

The Dalles Outreach Team Community Enhancement Program The Dalles, Oregon March 2021



By: Ron Nichols, Courtesy: [NRCS](#)

Spring Cherry Orchard in The Dalles

THE DALLES COMMUNITY OUTREACH TEAM
Community Enhancement Program

March 2021

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THE DALLES OUTREACH TEAM

COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

March 2021



Come visit us in The Dalles today and you will see a city vastly different from a decade ago. Our downtown is bustling with new businesses and private investment. Our industrial area and affordable public power are attracting innovative new industry and Columbia Gorge Community College is welcoming more people who want to prepare for jobs in our modern economy.

All this did not happen by accident. It is the result of partnerships carefully nurtured over time among the organizations you see represented at left, and relationships forged with our state and federal government.

We have been grateful to receive federal funding in the past for local projects. Every time we do, we make sure to leverage that money for an improvement of even greater value and positive impact.

For example, the City of The Dalles' East Gateway Project, funded with the help of a \$2.4 million Federal investment, is now at the eye of a busy Maker's District focused on beverages.

At the other end of The Dalles' downtown, the Marine Terminal is drawing thousands more visitors to the area from the 300-plus cruise ship dockings here every year. A \$2 million Federal investment helped make that \$5.5 million project possible.

Today, Columbia Gorge Community College is beginning the construction of a new, \$14 million skills center. This project is funded by a \$7 million contribution from the Oregon State Legislature, Wasco County, City of The Dalles, Port of The Dalles, and private contributions. The skills center will also include a residential component for students that are traveling to the area for training.

We thank you for helping us build a strong, vibrant community. Let us show you what we have in mind for the future.

Sincerely,

Scott Hege, Commission Chair
Wasco County

Greg Weast, Commission President
Port of The Dalles

Andrea Klaas, Executive Director
Port of The Dalles

Dr. Marta Yera Cronin
President
Columbia Gorge Community College

Rich Mays, Mayor
City of The Dalles

Dan Richardson, City Councilor
City of The Dalles

Dan Spatz, Director, Capital Projects &
Community Relations
Columbia Gorge Community College

VISITING OUTREACH TEAM MEMBERS



Andrea Klaas, Executive Director, Port of The Dalles
andrea@portofthedalles.com (541) 298-4148

Andrea has been Port of The Dalles Executive Director since 2006 and was previously its Marketing Director for seven years. Andrea is currently the Chair of the Oregon Public Ports Association, Oregon Infrastructure Finance Authority, and the Oregon Special Districts Insurance Services.



Scott Hege, Commission Chair, Wasco County
scotth@co.wasco.or.us (541) 288-1616

Scott Hege has been a resident of Wasco County for the past 28 years. He was born and raised in Spokane, Washington. He has a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Idaho and earned Master's in Business Administration from Washington State University in 1986. His family moved to The Dalles in 1991 when he took over management of the Port of The Dalles, serving in that role for almost 15 years.



Richard Mays, Mayor, City of The Dalles
rmays@ci.the-dalles.or.us (541) 769-0585

Mayor of The Dalles, Rich's 40-year public service career includes 33 years in municipal government, 28 as a City Manager in Cannon Beach, Oregon; Jefferson City, the state capital of Missouri; and Collinsville and Sterling, Illinois. Rich also served as Interim County Manager for Clatsop County following retirement from Cannon Beach in July 2014. Rich and his wife, Rose, moved to The Dalles in 2015 to be closer to their daughter, Christine, and their grandchildren, Olivia and Carter.



Greg Weast, Commission President, Port of The Dalles
gweast@portofthedalles.com (541) 980-1107

Greg was elected to the Port of The Dalles in 2011 and became Commission President in 2017. Prior to becoming a Commissioner, he served as Chair of the Port Budget Committee for many years. Greg has been an active member of The Dalles community, representing small business on the Urban Renewal District board, as a volunteer band director, and a downtown business owner for over 30 years. Greg is a well-known advocate of independent music stores and small business.



Dan Richardson, City Councilor, City of The Dalles

drichardson@ci.the-dalles.or.us (541) 238-2883

Dan Richardson was raised in The Dalles and returned in 2003 with his wife and daughter to raise their family. His work history spans two careers. He spent 10 years working as a reporter and news editor for newspapers in New England, Spokane and Goldendale, Wash., where he was editor at The Goldendale Sentinel. More recently, Richardson has worked in natural resources conservation at a soil and water conservation district in Klickitat and Skamania Counties. There, he helps landowners on projects involving wildfire hazard-reduction, streams, native plants and habitats, and related projects mostly with rural landowners.



Dr. Marta Yera Cronin, President, Columbia Gorge Community College

mcronin@cgcc.edu (541) 506-6034

Marta was appointed in 2018 as President of Columbia Gorge Community College. Prior to that, she served as Vice President of Academic Affairs at Indian River State College, as well as their first Dean at the school of Education. During her tenure at Indian River, she represented the institution on several national initiatives, such as the AACC Pathways Project, the Frontier Set and the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence.



Dan Spatz, Director, Capital Projects & Community Relations

Columbia Gorge Community College

dspatz@cgcc.edu (541) 506-6034

Dan is a graduate of Columbia High School in White Salmon, Clark College and Eastern Oregon State College. He worked 30 years in regional journalism before joining the college, most recently as editor and general manager of The Dalles Chronicle. He served nine years on The Dalles City Council. Earlier in his career he was interim director of the Port of Klickitat and economic development coordinator for Wasco County

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH TEAM
CONTACT INFORMATION**



City of The Dalles
Julie Krueger, City Manager
jkrueger@ci.the-dalles.or.us
(541) 296-5481, ext. 1120



Columbia Gorge Community College
Dr. Marta Yera Cronin, President
mcronin@cgcc.edu
(541) 506-6034



Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
Jessica Metta, Executive Director
jessica@mcedd.org
(541) 296-2266



North Wasco County School District
Theresa Peters, Interim Superintendent
peterst@nwasco.k12.or.us
(541) 506-3420



Northern Wasco County People's Utility District
Roger Kline, General Manager
roger-kline@nwascopud.org
(541) 296-2226



Port of The Dalles
Andrea Klaas, Executive Director
andrea@portofthedalles.com
(541) 298-4148



The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce
Lisa Farquharson, CEO/President
lisa@thedalleschamber.com
(541) 296-2231



Wasco County
Tyler Stone, Administrative Officer
tylers@co.wasco.or.us
(541) 506-2552

COME SEE US IN THE DALLES!

The Dalles is centrally located on major transportation routes through the heart of Oregon, Washington and Idaho, as well as beyond to Canada, California and the western United States.



MARCH 2021
PROJECTS AND ISSUES OVERVIEW

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTS

Aviation Maintenance Technician Training Page 10-11

Request: Subject to approval by the Federal Aviation Administration, Columbia Gorge Community College will establish an aviation maintenance technician training program (CFR Part 147 Airframe and Power Plant) by January 2022, helping address a critical national skills gap in the aviation industry. The college will develop public and private partnerships to ensure program success.

