



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

READY, SET, GORGE!

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The Columbia River Gorge communities and agencies are asking residents, conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts...

“Let’s Talk Trash!”

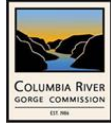
Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area — July 31st, 2020

Excessive trash and littering challenges have approached a crisis level of concern at recreation sites throughout the Columbia River Gorge. During a time when resources and staffing capacities are stretched thin, keeping up with maintenance, cleaning, and trash removal has proved problematic during record high visitations in 2020.

Public lands within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area are managed by multiple jurisdictions including cities, counties, ports, and resource agencies. Those agencies are asking everyone to do their part to help keep the Gorge clean and free of litter. While visitors and community members may understand the importance of proper trash removal, more detrimental impacts are not always obvious:

- Even small amounts of trash, waste, and litter left behind are magnified when millions of visitors do the same.
- Trash or litter may expose other visitors to health risks.
- Packing trash home to be sorted and recycled offers environmental benefits.
- Dumpsters and cans have been overwhelmed by illegal dumping, including household garbage dumped at sites, reducing availability for users.

Through a partnership with “Ready, Set, GORge!” agencies are collaborating on a public outreach campaign called “Let’s Talk Trash” to highlight current trash-related struggles, resources, tips, and ways to help to ensure prolonged protection of the Gorge, wildlife health, public safety, and the strength of its communities.



With a focus on staying local during these times, we ask community members and visitors to be kind and respectful of the Gorge and its communities, by following a few simple, easy steps:

1. Pack out what you pack in and don't plan to use available dumpsters or trash containers.
2. Bring an extra bag to collect errant litter and waste.
3. If you use available trash containers, ensure everything is completely inside. Don't stack waste next to receptacles where the wind or wildlife can scatter it.
4. Be kind to local rangers, community members, volunteers, and public service workers performing in very challenging times to keep people and lands healthy and safe.

Whether you live within the Gorge or visit our many special communities or recreation sites, we know you love the Gorge and we are diligently working to provide the best public services possible. If you are interested in learning more about volunteering or other resource needs, please visit our websites for further information.

- Volunteering -- [Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area - Volunteering](#)
- In need of utility assistance? Visit <https://www.mid-columbiahousingauthority.org/mid-columbia-covid-19-relief-fund/>
- Are you planning to visit the Gorge? Before leaving home, visit www.ReadySetGorge.com to find an interactive and updated map of trails and trip planning resources.
- Check the status of state parks, trails and campgrounds before you go, for Oregon State Parks visit <https://stateparks.oregon.gov/> and for Washington State Parks visit <https://parks.state.wa.us/1181/Parks-opening>

Partner Groups and Organizations:

Ready, Set, Gorge!	City of Hood River	City of Stevenson
US Forest Service	Port of Hood River	Trail Keepers of Oregon
Army Corp of Engineering	Washington State Parks	Visit Hood River
The Dalles Chamber of Commerce	Oregon State Parks	Friends of the Gorge
Mt. Adams Chamber of Commerce	Washington DNR	City of Washougal
Hood River County	Travel Oregon	Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance
	Gorge Commission	

[Ready, Set, GORge!](#) is an initiative aimed at improving the visitor experience in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area through collaboration between the U.S. Forest Service, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Travel Oregon, Oregon Department of Transportation and the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance. ###