

**From:** Rick Till [Rick@gorgefriends.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2010 4:04 PM  
**To:** Brian Litt  
**Subject:** RE: Visual Quality Objectives

Brian, thanks for the info. I did receive the disk and took a look at the data files. Unfortunately I don't have the GIS experience to shape into meaningful information. I'll be visiting the Forest Service office next Wednesday and will be taking a look at their GIS data. If I can't access the info I'm searching for, is there any chance I could sit down with your GIS folks and look at a few layers and print some maps?

Thanks,

Rick

Richard Till, Conservation Legal Advocate  
Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
[rick@gorgefriends.org](mailto:rick@gorgefriends.org)  
522 SW 5th Ave., Suite 720  
Portland, Oregon 97204-2100  
(503) 241-3762 x 107  
Fax: (503) 241-3873

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**From:** Brian Litt [mailto:Litt@gorgecommission.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2010 11:30 AM  
**To:** Rick Till  
**Cc:** Jill Arens  
**Subject:** RE: Visual Quality Objectives

Rick,

Regarding your request for scenic inventory data for the Dog Mountain area, the layers on the CD we sent you cover the entire Scenic Area, and include all the original scenic inventory information in the Commission's possession.

You asked if the original VQO for Underwood Bluff was partial retention and the additional requirement added after the fact. As I mentioned earlier, the policy of "visually subordinate to the landscape setting as seen from key viewing areas" covers much of the GMA and reflects the Forest Service 'partial retention' VQO. The guideline for the 'Gorge Walls, Canyonlands and Wildlands' setting of "fully screened to the maximum extent practicable" developed by the Gorge Commission does not directly correlate to the Forest Service VQO system. This guideline has been part of the Management Plan since its first adoption in October 1991.

*Brian Litt  
Principal Planner  
Columbia River Gorge Commission  
P.O. Box 730  
White Salmon, WA 98672*

(509) 493-3323, extension 223  
(509) 493-2229 Fax  
[brian.litt@gorgecommission.org](mailto:brian.litt@gorgecommission.org)

**From:** Rick Till [mailto:Rick@gorgefriends.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 06, 2010 4:03 PM  
**To:** Brian Litt  
**Cc:** Jill Arens  
**Subject:** RE: Visual Quality Objectives

Brian, I haven't received the CD yet, but I expect they'll be here Monday. I'll contact the Forest Service about the Visual Attributes and Landscape Diversity inventories.

Thanks for the summary of how the VQOs tie in with the Management Plan. I'm hoping the inventory data will include the raw VQOs that were established through the Visual Management System. Hopefully the inventories will explicitly connect the dots on how the visual subordinant and not visually evident standards serve as the VQOs (partial retention and retention) and provide specific findings on the landscapes I'm targeting. While we understand the scenic standard/VQO connection, I don't think all the dots aren't connected in the Management Plan. If I'm mistaken please let me know.

It's interesting to know that the Gorge Wall, Caynon Lands, and Wildlands guideline does not correspond to a VQO established by the Forest Service. I'll probably find this out when I review the documents, but was the original VQO for Underwood Bluff partial retention and the additional requirement added after the fact. The "fully screened to the maximum extent practicable" language sounds a lot like something between partial retention and retention. I would be curious to know the background on how that guideline was established.

Thanks for your assistance,

Rick

Richard Till, Conservation Legal Advocate  
Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
[rick@gorgefriends.org](mailto:rick@gorgefriends.org)  
522 SW 5th Ave., Suite 720  
Portland, Oregon 97204-2100  
(503) 241-3762 x 107  
Fax: (503) 241-3873

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**From:** Brian Litt [mailto:Litt@gorgecommission.org]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 06, 2010 11:08 AM  
**To:** Rick Till  
**Cc:** Jill Arens  
**Subject:** RE: Visual Quality Objectives

Rick,

I hope by now you have received the CD Michele Dailey prepared in response to your request. It contains four scenic inventories that we have. They are: Seen Areas, Landscape Significance, Visual

Absorption Capability and Landscape Sensitivity. Please note three of these are original layers created by the Forest Service in the 1980s. The Seen Areas layer has been refined since the original version was created; metadata information about this layer is included on the CD for your information. The Forest Service also prepared two other scenic inventories, Visual Attributes and Landscape Diversity. We do not have either digital or hard copies of these maps. You may want to check with the Forest Service to see if they have them.

In response to your questions about the visual quality objectives in general and for specific areas and designations, I offer the following. 'Visual quality objectives' (VQOs) specifically refers to a set of visual management goals established by the Forest Service (see Management Plan Glossary).

For the majority of the General Management Area (GMA), new development is required to be visually subordinate to its setting as seen from key viewing areas. (see GMA Policy 2, page I-1-6 of the Management Plan). As the policy states, there are exceptions for some types of development, such as rehabilitation of historically significant structures. Regarding specific areas you asked about, the above-referenced policy applies to the agriculture and forest land use designations in the Underwood area and the GMA lands in the eastern Scenic Area (Columbia Hills). The plan's definition of 'visually subordinate' is reflective of the partial retention VQO developed by the Forest Service.

The 'Gorge Walls, Canyons, and Wildlands' landscape setting includes an area designated Open Space above Highway 14 on the Underwood Bluffs. In addition to having to be visually subordinate, new development and expansion of existing development in this setting are subject to additional scenic resources guidelines. For example, such development "...shall be screened so it is not seen from key viewing areas, to the maximum extent practicable" (see Management Plan, p. I-1-28, Design Guideline 1). Please note these additional guidelines do not correspond directly to any VQO established by the Forest Service.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Sincerely,

Brian

*Brian Litt  
Principal Planner  
Columbia River Gorge Commission  
P.O. Box 730  
White Salmon, WA 98672  
(509) 493-3323, extension 223  
(509) 493-2229 Fax  
[brian.litt@gorgecommission.org](mailto:brian.litt@gorgecommission.org)*

**From:** Rick Till [mailto:Rick@gorgefriends.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 27, 2010 3:55 PM  
**To:** Brian Litt  
**Subject:** Visual Quality Objectives

Brian,

I'm looking for the original scenic resource inventory and visual quality objectives that formed the basis for the land use designations and scenic resource protection policies and guidelines. In particular, I'm looking for the visual quality objectives for the Underwood Bluff Open Space area. I'm also interested in the visual quality objectives for the Ag and Forest zones between the bluff, the Little White Salmon River, and Underwood Mountain.

Could you provide this information? If need be I can phrase the request as a public records request.

Thanks,

Rick

Richard Till, Conservation Legal Advocate  
Friends of the Columbia Gorge  
[rick@gorgefriends.org](mailto:rick@gorgefriends.org)  
522 SW 5th Ave., Suite 720  
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