This initiative will provide opportunities for students to gain skills gap in high-demand careers. The aviation tech training program combined with the college’s newly constructed residential hall will enable CGCC to become a destination institution for students from throughout the Pacific Northwest. Air Frame and Power Plant (A&P) mechanics earn \$50,000 to \$80,000+ and there is a growing shortage of mechanics with the necessary skills to fill the need. “A&P” is one of three new programs in the college’s Regional Skills Center which will be opening Fall Term 2021.

BRIC Support and Cascades East Interconnection Feasibility Study Page 12

Request: We seek your support for a FEMA BRIC application included in the State of Oregon’s request that would fund completion of the co-location space. We also seek support for funding to implement a fiber-based interconnection feasibility study for a route to locations east of the Cascadia impact zone to assure continued connection in the face of a disaster.

Internet service occurs because of the interconnection of many networks at co-location and exchange facilities. Major locations of these facilities in the Pacific Northwest are all in areas west of the Cascades Mountain Range where experts anticipate devastating impacts will occur from a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake. As a result, the Internet, the cellular networks that rely on it, and many public safety communications networks, would be inoperable in the Northwest during and after a Cascadia event because carriers would no longer have access to these critical connectivity locations in their network architecture.

Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Economic Development Page 13

Request: \$1,996,500 to Columbia Gorge investment boards in Oregon and Washington

The reach of funding through the Columbia Gorge investment boards in Oregon and Washington extends beyond the confines of the Gorge walls. Scenic area funding has helped leverage over \$14.7 million in private funds, \$13.3 million in public funds, and has directly contributed to the creation or retention of 1,000 jobs. It also funded a pilot loan program to provide emergency financing for businesses impacted by the Eagle Creek Fire in 2017.

The dollars provided to the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards are now fully revolved and available funding for new grants and loans is constrained. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act authorized \$10 million in 1986 to stimulate economic development in the Gorge, of which only a portion has been appropriated. Release of the remaining \$1,996,500 would enable the investment boards to help more businesses affected by wildfires and workforce challenges.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND POLICY ISSUES

Federal Forest Fire Fuels Reduction..... Page 17

Request: Support sensible forest management and fuels reduction.

On September 2, 2017, a catastrophic wildfire broke out in the Columbia River Gorge near Cascade Locks. This fire closed I-84 for three weeks, decimated the Historic Columbia River Highway, produced unhealthy levels of smoke, and caused economic hardship for many businesses in The Dalles, Wasco County, and the Gorge, which saw business shrivel as the fire burned for more than three months. The 2018 fire season started early and kept local communities covered with unhealthy smoke through much of the summer.

All of this could have been prevented with adequate forest management and fuels reduction. The Community Outreach Team has been asking for additional funding for the USFS to help with forest management, and a path for expedited permitting to address salvage timber after a storm or fire to remove deadfall. In 2017 alone, \$2 billion were spent fighting forest fires. Watersheds, local economies, and air quality continue to be negatively impacted.

“In 2018, the Community Planning Assistance for Wildfire (CPAW) program provided Wasco County with land use planning solutions to better manage the wildland-urban interface,” said Angie Brewer, Wasco County Planning Director. “This team of planners, foresters, economists, researchers, and wildfire hazard modelers visited Wasco County and delivered a packet of recommendations which included an in-depth risk assessment and maps identifying wildfire hazard levels in the county ranging from moderate to very high.”

Our endangered forests are in desperate need of sensible forest management and fuels reduction.

Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools Continued Funding..... Page 18

Request: Restore adequate federal PILT and SRS funding to timber counties.

Imagine that you own a building, and your tenant decides to stop paying rent. Then imagine that the tenant decides to stay in the building, so you cannot rent it out for income.

This is in fact what the Federal government is doing to Wasco County. They promised payments to reimburse the County for lost tax receipts, but annually choose not to make those payments, at the same time they have restricted timber harvest that could have made up for some of that lost revenue. Wasco County’s road department is very reliant on Federal payments, which make up about 60% of that budget.

“Funds from forest operations have historically been key in funding the maintenance and operation of Wasco County’s road system,” said Commissioner Scott Hege of Wasco County. “With declining infrastructure funding, these dollars are even more important in providing critical funds to help Wasco County keep its roads maintained for our business community, as well as our citizens.”

Rural Equity for American Prosperity Page 23

Request: Support Congressionally designated discretionary funds to support rural community projects.

Most rural communities have neither the staff nor budgets to compete against the major metropolitan areas for Federal competitive grants, which in some instances are the replacement program for earmarks. While the competitive grant process was intended to put all communities on equal footing when competing for Federal dollars it instead rewarded well-funded larger communities and disadvantaged smaller, less wealthy communities.

We are requesting that Congress restore Congressionally designated discretionary funds to help support rural community projects. We propose to reinvent “earmarks” as “Rural Equity for American Prosperity.”

U.S. Economic Development Administration Support Page 24

Request: We request support for ongoing investment into the U.S. Economic Development Administration, an agency which has been instrumental in helping us invest in our communities and plan for our future. We request support for EDA reauthorization.

The U.S. Economic Development Administration provides vital funding to help the Columbia Gorge economy move forward.

“The food and beverage industry is one of the fastest-growing sectors in the Columbia Gorge economy,” said Dr. Marta Yera Cronin, President, Columbia Gorge Community College. “As the region’s only institution of higher education, Columbia Gorge Community College gained valuable insight into this sector’s workforce demands through an analysis primarily funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Now, we are asking the EDA’s assistance in helping us prepare students for high growth, family-wage positions in healthcare and aviation maintenance. It’s critical that EDA receive the federal resources to address these and other needs facing rural America.”

U.S. Economic Development Administration funding supports efforts crucial to the prosperity of the bi-state Columbia River Gorge region. Local examples include: the Columbia Gorge Regional Airport Flex Building, development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region, and revolving loan funds that support expansion of the rural business base.

Projects

AVIATION MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN TRAINING

Subject to approval by the Federal Aviation Administration, Columbia Gorge Community College will establish an aviation maintenance technician training program (CFR Part 147 Airframe and Power Plant) by January 2022, helping address a critical national skills gap in the aviation industry¹. The college will develop public and private partnerships to ensure program success.

Project lead:

Organization: Columbia Gorge Community College
Contact: Dan Spatz, Capital Projects & Community Relations
Address: 400 E. Scenic Drive, The Dalles, Oregon 97058
Phone, Email: o: (541) 506-6034 c: (541) 340-9883 dspatz@cgcc.edu

Community Benefit:

Airframe & Power Plant (A&P) mechanics earn \$50,000 to \$80,000+ and there is a growing shortage of mechanics with the necessary skills to fill the need. “A&P” is one of three new programs in the college’s Regional Skills Center which will be opening Fall Term 2021. The college is also concurrently building on-campus student housing that will be available for students in 2021. The Skills Center and residential hall were funded by the Oregon Legislature, community partners and the college *without the need for a local tax measure*. The A&P training will provide career skills in high-demand careers, while available, affordable housing will enable CGCC to become a destination institution. Aviation training will occur in the Skills Center and in a dedicated hangar to be constructed at Columbia Gorge Regional Airport in Dallesport, WA, near the college campus in The Dalles, OR. Associated infrastructure development at Columbia Gorge Regional Airport will leverage private investment and jobs creation.

