

SECTION 14.700 Recreation Resources (GMA Only)

A. Purpose

1. Protect and enhance recreation resources consistent with Indian treaty rights.
2. Protect scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources when providing new recreation opportunities.

B. Recreation Intensity Classes (RIC)

The following uses are permitted in the applicable Recreation Intensity Class designation, subject to compliance with Subsections (C) Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses and (D) Facility Design Standards for all Recreation Projects.

1. Recreation Intensity Class 1

- a. Parking areas for a maximum of 10 cars for any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 1.
- b. Trails for hiking, equestrian and mountain biking use.
- c. Pathways for pedestrian and bicycling use.
- d. Trailheads (with provisions for hitching rails and equestrian trailers at trailheads accommodating equestrian use).
- e. Scenic viewpoints and overlooks.
- f. Wildlife/botanical viewing and nature study areas.
- g. River access areas.
- h. Simple interpretive signs and/or displays, not to exceed a total of 50 square feet.
- i. Entry name signs not to exceed 10 square feet per sign.
- j. Boat docks, piers or wharfs.
- k. Picnic areas.
- l. Restrooms/comfort facilities.

2. Recreation Intensity Class 2

- a. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Class 1.
- b. Parking areas for a maximum of 25 cars, including campground units. to serve any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 2.
- c. Simple interpretive signs and displays, not to exceed a total of 100 square feet.
- d. Entry name signs not to exceed 20 square feet per sign.
- e. Boat ramps, not to exceed two lanes.
- f. Campgrounds for 20 units or less, tent sites only.

3. Recreation Intensity Class 3

- a. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Classes 1 and 2.
- b. Parking areas for a maximum of 75 cars, including campground units, for any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 3.
- c. Interpretive signs, displays and/or facilities.
- d. Visitor information and environmental education signs, displays or facilities.
- e. Entry name signs not to exceed 32 square feet per sign.
- f. Boat ramps, not to exceed three lanes.
- g. Concession stands, pursuant to applicable policies in this chapter.
- h. Campgrounds for 50 individual units or less for tents and/or recreational vehicles, with a total density of no more than 10 units per acre (density to be measured based on total size of recreation facility and may include required buffer and setback areas). Class 3 campgrounds may also include one group campsite area, in addition to the individual campground units or parking area maximums allowed as described herein.

4. Recreation Intensity Class 4

- a. All uses permitted in Recreation Intensity Classes 1, 2, and 3.

- b. Parking areas for a maximum of 250 cars, including campground units, for any allowed uses in Recreation Intensity Class 4.
- c. Horseback riding stables and associated facilities.
- d. Entry name signs, not to exceed 40 square feet per sign.
- e. Boat ramps.
- f. Campgrounds for 175 individual units or less for tents and/or recreation vehicles with a total density of no more than 10 units per acre (density to be measured based on total size of recreation facility and may include required buffer and setback areas). Class 4 campgrounds may also include up to 3 group campsite areas, in addition to individual campsite units or parking area maximums allowed as described herein.

C. Approval Criteria for Recreation Uses

For all proposed recreation projects outside of Public or Commercial Recreation designations, project applicants shall demonstrate compliance with the following criteria (if applicable) as a condition of project approval:

1. Complete a Scenic Area Review.
2. Cumulative effects of proposed recreation projects on landscape settings shall be based on the stated "compatible recreation use" for the designated landscape setting in which the proposed project is located.
3. For proposed recreation projects in or adjacent to lands designated Large or Small-Scale Agriculture, Commercial Forest Land, or Large or Small Woodland:
 - a. The use would not seriously interfere with accepted forest or agricultural practices on surrounding lands devoted to forest or farm uses. Provision of on-site buffers may be used to partially or fully comply with this criterion, depending upon project design and/or site conditions.
 - b. A declaration has been signed by the project applicant or owner and recorded with County deeds and records specifying that the applicant or owner is aware that operators are entitled to carry on accepted forest or farm practices on lands designated Large or Small-Scale Agriculture, Commercial Forest Land or Large or Small Woodland.
4. For proposed projects including facilities for outdoor fires for cooking or other purposes or proposed campgrounds:

- a. The project applicant shall demonstrate that a sufficient quantity of water necessary for fire suppression (as determined pursuant to applicable fire codes or the County fire marshal) is readily available to the proposed facility, either through connection to a community water system or on-site wells, storage tanks, sumps, ponds or similar storage devices.
 - b. If connection to a community water system is proposed, the project applicant shall demonstrate that the water system has adequate capacity to meet the facility's emergency fire suppression needs without adversely affecting the remainder of the water system with respect to fire suppression capabilities.
 - c. In order to provide access for fire-fighting equipment, access drives shall be constructed to a minimum of 12 feet in width and a maximum grade of 12 percent. Access drives shall be maintained to a level that is passable to fire-fighting equipment.
5. For proposed trail or trailhead projects: compliance with applicable trail policies in the Management Plan.
 6. For proposed projects providing boating or windsurfing access to the Columbia River or its tributaries: compliance with applicable "River Access and Protection of Treaty Rights" objectives in the Management Plan.
 7. Proposed projects on public lands or proposed projects providing access to the Columbia River or its tributaries shall comply with guidelines for protection of tribal treaty rights, as defined in Sections 14.800 and 14.810, Indian Tribal Treaty Rights and Consultation.
 8. Proposed projects which include interpretation of natural or cultural resources shall demonstrate that the interpretive facilities will not adversely affect natural or cultural resources and that appropriate and necessary resource protection measures shall be employed.
 9. Proposed Recreation Intensity Class 4 projects (except for projects predominantly devoted to boat access) shall:
 - a. Demonstrate that the project accommodates provision of mass transportation access to the site.
 - b. The number and size of the mass transportation facilities shall reflect the physical capability of the site.
 - c. This mass transportation access requirement may be waived upon a demonstration that provision of such facilities would result in overuse of the site, either degrading the quality of the recreation experience or adversely affecting other resources at the site.

D. Facility Design Standards for All Recreation Projects

1. Recreation facilities which are not resource-based in nature may be included at sites providing resource-based recreation uses consistent with the standards and criteria contained herein, as long as such facilities comprise no more than one-third of the total land area dedicated to recreation uses and/or facilities. Required landscaped buffers may be included in calculations of total land area dedicated to recreation uses and/or facilities.
2. The facility design standards contained herein are intended to apply to individual recreation facilities. For the purposes of these standards, a recreation facility is considered a cluster or grouping of recreational developments or improvements located in relatively close proximity to one another.

To be considered a separate facility from other developments or improvements within the same Recreation Intensity Class, recreation developments or improvements must be separated by at least one-quarter mile of undeveloped land (excluding trails, pathways, or access roads) from such developments or improvements.

3. Parking areas, access roads, and campsites shall be sited and designed to fit into the existing natural contours as much as possible, both to minimize ground-disturbing grading activities and utilize topography to screen parking areas and associated structures. Parking areas, access roads, and campsites shall be sited and set back sufficiently from bluffs so as to be visually subordinate as seen from Key Viewing Areas.
4. Existing vegetation, particularly mature trees, shall be maintained to the maximum extent practicable, and utilized to screen parking areas and campsites from Key Viewing Areas and satisfy requirements for perimeter and interior landscaped buffers.
5. Parking areas providing over 50 spaces shall be divided into discrete "islands" separated by unpaved, landscaped buffer areas.
6. Lineal frontage of parking areas and campsite loops to Scenic Travel Corridors shall be minimized to the greatest extent practicable.
7. Ingress/egress points shall be consolidated to the maximum extent practicable, providing for adequate emergency access pursuant to applicable fire and safety codes.

