

SECTION III: RARE AmeriCorps 2022-2023 PLACEMENT NARRATIVE

PART A: BASIC INFORMATION

RARE Host Organization

Organization	Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance		
Organization Location	Oregon City, but RARE to be based in Hood River, The Dalles, or Estacada		
RARE Position Title	Destination Stewardship Specialist		
Area to be served	Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region	Population	Approx 87,000
	City, county, region, watershed		

Placement Type

Check the placement type(s) that best describe this position. These check boxes are used to match your organization with prospective members. Please check all that apply.

Host Organization & Economic Development

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Main St. & Downtown Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Small City, County & Regional Planning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Small Business & Entrepreneurship Support |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit Development & Management | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rural Tourism & Destination Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Economic Resilience |

Food Systems

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Food Systems | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Access & Security |
|--|---|

Environment & Sustainability

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Renewable Energy | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Hazard Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Hazard Mitigation |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Climate Change & Host Organization Resilience | | |

Host Organization Housing Information

Median Rental Costs	\$ <u>1000</u>	\$ <u>1800</u>
	1 bdrm. Apartment	2 bdrm. House

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PART B: RARE PLACEMENT DESCRIPTION

Please describe the RARE placement by answering the questions below.

SUMMARY

Please provide a one paragraph position summary of the RARE placement (no more than 300 words).

The RARE placement for the [Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance](#) is an exciting opportunity for an individual to understand and gain experience across the broad range of work that is connected to tourism destination management and stewardship in one of Oregon's most interesting tourism regions. Our region is home to two of Oregon's most visited sites, Mt. Hood and Multnomah Falls, yet lacks the financial structure to adequately support the challenges that come with that level of visitation. That is why our work needs to be creative, thoughtful, and as impactful as possible. The region is composed of over 13 communities with populations ranging from about 600 in Dufur to just over 15,000 in The Dalles but is bordered by a 2.5million metro. This puts significant strain on rural resources, stewardship of the land, resident sentiment towards tourism, and the economic vitality and resilience of our rural communities. This RARE placement is the added capacity our region needs to help move our priority destination and visitor management projects forward to provide safer, more inclusive, and more sustainable visitor experiences that benefit our rural communities in a positive and meaningful long term way. Joining this small team, the RARE will have the opportunity to get their hands dirty in a wide array of project areas that connect to the tourism eco-system, including: food systems, accessibility and DEI, outdoor recreation, climate change, and community engagement. The work for the RARE in these areas includes, but is not limited to: event management, convening, research, training, recruiting, project management and more. This RARE will work with and learn from folks in the private and public sector, from small business owners and community non-profits to statewide and federal agencies. You don't want to miss this opportunity.

WHO WE ARE

Host Organization

Describe the host organization with which the RARE AmeriCorps Member will be serving. Please include a description of the office where the RARE AmeriCorps Member will be located, how many staff are present regularly, whether clients/residents come in for services, and expectations for office hours.

The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance, also known locally as the [Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO](#) (Regional Destination Management Organization), is one of the seven designated tourism regions in the state of Oregon. The organization is run out of Clackamas County Tourism's department, but represents tourism in parts of Multnomah County, Clackamas County, Wasco County, and all of Hood River County. The RDMO is a staff of one with support from a handful of contractors and community tourism partners. Because the RDMO sits within Clackamas County Tourism's department, our organization is also part of their eight person team.

Since the COVID pandemic, we have moved to an entirely remote office, which means the RARE has some flexibility on where they would like to work from in the region. We have secured options for office space in The Dalles, Hood River, and Estacada, pending the RARE's interest. Each location offers a

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unique work setting, from inside a Chamber of Commerce to inside a museum/Visitor Center. The Supervisor will meet with the RARE in-person in the region on a weekly basis. Office hours for the RDMO and Clackamas County are typically Monday-Thursday, 7:30am-6pm, with Fridays off. This is a 4 days a week and 10 hours a day schedule. While this is the typical schedule, the position does require some weekend and after hours work.

Host Organization Need Statement

Describe the specific needs in your Host Organization that the RARE project(s) will address. This may include a description of the Host Organization/organization strategic plan or a description of the events or change in policy that has led your Host Organization to seek assistance from the RARE Program.

The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Regional Tourism Alliance seeks to use responsible visitor management to build awareness for the region as a multi-day and year-round travel destination that benefits all communities. Our mission is to continuously and creatively address the challenges that come with being a mature destination that encompasses small rural communities and neighbors Oregon's largest metro area. Our current biennial priorities include:

- Care for Community: Create and support ways in which our communities can engage with, advocate for, and understand the benefits from the tourism economy.
- Destination and Visitor Management: Leverage and support tools and programs that address high-use/low-use issues, seasonality, and economic impact needs in the region.
- Improve Visitor Experiences: Access funding and partnerships that support regional partners with improving existing visitor experiences in the region.
- Leverage Resource through partnerships: Expand the work the RDMO can accomplish to meet our goals through partnerships with Travel Oregon, other RDMOs, DMOs, associations and other stakeholders
- Regional Alignment: Maintain and support a strong sense of alignment between Mt. Hood and the Columbia River Gorge in visitor communications.