Next steps:

FAA encourages airport proximity for aviation technician training. An industrial parcel is available at Columbia Gorge Regional Airport, which supports this initiative. The airport is owned jointly by City of The Dalles, OR and Klickitat County, WA, and is in a federally designated Opportunity Zone. Funding is needed to construct the college’s training hangar, acquire training equipment, support student scholarships, and extend infrastructure to foster private-sector job creation.

UAS/UAV integration:

A unique aspect of A&P at CGCC will be curricula for Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) operations and maintenance. CGCC is certified by AUVSI² as Level One training provider. The Columbia Gorge region supports a UAS supply chain of at least 25 companies. Two FAA-certified UAV test ranges are nearby.

¹Boeing Co., 2019-38 projection: 193,000 vacancies in North America

²Assoc. for Unmanned Vehicle Systems International

Request for assistance:

- Support the college's request for Department of Transportation, FAA Sec. 625 (Aviation maintenance training) to establish this new training program (acquisition of equipment, student scholarship support).
- Support request by Klickitat County and City of The Dalles to U.S. Economic Development Administration to construct training hangar and related industrial park infrastructure at Columbia Gorge Regional Airport.

Project Partners:

Oregon Legislature, private industry partners, Wasco and Klickitat counties, North Wasco County School District, City of The Dalles, Mid-Columbia Fire and Rescue, Port of The Dalles, Columbia Gorge Regional Airport, Columbia Gorge Community College.

BRIC SUPPORT and CASCADES EAST INTERCONNECTION FEASIBILITY STUDY

We seek your support for a FEMA BRIC application included in the State of Oregon's request that would fund completion of the co-location space. We also seek support for funding to implement a fiber-based interconnection feasibility study for a route to locations east of the Cascadia impact zone to assure continued connection in the face of a disaster.

Project Budget:

Fiber Co-Location in Wasco County

Total (est.): \$566,000

Funded to Date: \$141,000

Funding request: \$425,000

Project Budget:

Interconnection Feasibility Study

Total (est.): \$150,000

Funding to Date: \$0

Funding Request: \$150,000

Community Benefit: Functioning high-speed Internet networks are a key component of any disaster resiliency strategy. A lack of access to the Internet post-Cascadia will significantly hamper rescue, relief and recovery efforts in the Pacific Northwest region and reduce the ability of areas impacted less by disaster to provide effective staging and relocation.

Location: The Dalles, Oregon, addressing challenges throughout the Pacific Northwest

Lead Sponsor:

Organization: Q-Life Network

Contact: Matthew Klebes, Q-Life Administrator

Address: 511 Washington St., The Dalles, OR 97058

Phone, Email: (541) 506-2553, matthewk@co.wasco.or.us

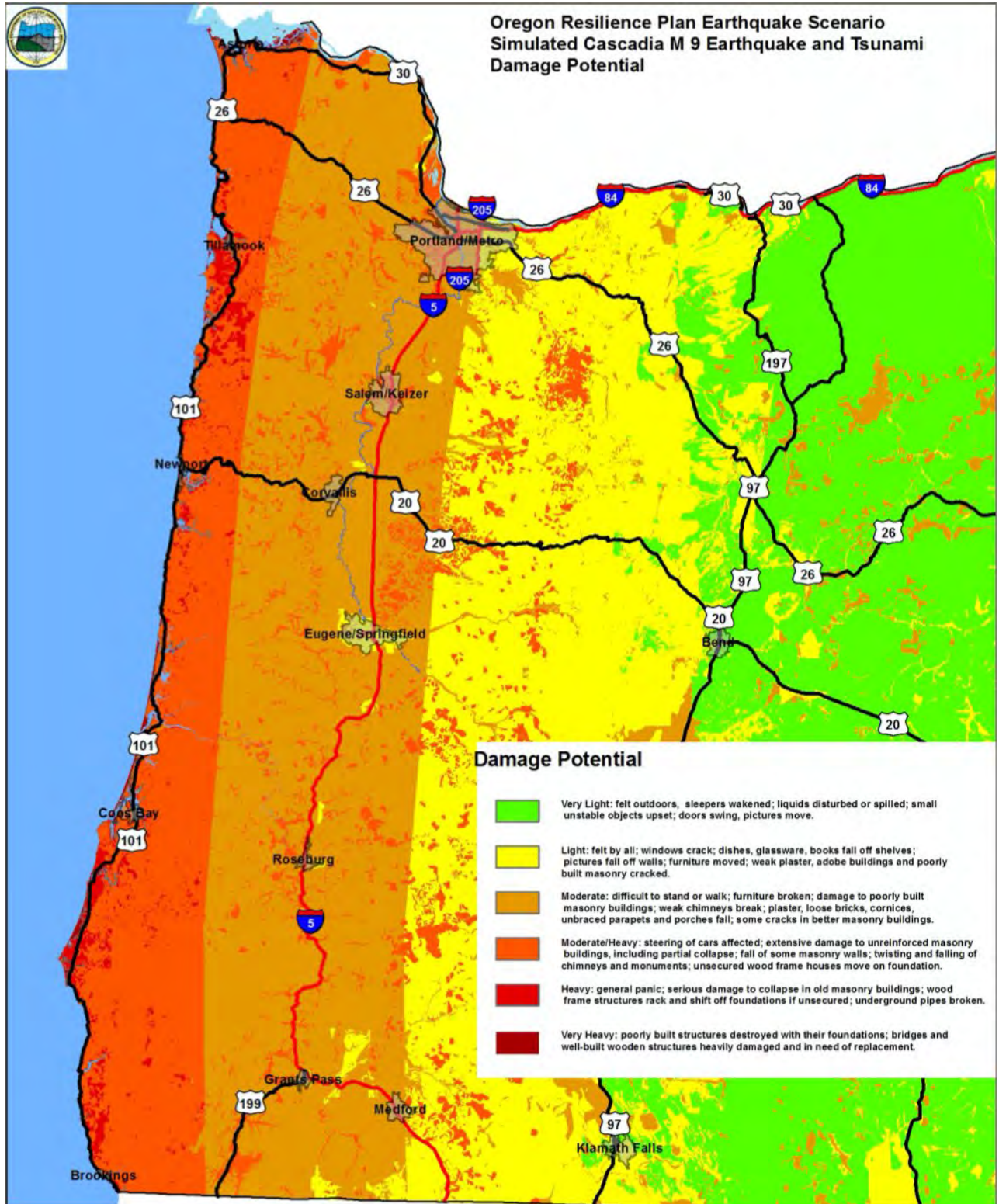
Internet service occurs because of the interconnection of many networks at co-location and exchange facilities. Major locations of these facilities in the Pacific Northwest are all in areas west of the Cascades Mountain Range where experts anticipate devastating impacts will occur from a Cascadia subduction zone earthquake. As a result, the Internet, the cellular networks that rely on it, and many public safety communications networks, would be inoperable in the Northwest during and after a Cascadia event because carriers would no longer have access to these critical connectivity locations in their network architecture. This would not just affect the high impact zones west of the Cascades, but areas throughout Oregon and Washington. To address this weakness, Internet service providers and public partners need to explore the feasibility of developing an additional interconnection providing a redundant path out of Oregon to the east that can be resilient in the face of a catastrophic Cascadia event.

