Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
Urban Area Policy Assessment

Overview

Oregon Consensus, a program at Portland State University; and the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, a joint program of Washington State University and University of Washington, are both neutral forums for resolving public policy issues. The Columbia River Gorge Commission wishes to explore opportunities to collaboratively engage its constituents in developing a comprehensive regional urban area policy in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA). The Commission has asked the Centers to help them determine how best to engage stakeholders in developing this urban area policy.

The Centers will be conducting interviews to explore whether and how a collaborative process might be convened and implemented to inform the Commission as it develops an urban area policy. The Centers will reach out to a cross-section of parties in the Gorge NSA as well as state and agency representatives in Oregon and Washington in order to capture a wide range of perspectives. The assessment will explore the potential scope and content of an urban area policy, the interests of affected parties, and situation dynamics. A report will be derived from this interview-based assessment. The final report is expected to be completed early 2015.

We are currently contacting representatives of interested stakeholder groups and other entities to schedule interviews. As an individual with a particular role or interest in, or knowledge of, urban area issues, you have been identified as an interview candidate. We hope you will agree to participate.

Interviews typically take between 30-60 minutes, and participation is voluntary. You can choose at any time during the interview to decline to answer a question or end the interview. To encourage you to be as candid as possible, interview responses will not be attributed to their source by name or organization. The report will include a list of who was interviewed and a summary of key themes without attribution.

Attached is a copy of the assessment interview questions and more information about the Centers. If you have any questions about participating, please contact Turner Odell at Oregon Consensus at (503) 725-8200 or Chris Page at the Ruckelshaus Center at (206) 770-6060.
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area
Urban Area Policy Assessment

About the Centers

Oregon Consensus:
Oregon Consensus (OC) is part of the Oregon Solutions Network and serves as Oregon’s official program established to promote effective agreement-seeking approaches for addressing public issues in the state. OC provides assessment, facilitation, mediation and other collaborative support services to public entities and their stakeholders throughout Oregon. OC is a university-based program located at Portland State University. OC offers state agencies, local governments and the public a neutral forum and neutral services in support of collaborative governance.

William D. Ruckelshaus Center:
The William D. Ruckelshaus Center is a joint effort of Washington’s two research universities, hosted at the University of Washington by the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs and at Washington State University by WSU Extension. Building on the unique strengths of the two institutions, the Center is dedicated to assisting public, private, tribal, non-profit and other community leaders in their efforts to build consensus and resolve conflicts around difficult public policy issues. The mission of the Center is to act as a neutral resource for collaborative problem solving in the State of Washington and Pacific Northwest. The Center provides expertise to improve the quality and availability of voluntary collaborative approaches for policy development and multi-party dispute resolution.
COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE URBAN AREA POLICY ASSESSMENT

Assessment Interview Questions

Background

The Columbia River Gorge Commission wishes to explore opportunities to collaboratively engage its constituents in developing a comprehensive regional urban area policy in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The Commission has asked our University-based centers to help them determine how best to engage stakeholders in developing urban area policy for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The Oregon Consensus Program, located at Portland State University; and the William D. Ruckelshaus Center, a joint program of Washington State University and University of Washington, are both neutral forums for resolving public policy issues. The Centers will be conducting interviews with representative parties from throughout the Gorge National Scenic Area to explore whether and how a collaborative process might be convened.

Interview Questions

Background

1. Please tell us about your background and involvement with respect to urban area policy for the Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA).

2. [For those affiliated with a particular urban area]
   What is your vision for your particular urban area?

3. Looking at the Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) as a whole, how will you know urban area policy has been successful for the NSA? (25/50/75 years …) How can an urban area policy help serve the purpose and goals of the NSA?

4. Are there challenges or barriers to developing an urban area policy? Do you have suggestions for how to address these challenges?

Scope

5. What should be the scope of an urban area policy – what matters or issues should be addressed in an urban area policy? If these areas were addressed, what outcomes would you see? Are there matters or issues that should not be addressed in an urban area policy?
   a. Is there common ground on any urban area issues or are there any policies that you think would meet multiple interests? How would other interested parties in the NSA be affected by those approaches/outcomes?

Potential for a collaborative approach

In a typical collaborative process, stakeholders are brought together as a group to share perspectives, define issues, identify interests and common ground, generate options for addressing issues, and seek agreement.

6. Do you feel there is potential for using a collaborative process to help inform the Commission as they develop an urban area policy for the NSA? If so, would you or your organizations be interested in participating? Are there challenges or barriers? If so, do you have suggestions for approaches or processes that could be used to help develop an urban area policy?
7. If the Commission were to move forward with a process for developing an urban area policy for the scenic area what do you see as the first steps?

Other funding or resources

8. Do you have any ideas for other funding opportunities or other resources available to support such a process?

Wrap-up questions

9. Is there anyone else you think we should be interviewing? Why is it important to speak to him/her?

10. What should we have asked that we did not? Do you have any questions for us?