8. Signage shall be limited to that necessary to provide relevant, recreation or facility information, interpretive information, vehicular and pedestrian direction, and for safety purposes.
9. Innovative designs and materials which reduce visual impacts (such as "turf blocks" instead of conventional asphalt paving) shall be encouraged through incentives such as additional allowable parking spaces and reduce required minimum interior or perimeter landscaped buffers. Upon determination that potential visual impacts have been substantially reduced by use of such designs and materials, the County shall allow either reductions in required minimum interior or perimeter landscape buffers up to 50 percent of what would otherwise be required, or additional parking spaces not to exceed 10 percent of what would otherwise be permitted.
10. All structures shall be designed such that height, exterior colors, reflectivity, mass and siting result in the structures blending with and not noticeably contrasting their setting.
11. Landscape buffers around the perimeter of parking areas accommodating more than 10 vehicles shall be provided. Minimum required widths are 5 feet for 20 vehicles or less, 20 feet for 50 vehicles or less, 30 feet for 100 vehicles or less, and 40 feet for 250 vehicles or less.
12. Interior landscaped buffers breaking up continuous areas of parking shall be provided for any parking areas over 50 spaces in size. The minimum width of interior landscaped buffers between each parking lot of 50 spaces or less shall be 20 feet.
13. Within required perimeter and interior landscaped buffer areas, a minimum of one tree of at least 6 feet in height shall be planted for every 10 lineal feet as averaged for the entire perimeter width. A minimum of 25 percent of planted species in perimeter buffers shall be coniferous to provide screening during the winter. Project applicants are encouraged to place such trees in random groupings approximating natural conditions. In addition to the required trees, landscaping shall include appropriate shrubs, groundcover and other plant materials.
14. Minimum required perimeter landscape buffer widths for parking areas or campgrounds may be reduced by as much as 50 percent, at the discretion of the County, if existing vegetation stands and/or existing topography are utilized such that the development is not visible from any Key Viewing Area.
15. Grading or soil compaction within the "drip line" of existing mature trees shall be avoided to the maximum extent practicable, to reduce risk of root damage and associated tree mortality.

16. All parking areas and campsites shall be set back from Scenic Travel Corridors, and the Columbia River and its major tributaries at least 100 feet.
 - a. Required perimeter landscaped buffers may be included when calculating such setbacks.
 - b. Setbacks from rivers shall be measured from the ordinary high water mark.
 - c. Setbacks from Scenic Travel Corridors shall be measured from the edge of road pavements.
17. Project applicants shall utilize measures and equipment necessary for the proper maintenance and survival of all vegetation utilized to meet the landscape standards contained herein, and shall be responsible for such maintenance and survival.
18. All parking areas shall be set back from property boundaries by at least 50 feet. All campsites and associated facilities shall be set back from property boundaries by at least 100 feet.
19. All proposed projects at levels consistent with Recreation Intensity Class 4 (except proposals predominantly devoted to boat access) shall comply with C(9) above regarding provision of mass transportation access.

E. Variances and Plan Amendments

1. The County may grant a variance to the setback and buffer requirements contained in this Chapter in accordance with Chapter 6 and upon findings that the following conditions exist:
 - a. The proposed project is a public use, resource-based recreation facility providing or supporting either recreational access to the Columbia River and its tributaries, or recreational opportunities associated with a Scenic Travel Corridor;
 - b. All reasonable measures to redesign the proposed project to comply with required setbacks and buffers have been explored, and application of those setbacks and buffers would prohibit a viable recreation use of the site as proposed;
 - c. Resource impacts have been mitigated to less than adverse levels through design provisions and mitigation measures.
 - d. The variance is the minimum necessary to accommodate the use.

2. The County may grant a variance of up to 10 percent to the standards of Recreation Intensity Class 4 for parking and campground units upon demonstration that:
(The provisions of Chapter 6, Variances shall not apply)
 - a. Demand and use levels for the proposed activity(s), particularly in the area where the site is proposed, are high and expected to remain so and/or increase. Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) data and data from Scenic Area recreation demand studies shall be relied upon to meet this criterion in the absence of current applicable studies.
 - b. The proposed use is dependent on resources present at the site.
 - c. Reasonable alternative sites, including those in nearby Urban Areas, offering similar opportunities have been evaluated and it has been demonstrated that the proposed use cannot be adequately accommodated elsewhere.
 - d. The proposed use is consistent with the goals, objectives and policies for recreation in the Management Plan.
 - e. Through site design and/or mitigation measures, the proposed use can be implemented without adversely affecting scenic, natural or cultural resources, and adjacent land uses.
 - f. Through site design and/or mitigation measures, the proposed use can be implemented without affecting treaty rights.
3. Proposals to change the Recreation Intensity Class of an area to a different class shall require a plan amendment, pursuant to Policies 1 through 4 in "Amendment of the Management Plan" (Part IV, Chapter 1, Gorge Commission Role) of the Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

F. Proposed development on properties Adjacent to Listed Recreation Sites

Recreation sites shall be protected from adjacent uses that would detract from their use and enjoyment. If new buildings or structures may detract from the use and enjoyment of established recreation sites on adjacent parcels, an appropriate buffer shall be established between the building/structure and the parcel.