Q-Life and other local partners are working together to provide a carrier-neutral route to address this. Development of this path would have statewide benefits to first responders and communities after a Cascadia event. The Dalles area is well-equipped to support this connection for several reasons. It is along a critical response corridor for staging and recovery after a Cascadia subduction earthquake and serves as a key crossing point for several long-haul broadband networks. Q-Life has begun investing in a co-location space to be housed in Wasco County's Emergency Operations Center and 911 dispatch center. The County has applied for \$425,000 in FEMA BRIC funds matched by \$141,000 in local resources to improve the space to meet the needs of a secure telecom facility. Q-Life is still seeking \$150,000 of additional funding to determine the best route for a redundant fiber path heading east.

Project Partners:

Q-Life Intergovernmental Agency (Wasco County, City of The Dalles), Wasco County Emergency Services, and internet service providers.

CASCADIA EVENT SIMULATION MAP



COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDING

The final infusion of promised federal funding is urgently needed to support the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area's economic development loans and grants program in Oregon and Washington, particularly given the devastation resulting from multiple wildfires in our region. Help us provide relief for struggling local businesses and capitalize on the interest of new and developing businesses in the Scenic Area.

Project Budget:

Total: \$10,000,000 - Authorized in 1986
Funded to Date: \$ 8,003,500 - Appropriated to-date (last appropriation 2009)
Funding request: \$ 1,996,500 - Balance authorized but unappropriated

Community Benefit: Strengthens and stabilizes the economy of communities in the National Scenic Area, helps the region provide relief for fire-affected businesses, contributes to creation and retention of jobs, leverages nonfederal dollars both public and private, provides a valuable tool for attraction of business investment, particularly within the Urban Areas.

Location: Oregon and Washington: Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (includes parts of Wasco, Hood River, Multnomah, Clark and Skamania counties)

Lead Sponsor:

Organization: Columbia River Gorge Bi-State Advisory Council
Contact: Jessica Metta, Executive Director
Address: 515 E. Second Street, The Dalles, OR 97058
Phone, Email: (541) 296-2266, jessica@mcedd.org

In 1986, Congress established the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA), a bi-state region within Oregon and Washington, and authorized \$10 million for the Oregon and Washington Investment Board loan and grant programs. Only a portion of those funds have been appropriated to the Investment Boards and those are now fully revolved. Additional appropriations are required to support the economic development goals of the federally designated National Scenic Area. Funding awarded through the Investment Boards helps to strengthen and diversify the economy of the region:

- **Sustained Impact:** From initial funding of \$8 million, the Boards awarded over 200 grants and loans, and revolved funds more than two times.
- **Creates/Retains Jobs:** One job for every \$8,000 granted or loaned.
- **Leverage:** Leveraged federal funds at a rate of 5-to-1.

Funding through the Investment Boards serves as a valuable tool that will continue to be used for loans and grants to improve the regional economy. The Investment Boards provide resources to businesses, governments and nonprofits for business assistance, infrastructure assistance and workforce development. The funds from this request will increase the Investment Boards' financing capacity to support the regional economy of the Columbia River Gorge. The Boards' vital initiatives address lost economic opportunity resulting from the more than 30-year gap between Congressional fund authorization and appropriation.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 20, 2018

Secretary Sonny Perdue
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

We write to you today regarding the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (Scenic Area), which spans the Columbia River Gorge in southern Washington and northern Oregon. We ask that you include funding for economic development grants for the Scenic Area in your Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request.

The Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area Act, passed in 1986, encompasses an incredible combination of ecosystems, wildlife, farmland, communities and cultural resources – some dating back 10,000 years. The region attracts over 2 million annual visitors through unique recreational activities and tourist attractions, generating significant economic activity in the region. You saw this incredible area firsthand when you visited communities in and around the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area during your visit to the Pacific Northwest in July of this year.

In order to support communities in the Scenic Area, Congress authorized \$10 million in grant funding –split evenly between the two states – to be appropriated to the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards and put into a revolving loan fund. These grants were established to help launch businesses that would support the area’s unique economy and develop necessary infrastructure. To date, the allocated funds have been a critical source of investment for the region but there is more need than money to go around.

For example, Farmer’s Conservation Alliance, a Hood River-based organization focused on water management solutions benefitting agriculture and the environment, was awarded a \$250,000 loan to help fund office space expansion to accommodate their growing staff. In The Dalles, Ellson, LLC received start-up financing to start an HVAC business in a community with a dearth of services. The grants also supported infrastructure development, such as investment into a broadband network in The Dalles which was instrumental in helping attract and grow businesses like Google. These local businesses and others have brought millions of dollars back into the Columbia River Gorge economy, and have benefited greatly from these economic development grants.

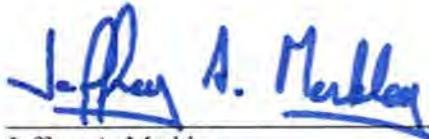
However, over the past 30+ years only \$8 million out of the \$10 million authorized has been delivered and the last time the grants were funded was in Fiscal Year 2001. As the region works

to diversify its economy, it is important that the federal government work to meet the obligations agreed upon when the Columbia River Gorge was designated as a National Scenic Area and deliver the remaining \$2 million authorized.

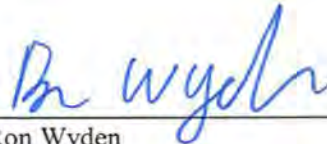
As you review this request, we also ask that you consider the substantial economic hardship that the Columbia Gorge faced these past two wildfire seasons. Last year, the Eagle Creek fire burned over 48,000 acres of forest in the Gorge. Homes and businesses were threatened, communities were evacuated, major roads and Interstate 84 was shut down for weeks and the air was filled with smoke. This year, several wildfires burned through Wasco County, destroying over 100,000 acres of prime wheat land and pasture, some of which you toured during your trip to Oregon. The economic development funds promised to these communities by the National Scenic Area Act are needed now more than ever to help recover the region.

