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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge Awards \$120,000 for
Tourism Infrastructure and Visitor Experience Projects**

*Six projects across the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region will improve
access, safety, wayfinding, and outdoor recreation experiences*

OREGON CITY, Ore. — Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge Regional Destination Management Organization (RDMO) has awarded \$120,000 through its 2026 Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) grants to support six projects that enhance public infrastructure, outdoor recreation access, visitor experience, and community livability across the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region.

The Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge Strategic Investment Fund invests directly in tourism assets, businesses, and communities through one-time investments in regionally impactful tourism projects that address the region's key priorities. For the 2026 funding cycle, priority was given to projects that address tourism-related public infrastructure, including improvements to parking, accessibility, transportation, wayfinding, and visitor facilities. All funded projects are expected to be completed by June 2027.

Public infrastructure was identified as the region's top tourism priority in Travel Oregon's most recent tourism industry survey, ranking significantly higher than the statewide average. The 2026 SIF grant program received 18 project applications totaling \$799,000 in asks, demonstrating this need. By prioritizing infrastructure improvements, Experience Mt. Hood & the Gorge aims to address needs identified by local communities and tourism partners while improving experiences for both residents and visitors.

"These projects reflect the RDMO's commitment to addressing community-identified needs while celebrating the places that make Mt. Hood and the Gorge so special," said Ithaca Janzen, Regional Tourism Lead, Experience Mt. Hood & the Gorge. "From parking and accessibility improvements to urban trail signage and safety enhancements, these investments help ensure the region remains a welcoming and sustainable destination for residents and visitors."

The 2026 Strategic Investment Fund recipients include:

Bike Rack Installation at Hole-In-The-Wall Falls

Bike The Gorge (\$15,000)

Funding will support the installation of three bike racks at Hole-In-The-Wall Falls, a popular stop along the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail. The project addresses the current lack of bicycle parking infrastructure, helping reduce conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians while minimizing environmental impacts within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Sandy Parks and Trails Visitor Access and Wayfinding Improvement

City of Sandy (\$42,100)

The City of Sandy will develop and install park entry signs, information kiosks, and trail wayfinding signage at five destination parks. The project will improve visitor navigation and increase awareness of Sandy's growing network of parks and recreation opportunities.

Mosier Confluence Park Infrastructure Improvements

Main Street Mosier (\$26,580)

Funding will support pedestrian safety enhancements at Mosier Confluence Park, including clearly defined pathways and a dedicated creek viewpoint. The project will connect downtown Mosier to trails and Mosier Creek while integrating with existing amenities such as parking, EV charging stations, and the skate park.

Herman Creek Cove Parking and Accessibility Enhancement

Port of Cascade Locks (\$25,000)

The Port of Cascade Locks will pave the existing gravel parking lot and access road and add ADA-accessible parking spaces at Herman Creek Cove. The site serves kayakers, anglers, mountain bikers, and other recreation users with access to the popular EasyCLIMB trail network.

Gorge Audio Trails Visitor Experience at Sharon Nesbit Heritage Park

Columbia Gorge Stewardship Alliance (\$6,550)

This project will create a series of audio stories highlighting the history, culture, and ecology of Sharon Nesbit Heritage Park in Troutdale. Accessible through QR codes placed on park signage, the stories will feature Sharon Nesbit's own words alongside other narrators to deepen visitors' connection to the site.

Improvements to Wylde Wind & Water Dock Site

Wylde Wind & Water (\$4,770)

Funding will support infrastructure upgrades at the organization's Hood River waterfront dock site, including improved surfacing, equipment storage, and public safety information. Wylde Wind & Water provides water sports education and safety programming for youth and adults, serving both residents and visitors.

The Strategic Investment Fund supports one-time investments that advance the region's priorities around community engagement, destination management, visitor experience, partnerships, and regional alignment. By investing tourism-generated revenue back into the region, the program helps strengthen communities, improve recreation infrastructure, and support responsible visitation throughout the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge region.

Funding for Experience Mt. Hood & the Gorge's Strategic Investment Fund Grant Program is provided through the state transient lodging tax through Travel Oregon's Regional Cooperative Tourism Program.

About Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge

Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge, also known as the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO, is managed through Clackamas County Tourism with regional leadership from The Dalles Area Chamber of Commerce, Visit Hood River, Explore Troutdale, and Mt. Hood Territory. From exploring Mt. Hood, the tallest mountain in Oregon, to the Columbia River Gorge with its awe inspiring views, the region is a place where visitors can experience Oregon's history, culture, local cuisine and wine/beer, and an abundance of year-round adventures. For more information about Experience Mt. Hood and the Gorge, follow us on Facebook (Mt. Hood/Columbia River Gorge Region) and Instagram (@hoodgorge) or visit hood-gorge.com.