162021: Plan adoption; submission to States of Oregon and Washington.

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Consultation and Public Meetings

Public meetings to review the plan were held with the following entities:

- Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Advisory Council
- Oregon Investment Board
- Washington Investment Board

Future Updates

This plan is designed to be reviewed at least once every five years by the governing bodies of the two Investment Boards and the Bi-State Advisory Council. Updates should allow for the following:

- Development of an updated Plan by staff and Board members for the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards, in consultation with the States and affected counties.
- Allowance for at least one public meeting in each state in which the plan is considered.
- Adoption of the Plan by the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards, independently or through the Bi-State Advisory Council.
- Adoption of the Plan by the Bi-State Advisory Council.
- Presentation of the plan or providing copies of the plan to the Columbia River Gorge Commission and affected counties.

The Oregon Investment Board
Economic Vitality Plan
~~2016~~2021 Update

To be updated by the OIB individually, for incorporation to the final plan

The Washington Investment Board
Economic Vitality Plan ~~2016~~2021 Update

To be updated by the WIB individually, for incorporation to the final plan

Appendix A: Oregon Investment Board Composition

Oregon Investment Board Members (May ~~2016~~2021)

~~Ken Bailey~~Jill Amery

Wasco County

~~Bob McFadden~~Craig Bowder

At Large Member

~~Vacant~~Tammy Miller

Multnomah County

~~Jack Miller~~Doug Roof

Hood River County

~~Rick Leibowitz~~Jorge Barragan

Wasco County

Vacant

Multnomah County

John Kasberger

Hood River County

Ex-Officio

~~Carolyn Meece~~Michael Held, Oregon Business Development Department

Krystyna Wolniakowski, Columbia River Gorge Commission

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District Staff Serving the OIB

~~Amanda Hoey~~Jessica Metta, Executive Director

~~Eric Nerdin~~Israel Ayala Guevara, Loan Fund Manager

~~Sherry Wickert~~Dana Woods, Finance & Operations

~~Sherry Bohn~~, Office AdministratorAdministrative Assistant

Appendix B: Washington Investment Board Composition

Washington Investment Board Members (May ~~2016~~2021)

Jen Baker

Clark County ADO

Sandy Seaman

Skamania County ADO

Kathy McKenzie

State of Washington Governor's
Appointee

Vacant

Clark County Board of Councilors

Anita Gahimer Crow

Skamania County Board of County
Commissioners

Matt Masco

State of Washington Department of
Commerce

Jacqueline Perez Woodson

State of Washington Department of
Commerce

Vacant (non voting)

Mount Adams Chamber of Commerce

Vacant (non voting)

Klickitat County Board of County
Commissioners

Ex-Officio

Vacant/Open

Washington State Department of Commerce

~~Amanda Hoey~~**Jessica Metta**

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District

Tamara Kaufman

Columbia River Gorge Commission

Lynn Burditt

US Forest Service

Skamania EDC Staff

~~Pat Albaugh~~**Kevin Waters**

Skamania County Economic Development Council

Appendix C: Agencies Consulted

List of Agencies Consulted

Agencies consulted for the ~~2016~~2021 update to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area economic vitality plan include the following:

- Columbia River Gorge Commission
- US Forest Service
- Mid-Columbia Economic Development District