As you continue to work on your Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Request, we encourage you to include funding for these economic development grants. In addition, we encourage USDA to use economic development programs and accounts under USDA Rural Development's purview to allocate these funds to the Oregon and Washington Investment Boards. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

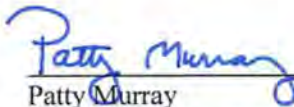
Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



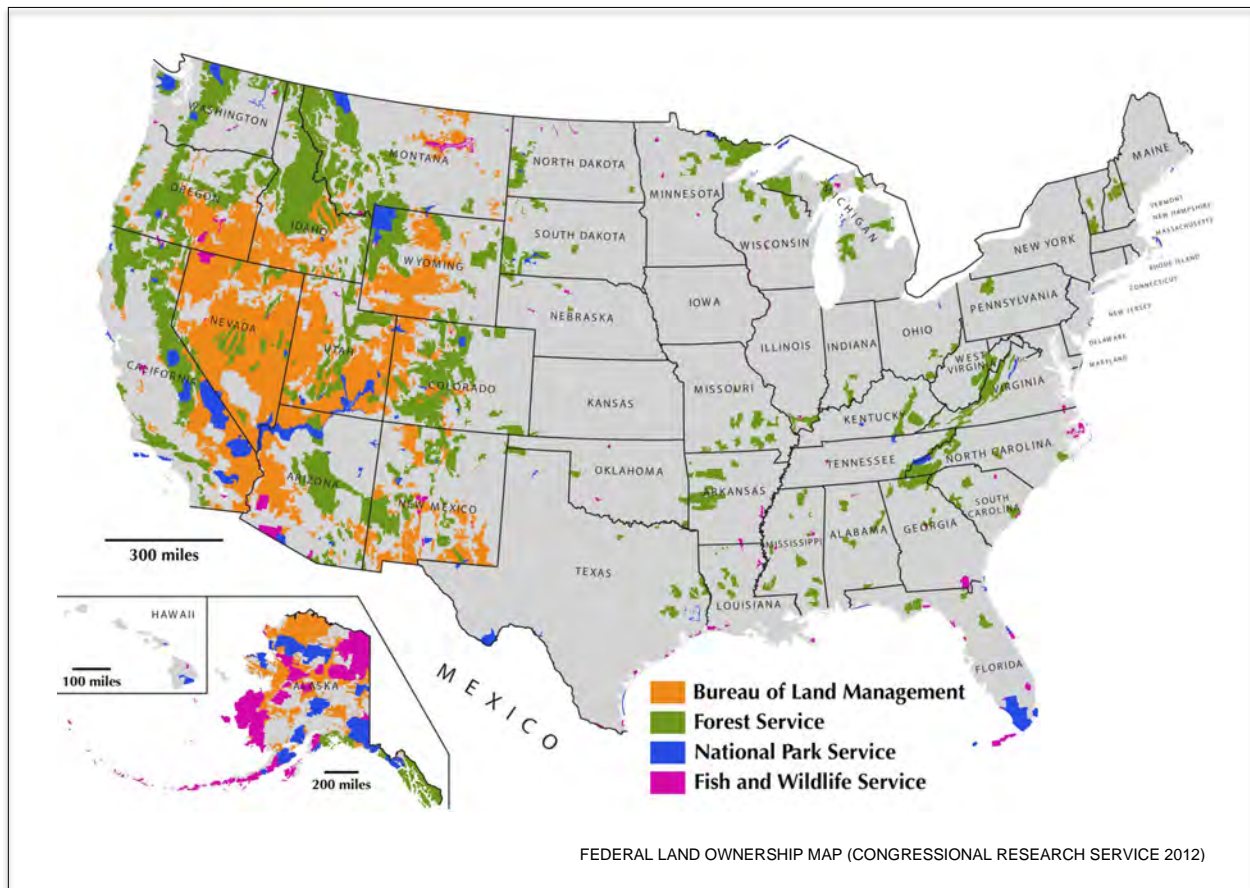
Greg Walden
United States Representative



Jaime Herrera Beutler
United States Representative

Issues

WHO OWNS THE WEST?



- *The Federal Government owns 68% of Alaska, 47% of the 11 Western States, and only 4% of the remaining 38 States.*
- *In Oregon, federal land ownership (32,000,000+ acres) accounts for almost half of all the lands of the State (63,000,000+ acres). Other public lands (state and local) mean even more land is off limits for helping fund local services.*

CHALLENGES:

- Federal payments to counties based on timber receipts, and later in compensation for lost timber harvest, once funded county roads and other services, but have all but disappeared in recent years, leaving huge budget holes for counties to fill.
- Counties cannot collect property taxes on public lands within their boundaries to help fund local roads and services, risking the loss of costly public road infrastructure.
- Local taxpayers are experiencing sticker shock and rejecting large tax measures designed to replace lost federal revenues.

SOLUTION:

- **Restoration of sustainable timber harvest would help restore funds to county coffers, assure healthier forest through thinning practices, and reduce the risk from catastrophic wildfire.**

FEDERAL FOREST FIRE FUELS REDUCTION FOR FOREST HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS

We ask your help in developing practical forest management options within the Late Successional Resources (LSRs) to promote water quality and realize the mature forest values for which LSRs were originally designated. The Dalles Watershed includes LSR areas which, under the current “no touch” option, are growing into areas with high potential for uncontrollable, high intensity fires that could have devastating effects on water quality.

Community Benefit: Better forest management would improve wildlife habitat, protect The Dalles’ vital municipal water supply, and reduce tree mortality from overstocking effects. The Pacific Northwest’s non-federal forests provide ample evidence that managed forests fare better in a wildfire.

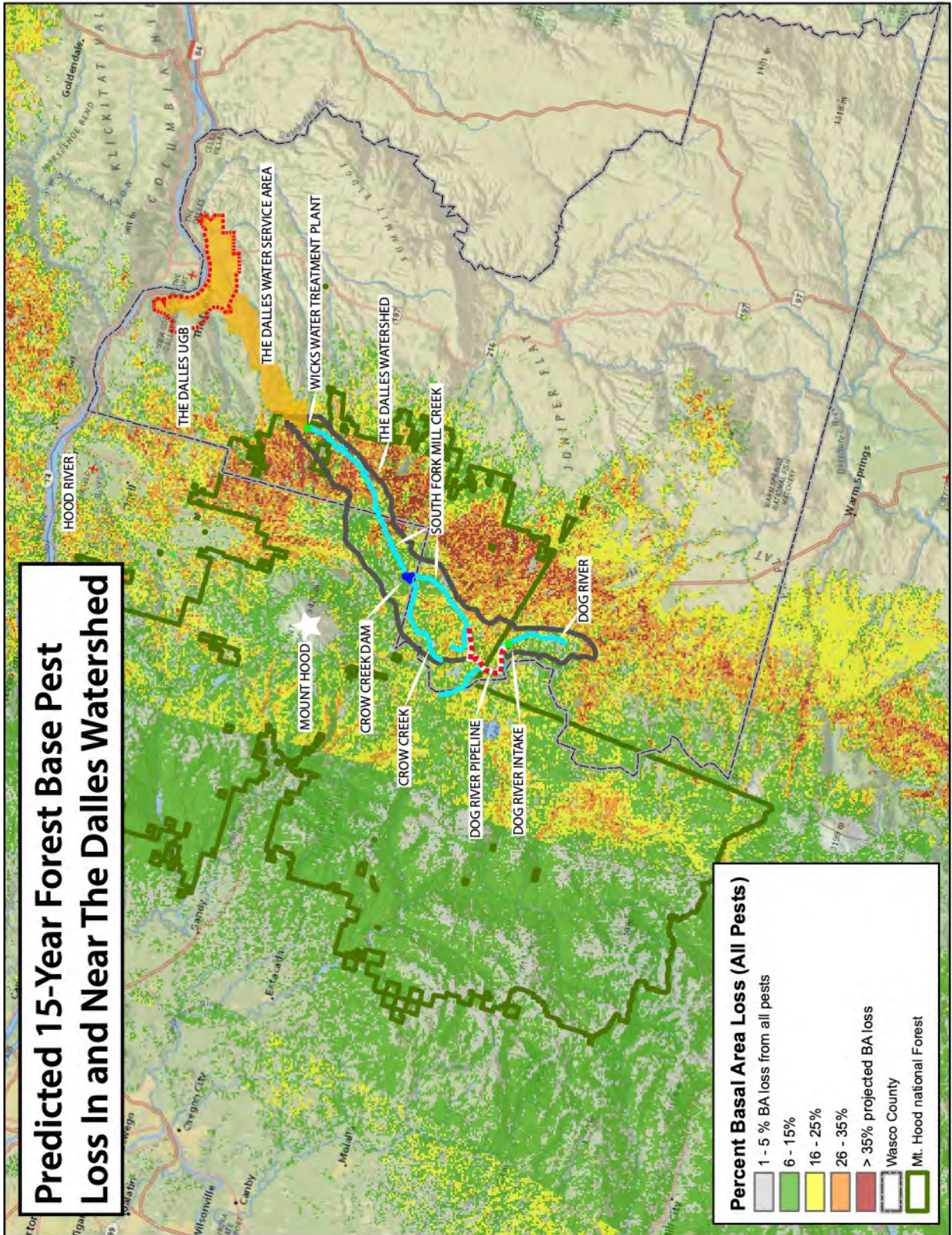
Local Lead Agency:

