



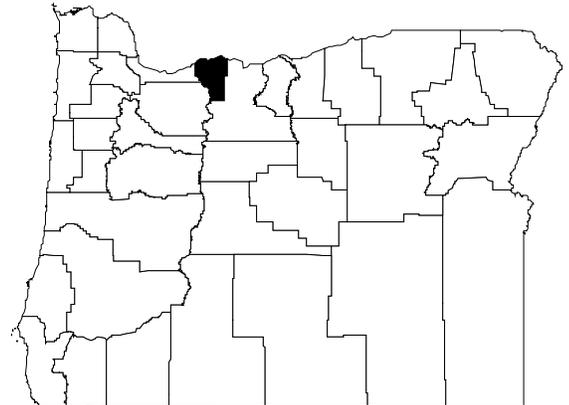
Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance

Community Profile

County Hood River
 City Stevenson
 Population 60,000

Assignment

Organization Columbia Gorge Tourism
 Supervisor Casey Roeder
 RARE Member Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch



About the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance

Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance (CGTA) is a non-profit organization formed in 1990 to promote the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area as a tourism destination and support the tourism industry therein. From 1990- 2017 the organization was named Columbia River Gorge Visitors Association. In 2016 Travel Oregon came to the region and completed a Gorge Rural Tourism Studio aimed at assisting communities interested in stimulating their local economies through sustainable tourism development, while protecting and enhancing local resources. Following the studio a steering committee was formed to determine the future of CRGVA and the graduates of the studio. The name change and board overhaul came as a signification that the organization would be doing more active development work in the region instead of just promotion as was previously done. CGTA hired a private consultant to come in and complete a smaller version of a strategic planning process to determine our new governance structure, funding, board members, and alliance leadership. It is governed by a board of volunteers and is partner-based. The Alliance is made up of 5 Action Teams: Culinary and Agritourism; Marketing Action Team (MAT); Gorge Outdoor Action Team (GOAT); Cultural Heritage Action Team (CHAT); and Car-free Implementation Team (CFIT). Overall there are around 50 stakeholders engaged with the Alliance at different levels. Each Action Team has a convener that the RARE participant will work closely with.



Meet Lauren Kolojejchick-Kotch

- B.A.E in Economics, Minor in International Studies – Seattle University, Albers School
- Postbaccalaureate Courses at University of Nebraska-Lincoln
- People may be surprised when they learn that I was the narrator of Decades, a documentary film about Lyons, Nebraska, which has recently been accepted into the Prairie Lights Film Festival. I’m very interested in projects that not only share local history, stories and ideas for the future, but also illuminate the ways in which rural communities are thriving, the ways in which they face challenges, and what these communities are to the people who call them home.
- One of my most significant accomplishments was learning to be an effective policy organizer in rural communities, especially in regard to healthcare energy and climate policy issues that shape the landscape and people’s lives.