Many of the tourism organizations in the region are staffed by 1-2 people, so working together to make big changes and provide needed support systems for our tourism partners is both critical and very difficult to accomplish. The value we will be able to get with the resource of a RARE member is immense as the added capacity to move projects forward is what is greatly needed.

Supervisor Statement

Provide a brief background of the Host Organization supervisor (the person who will be responsible for coordinating the day-to-day oversight of the RARE AmeriCorps Member). Please describe their supervisory and communication styles; experience working with AmeriCorps members, volunteers, or interns; and their role within the organization.

[Lizzie Keenan](#) will be the supervisor for the RARE Member. She is the sole staff person and lead for the Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO. Her supervisory style is that of mentorship and collaboration. She loves getting to know the individual, their interests and goals, then coach them

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through an approach that utilizes their talents while broadening their experience and developing new skills. Lizzie is an open book and welcomes all questions and leads with support and joy. If you want to dig further into her work and communication style, she is an iS on the DiSC assessment.

Lizzie has managed and run an internship program and interns before, has been a mentor through multiple different tourism Graduate University programs, and has experience supervising staff and contractors in full and part time roles. She also had a part-time role in managing a previous tourism focused RARE in the region and has worked and collaborated with other tourism RAREs in the state.

Community Description

Please describe the community in which the person will be living and serving. Include any information that you believe may be important for someone who is new to your community and/or the state of Oregon.

The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge Region of Oregon is one of the most spectacular sights you will ever experience. The region is made up of over 13 small, rural communities living along the Columbia River and in and around Mt. Hood National Forest. The area is most known for its expansive outdoor recreation opportunities, where you can ski, hike, river raft, kiteboard all in the same day. But, this area has so much more to offer. The landscape changes every 20 miles here, from lush old growth forest to open valleys to high desert rolling fields. This allows for a wide range of agricultural products to come from here, like apples, pears, cherries, Christmas trees, grapes for wineries, and more.

Because of its proximity to the Portland metro area, the region receives a significant amount of day use visitors that have led to management issues in the region. Local rural partners are constantly trying to adjust and plan for new ways to address those pressures while ensuring that our small businesses and downtown areas benefit economically from the visitation. This work has led to improvements in public transportation, new communication programs with land managers, and more.

But it has also led to some strained resident sentiment issues towards tourism that we hope to continue to address and work to improve in the coming years.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

How does your organization demonstrate a commitment to supporting and uplifting marginalized communities? Please describe efforts that are part of your organization and, in particular, part of the RARE projects.

The Mt. Hood and Columbia River Gorge RDMO demonstrates our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in a number of ways. Primarily, education has been the main focus the last few years and will continue to be a priority in perpetuity. Staff have gone through different DEI trainings offered by Travel Oregon, Clackamas County, and local non-profits. We are an active participant in the Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance's Welcomability Action Team, which we would ask the RARE to join as well and includes a DEI bookclub that was just started. We have been intentional about broadening our outreach to target new, more diverse audiences when we go out to bid for new contracts. We think through and

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adjust marketing, messaging, and storytelling to better reflect a more inclusive and equitable space for people to engage in. Finally, Clackamas County has a new [Equity and Inclusion office](#) that offers additional support and programs for us to access, including this RARE member.

Additionally, the RARE Member will be leading work that supports communities with varied disabilities in making our destination more informative and accessible to them.

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WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FOR

Skills Needed

Describe the skills that you would need in a RARE AmeriCorps Member that would serve in the position.

<i>Required Skills</i>	<i>Desired Skills</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive attitude• Willingness to learn• Teamwork and collaboration• Strong oral and written communication• Creative and critical thinking• Project management• Adaptability and resiliency• Curiosity• Ability to work with a diverse range of people from different backgrounds and with different belief systems from their own	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Training• Event coordination and planning• Volunteer management• Running meetings• Public speaking• Research skills/data collection• Specialty knowledge/experience in any of the following topics: tourism, food systems, accessibility, land management, climate change

Below are the essential functions of a RARE AmeriCorps Member in general. Please include any additional essential functions of your placement, not listed below. This may include skills as well as requirements such as passing a drug test, owning their own car, etc.