Organization:	City of The Dalles
Contact	Julie Krueger, City Manager
Address	313 Court St., The Dalles, OR 97058
Phone, Email	(541) 296-5481, jkrueger@ci.the-dalles.or.us

Catastrophic forest fires have become an ongoing economic and environmental disaster in the western United States. Of specific concern are uncontrolled wildfires in municipal watersheds. Current federal regulations, guidelines and management plans on federal lands are causing unhealthy forests susceptible to catastrophic fires. Tree mortality resulting from the combined effects of overstocking, species encroachment, drier type stands, insect infestations and disease all increase levels of accumulated fire fuels. This is particularly true in areas designated as Late Successional Resources (LSR) areas.

The City of The Dalles, Oregon (population 15,000) receives 90 percent of its annual water supply from The Dalles Municipal Watershed. Approximately 2/3 of the Watershed is owned and managed by the US Forest Service. The Forest Service and the City have been working together in recent years, often through public collaborative processes, to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire within the Watershed through forest fire fuels reduction and forest health improvement projects. Both the Mill Creek Buttes and the Dog River drainage have been identified in two separate Forest Service analyses as high to extreme risk of experiencing a catastrophic stand-replacing fire.

Creating practical forest management options will greatly improve public safety and protect our water supply.



PAYMENT IN LIEU OF TAXES AND SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS

Support efforts to ensure permanent and full mandatory funding for Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (SRS) and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) programs, and reform forest management practices.

Community Benefit: Continuing Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools program funding helps replace tax dollars Wasco County and other local taxing districts forfeit on federally owned lands, which are needed to provide county and school services.

Local Lead Agency:

Organization: Wasco County
Contact: Steve Kramer Commissioner
Address: 511 Washington Street, The Dalles, OR 97058
Phone, Email: (541) 993-2051, stevek@co.wasco.or.us

Supporting Sponsors:

National Association of Counties (NACO), Association of Oregon Counties (AOC)

Federal Secure Rural Schools (SRS) and Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) programs have historically provided close to \$3 million annually to Wasco County and our local schools (e.g., \$2.73 million SRS in 2005). Current payments are much lower. They have been reduced more than 90% from prior years prior because of federal policy and federal funding decisions.

220,000 acres, or 14.4%, of Wasco County's land mass is publicly held by the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and other federal agencies. No tax dollars are generated to support services from any of this federally owned land.

We need a solid and long-term funding approach to both SRS and PILT to eliminate the yoyo effect they have on local budgets. Action is needed to stabilize support for both programs. Like many federal programs, they have been on the chopping block numerous times and significant legislative effort is required each time Congress moves to defund the programs.

We urge you to support mandatory full funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program as well as to enact a long-term legislative solution for continued revenue sharing payments to forest counties through the U.S. Forest Service's Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program.

Further, Congress should reform forest management practices to improve forest health, increase production, reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfires and ensure robust revenue sharing to all forest counties. This is a long-term solution that we all want for our forests to provide both long-term sustainable resources as well as forest health.

In the 115th Congress, Senators Ron Wyden and Mike Crapo sponsored SB3753, the Forest Management for Rural Stability Act, to develop permanent funding for the program. We advocate similar efforts in the future and stand ready to work with you on stable funding mechanisms in the future.



2020 PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILT)

WASCO COUNTY, OR

PILT RECEIVED, FY 2020:	PERCENT OF PILT ENTITLEMENT LAND:	PILT ENTITLEMENT ACRES:	PILT AMOUNT PER ENTITLEMENT ACRE:
\$87,973	14.4%	220,099	\$0.40

FEDERAL LANDS, LOCAL COMMUNITIES



- **61% of counties have federal land within their boundaries.** Even though they are not able to collect property taxes on federal land, county governments must still provide essential services for their residents and those who visit these public lands each year. Such services include road and bridge maintenance, law enforcement, search and rescue, emergency medical, fire protection, solid waste disposal and environmental compliance.
- Our ask: **Counties urge Congress to provide full funding for PILT in FY 2021 and to support a sustainable long-term approach to financing essential local services in America's public lands counties.**

NOTES: NACo analysis of U.S. Department of the Interior data. PILT received, FY 2020 represents the total PILT appropriations for fiscal year 2020. The total number of PILT entitlement acres reflects the number of acres eligible for PILT payments.

