

Presentation Title: Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Interagency Recreation Team; Recreation Report and Interim Strategies

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In 2010 a group of interagency partners formed the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area (CRG) Interagency Recreation Strategy Team (IRST). The purpose of the Team was to understand the current state of recreation demand and land management capacity. The team included various federal, state, and local agencies, as well as a university partner. The IRST identified four common recreation related issues faced by land management agencies in the CRG, which became the basis of the IRST's goals and outcomes: (a) Growing demand for new recreation sites and emerging new uses; (b) increased impacts to natural and cultural resources from growing demand and unmanaged recreation use (i.e. overcrowding and illegal trails); (c) decreased budgets and agency capacity to meet current and future demand; and (d) increased dependency of local and regional economy on recreation resources.

IRST Vision Statement: To develop an Interagency Recreation Strategy that builds capacity, improves efficiency and creates citizen stewards. To accomplish the vision, the IRST focused on the following goals: (a) Create a common vision amongst public land managers for natural resource based public recreation in the Columbia River Gorge; (b) clarify roles and identify the strengths and focus areas of each agency; (c) practice working collaboratively toward sustainability; (d) identify management strategies to address increases in demand, unmanaged recreation and the capacity needed to provide for current and expected demand; and (e) increase citizen stewardship through education (increasing the public's understanding of the impacts unmanaged recreation has on sensitive resources, agency capacity and future recreation development opportunities). The Team also identified several working strategies, developed specifically to address the current needs and concerns of resource and recreation managers. Outcomes, challenges, and implications will be discussed.