Essential Functions

The RARE AmeriCorps Member must be able to fulfill the following essential functions:

- Complete a minimum of 1700 of service within 11 months;
- Represent the RARE AmeriCorps Program, their Host Organization organizations and themselves well by behaving professionally and following the dress code and standards of conduct of their sponsoring organization;
- Travel to and participate in required RARE trainings, including Orientation, Fall Training, Winter Training, and the End of the Year Event;
- Travel to and participate in tourism conferences and trainings, including Travel Oregon Days, the Oregon Governor's Conference on Tourism, the Oregon Trails Summit, and others.
- Create and submit a work plan, with the support and approval of the Host Organization supervisor, that accurately reflects the RARE AmeriCorps Member's on-site duties and deliverables;
- Complete monthly service reports (timesheets) and quarterly assessments in a timely manner;
- Seek technical assistance and support whenever needed, from Host Organization resources, RARE/IPRE staff, or from the University outlined both the in the scope of work and in the RARE AmeriCorps Member work plan;

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- Complete specified work products as described in scope of work and work plan.
- Have access to transportation. While the region does have public transportation, it is still not robust enough to reach our more rural areas.

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WHAT YOU'LL DO

Please summarize all anticipated projects your RARE AmeriCorps member will take on using the following table. The purpose of this table is to give members an overview of the placement description. This table will be attached to your Host Organization contract (signed at the beginning of the member's term of service). Please use sufficient detail to explain your projects (i.e., if a member were solely looking at this table, they would understand the scope of work for this placement).

Project 1: Food Trails and Local Food Systems			
Major Activities & Tasks to be Performed	Skills, Ability & Knowledge Needed	Expected Outcomes and/or Deliverables	% of time
<p>The RARE member would convene and help manage existing culinary and agritourism trails in the region through education, training, connection building, and resource sharing. Our regional food systems include: East Gorge Food Trail, West Gorge Food Trail, and the Hood River Fruit Loop.</p> <p>The RARE member would lead and assist the Gorge Food Trails Action Team with development and execution of a Winter 2023 Ag Tourism Summit (a first for the region). Lead outreach and engagement with partners on the three food/farm trails to foster collaborative project/product ideation and execution that enhances the visitor experience, extends seasonality, and supports the food systems economic vitality. Connect with partners on the Food Trails to lead new member on-boarding and shared resources. Assess, support, and communicate about local supply chain connectivity in the region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convening & facilitation • Volunteer management • Event management • Project management • Outreach & training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Execution of a successful Ag Tourism Summit in February 2023 • Development of winter agritourism product/itineraries. • Monthly admin support for Gorge Food Trail Action Team • Engaged and informed food/farm trail participants 	25

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Project 2: Accessibility in Tourism			
Major Activities & Tasks to be Performed	Skills, Ability & Knowledge Needed	Expected Outcomes and/or Deliverables	% of time
<p>The RARE will learn from and work with local tourism partners and local/regional accessibility experts to identify opportunities and gaps in accessibility at tourism attractions and visitor facing businesses in the region. This includes: developing an inventory of accessibility information about top tourism sites and experiences in the region through data collection and outreach and engagement with partners, helping to identify accessibility needs/opportunities in the region and connect partners to existing funding opportunities and RDMO grant support systems to support site upgrades to be more accessible, and training tourism attractions and businesses on how and where to provide accurate descriptions of their site’s accessibility using provided template sourced from expert consultants and advisory panel (ex. their website, Google listing, and more.) The RARE will also work with Trailkeepers of Oregon to help collect accessibility information for regional hikes to be shared on Oregonhikers.org. Pending the timing and location, the RARE may be sponsored to attend the 2023 Travelability Summit to learn from best practices and bring back learnings for regional partners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach • Training • Data collection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in accessibility information about tourism sites available to visitors to the region online • Tourism Accessibility Guide developed for the region • Increase in # of trails with accessibility information in our region on oregonhikers.org 	25

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Project 3: Climate Change & Car Free Transportation			
Major Activities & Tasks to be Performed	Skills, Ability & Knowledge Needed	Expected Outcomes and/or Deliverables	% of time
<p>The RARE will work with and support regional partners on existing transportation efforts to combat climate change in the region. This includes working with the Car Free Action Team which is convened by Columbia Gorge Tourism Alliance and with Clackamas County Tourism on their Hwy 26 Car Free transportation work and EV charging station project.</p> <p>The work will include outreach, education, training, and developing tools for local communities and tourism partners about the car free and EV travel options in the region and their benefits for use. They will test out car free options and develop itineraries around them. The RARE will help lead the expansion of EV charging stations in the region, based at top attractions to make them more desirable for EV visitor use. The RARE will also connect and work with the Oregon Coast Visitor’s Association Climate Change RARE to partner on learnings and help develop the region’s first tourism Climate Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research • Collaboration • Writing • Training • Outreach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple climate action plan developed for tourism in the region • Increase in EV charging stations in the region at tourism relevant locations • Car Free and Electric vehicle trip itineraries developed 	15