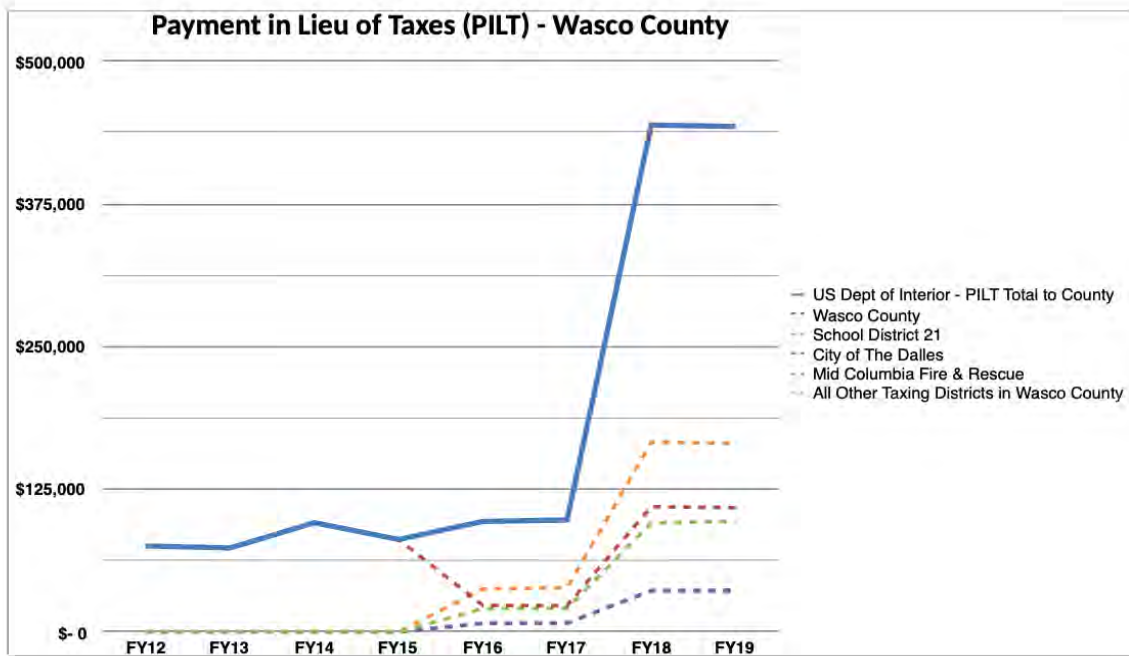
PILT FUNDING CRITICAL FOR SERVICES INCLUDING:

ROAD AND BRIDGE MAINTENANCE	LAW ENFORCEMENT	SEARCH AND RESCUE	EMERGENCY MEDICAL	FIRE PROTECTION	SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL	ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE

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WASCO COUNTY'S PILT HISTORICAL RECEIPTS

- PILT funding is collected by Wasco County and then redistributed to affected taxing districts.
- PILT is intended to offset losses in property taxes due to the existence of nontaxable Federal lands within County boundaries.
- On December 20, 2019, the President signed the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (P.L. 116-94) which appropriated full funding for PILT. The Department of Interior has initiated the FY 2020 PILT program.





WASCO COUNTY, OR

	SRS PAYMENT, FY 2019 RECEIPTS YEAR:	PROJECTED 25% FUND PAYMENT, FY 2017 RECEIPTS YEAR:	PROJECTED FY 2017 25% FUND PAYMENT VS. FY 2019 SRS:	PERCENT OF NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE LAND:
COUNTY	\$808,264	\$174,888	-78.4%	11.5%
STATE	\$48.9 M	\$8.4 M	-82.8%	24.2%

SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS

The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination (SRS) Act was enacted in 2000 to compensate for steep reductions in revenues from timber harvests, which resulted from national policies that substantially diminished revenue-generating activities within federal forests. For FY 2019, the SRS program provided \$249 million for roads and schools and other critical services in 656 mostly rural counties, parishes and boroughs across the United States. The last authorization for SRS expired on September 30, 2018.

OUR ASK

Without SRS, forest counties nationwide face dramatic budgetary shortfalls. Counties urge Congress to renew its long-standing commitment to forest counties by increasing revenue sharing through active forest management and extending SRS as critical transitional funding.

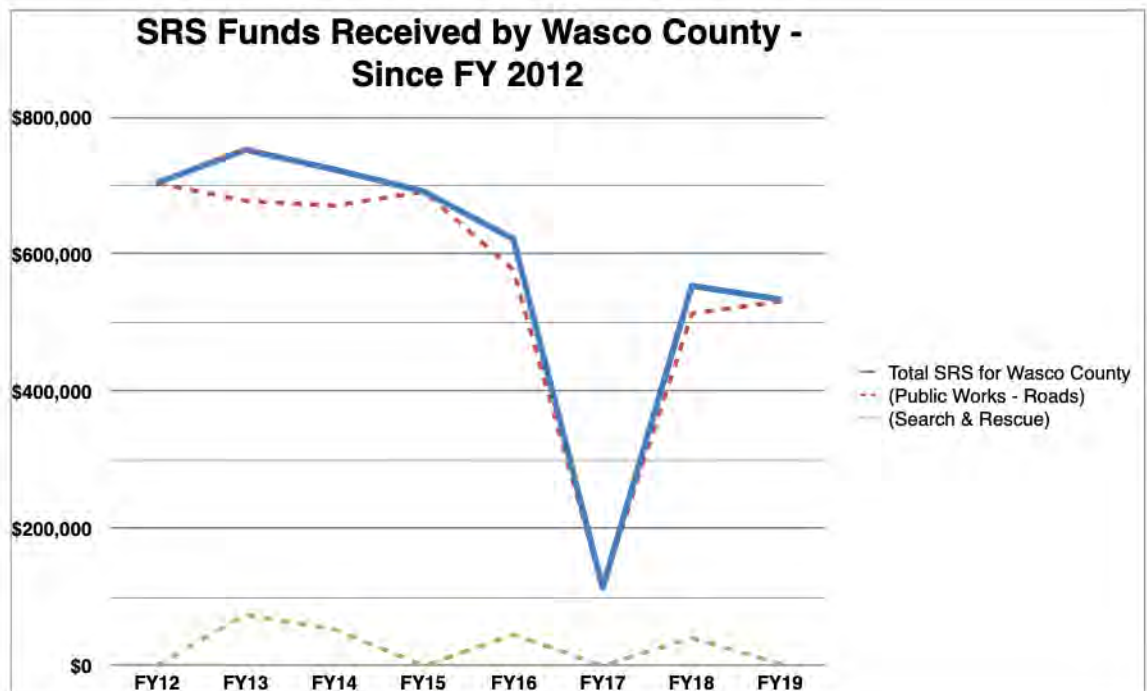
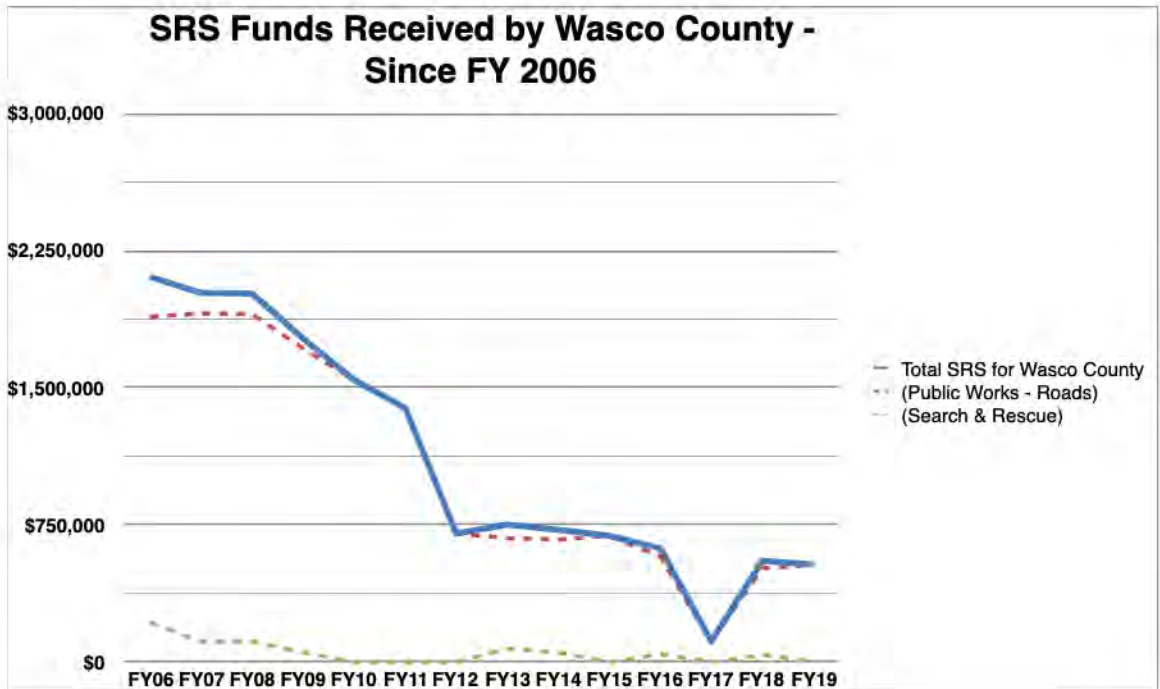
Notes: The receipts year reflects when U.S. Forest Service (USFS) collects revenues from national forest lands. Without the SRS Act reauthorization, states revert to the Payments to States Act of 1908 as amended, receiving a 25 percent payment from national forest receipts. USFS estimates FY 2017 county 25 percent payments based on county shares of the national forest receipts. These estimates reflect the application of a 6.8 percent sequester to the state payments.

Sources: NACo analysis of data from the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management and Headwaters Economics analysis of the U.S. Geological Survey, Protected Areas Database.

SRS PAYMENTS ARE CRITICAL FOR SERVICES INCLUDING:

TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE	SCHOOLS	FOREST MANAGEMENT	ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION	PROTECTION FROM WILDFIRE	SEARCH AND RESCUE	EMERGENCY SERVICES

WASCO COUNTY'S SRS HISTORICAL RECEIPTS



RURAL EQUITY FOR AMERICAN PROSPERITY (R.E.A.P.)

Restore Congressionally designated discretionary funds to help support rural community projects. We propose to reinvent “earmarks” as “Rural Equity for American Prosperity.”

Community Benefit: Wasco County and The Dalles have benefited from Congressionally designated funds to complete projects. The Community’s request was always for the last dollar, never the first dollar. Without those funds – all of them relying for the last dollar on federal “earmarks” – The Dalles would not have been able to complete the Union Street underpass, which reconnects downtown to the Columbia River, the 911 Emergency Dispatch center upgrade, Lewis and Clark Park, the Renewable Energy Technology and college nursing programs, and numerous other projects.

Yet rural communities rarely have resources to compete with metropolitan areas for federal grants, which have largely replaced program funding and “earmarks” as rural America’s primary access to federal funding. While the competitive grant process was intended to put all communities on equal footing, it instead rewards metro areas to the disadvantage of rural communities. This widens the urban / rural divide as rural communities fight for the table scraps. Small towns devote limited staffing resources in a never-ending quest for grants whose criteria seldom align with actual local needs. Requests for applications typically require the creation of new initiatives which are difficult to sustain. Often, a “research” component is required, which is entirely irrelevant to the real-world needs of small rural communities.

To help address these and other disparities, we propose:

- 1) Appropriations to USDA Rural Development’s Housing and Community Facilities programs and block grants to rural housing authorities to expand the inventory of “attainable” housing (60 to 120 percent of average median income for region), including but not limited to student housing.*.
- 2) Block grants to EDA regions to leverage rural infrastructure investments, with policies to allow the use of community “self-help” resources** when feasible.
- 3) FCC authorization to rural public utilities and cooperatives to deploy and operate broadband.
- 4) Block grants to rural public utilities and cooperatives to support rural broadband deployment.
- 5) Sustained program funding for rural workforce investment boards to support high-demand, family wage occupational training intentionally linked to block grant projects described above: Home construction, public infrastructure, and telecommunications installation.

Local Lead Agency:

Organization: Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
Contact: Jessica Metta, Executive Director
Address: 802 Chenoweth Loop, The Dalles, OR 97058
Phone/Email: (541) 296-2266, jessica@mcedd.org

Supporting Sponsors:

Columbia Gorge Community College, Port of The Dalles, City of The Dalles, Wasco County

**Self-help: Mobilize rural volunteers and donated use of equipment to construct projects, with technical assistance as needed.

*USDA Rural Development’s Community Facilities Program supports student housing at private universities (typically urban institutions where students pay a premium for housing) but is prohibited from assisting student housing at public community colleges, which strive to make housing affordable. Meanwhile, Rural Development’s housing program has not received an appropriation since 2012.

U.S. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT

We request support for ongoing investment into the U.S. Economic Development Administration, an agency which has been instrumental in helping us invest in our communities and plan for our future. We request support for EDA reauthorization.

Community Benefit: Maintain the primary federal vehicle that supports investment into regional economic development strategy and implementation, and critical community infrastructure.

Local Lead Agency:

Organization: Mid-Columbia Economic Development District
Contact: Jessica Metta, Executive Director
Address: 802 Chenoweth Loop, The Dalles, OR 97058
Phone, Email: (541) 296-2266, jessica@mcedd.org

Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD) leads regional economic and community development initiatives throughout its five-county bi-state rural region in Oregon and Washington, covering 7,289 square miles and about 85,000 people (as of 2017). By identifying and addressing local needs through planning, capacity-building and direct investment, the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) coordinates with MCEDD and similar entities to create jobs and promote entrepreneurship.

EDA invests in planning for tomorrow's opportunities. MCEDD administers the EDA-funded Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. This strategy organizes local public and private leaders to identify and assess existing assets and liabilities as well as future opportunities and challenges facing communities in the regional economy. As a result, consistent exchange and dialogue engages public and private sector leaders throughout the region on charting a path forward for economic development.

EDA invests in advancing entrepreneurship. EDA provides funding to develop and implement our regional economic development strategy and establish business funding programs. These resources have been critical to many of the services for advancing our economy, including:

- Creation of the Gorge Broadband Consortium and resulting investments into broadband to connect rural communities.
- Industry sector development, resulting in creation of, and ongoing support to, the Gorge Technology Alliance, Columbia Gorge Winegrowers Association, Columbia Gorge Bi-State Renewable Energy Zone and more.
- Support for direct business assistance and business loan programs.

EDA invests in people and places. EDA's support of locally driven projects leads to job creation and retention while generating significant private investment. A recent local (and bistate) example is the Columbia Gorge Regional Airport Flex Building, which received an EDA public works grant. This project allows the region to retain a critical employer, Life Flight, and private space for additional business growth. Without this investment, Life Flight would have moved out of the region, causing a loss in jobs important to our rural area and an anticipated loss of more than \$10 million in private investment. It is important from a health and safety standpoint, providing direct benefits to major medical providers, such as Mid-Columbia Medical Center, which indicated that service has resulted in a reduction in response time for trauma patients from 45-60 minutes to 7-8 minutes.