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Project 4: Destination Stewardship – Ambassador Program Volunteer Engagement			
Major Activities & Tasks to be Performed	Skills, Ability & Knowledge Needed	Expected Outcomes and/or Deliverables	% of time

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<p>This RARE would support existing trail and river ambassador programs in the region by leading local volunteer recruitment and engagement efforts, including, but not limited to reaching out to historically marginalized communities in the region.</p> <p>Trail Ambassadors are trained volunteers stationed from spring through fall at busy trailheads in the region to provide safety information and leave no trace principles to visitors and recreators. River Ambassadors are posted up at busy water put-ins along the Clackamas River in the summer also sharing safety and leave no trace messages.</p> <p>The RARE would conduct outreach to local community groups to find creative ways to help recruit more local volunteers for our trail and river ambassador programs in the region to expand and support their volunteer base. The COVID pandemic put a damper on volunteer participation and engagement. These programs need additional support to recruit new volunteers.</p> <p>The RARE will also have the opportunity to develop and present useful “lunch and learn” style trainings for volunteers to help connect them to the land they are stewarding and provide learnings they can share with the visitors they interact with.</p> <p>Optional activity for the RARE (if a fan of dogs): Support the growth and development of Ambassadors who help message dog trail etiquette and help curb the dog poop bag issues in the region. This is a program that Trailkeepers of Oregon has wanted to launch the last couple of years in conjunction with Trail Ambassadors, but has struggled to do so because of needed staff capacity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer recruitment • Community outreach and engagement • Training/presentation skills • Outdoor recreation knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase recruitment of volunteers for ambassador programs • “Lunch and Learn” style trainings developed and presented to volunteers. • Growth and development of Ambassadors 	<p>20</p>
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Project 5: TBD Projects & RDMO Support			
Major Activities & Tasks to be Performed	Skills, Ability & Knowledge Needed	Expected Outcomes and/or Deliverables	% of time
<p>This 5% time is available to be allocated for unexpected regional requests, as-needed staff support, and passion areas/projects of the RARE.</p> <p>There is some unallocated time available to be dedicated toward projects that are not captured above but come out of input through the regional work and RDMO priorities and align with interest areas of the placement, as well as providing general staff support. We would like to build in some flexibility toward this placement to engage in a passion project that they will fully own, that we could help fund and report out on at the end of the service term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD, based on identified projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TBD, based on RARE member's interests and needs in the region. 	5

Project 6: Member Professional Development			
Major Activities & Tasks to be Performed	Skills, Ability & Knowledge Needed	Expected Outcomes and/or Deliverables	% of time
<p><i>10% of service will include required RARE Program sponsored trainings*</i></p>			10

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WHAT YOU'LL GAIN

Professional Development Opportunities

Ten percent of the member's time is to be spend on required RARE AmeriCorps training (Orientation, Fall Training, Winter Training, and various webinars throughout the service year). These trainings are vital to the member's year of service as it covers important AmeriCorps policies as well as skills that will benefit the member and host organization over the service year. These skills include creating work plans, conducting effective community outreach, and conflict management.

AmeriCorps policy caps the total amount of hours spent on training at 20% of hours over the service year. Supervisors and members should plan for how to use these hours to best meet the needs of the projects and member development goals.

Please describe the professional development, learning opportunities and training for the RARE AmeriCorps Member who would serve in the position. Please be as specific as possible.

- Collaboration, facilitation, and project management experience - This RARE placement will have the opportunity to lead, manage and support a wide range of projects that need their added capacity in the region to succeed. Because these projects cross communities and industries, the placement will have the opportunity to foster new collaboration, facilitate meetings, and manage projects from start to finish and see those immediate results from the work.
- Regional Destination Stewardship/Management Experience – This position would have incredible access to a mix of local, regional and state agencies, nonprofits, and tourism partners that are working hard on innovative destination and visitor management solutions in a complex rural environment that is heavily impacted by its metro area neighbors. This position gives a behind the scenes, in-depth look and learning experience into destination management work that is unparalleled as an entry-level tourism position.
- Travel Oregon and RDMO Sponsored Trainings & Activities: RARE Training - Tourism Add-on Professional Development Programs at Orientation, Fall Training (Fall 2022) and Winter Training (Dec 2022), Travel Oregon Days (dates to be set with TO & RARE), Outdoor Recreation Summit, Regional Stakeholder Gatherings (varied dates), Destination Development Bootcamp, Governor's Conference on Tourism, Travelability Conference (TBD on timing and location), participate in CGTA's DEI/Welcomeability Book Club.