



WHISTLING RIDGE WIND PROJECT ENDS AFTER 22 YEARS |

FRIENDS MEMBER DESIGNS "TERRA CASCADIA" AT PDX AIRPORT |

TRAIL TALES: INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE AT LYLE CHERRY ORCHARD |

LAUNCHING "CAMINEMOS JUNTOS" OUTDOOR PROGRAM |

PASSAGES



I've often thought that our work to protect the Columbia Gorge is like one giant, never-ending relay race. We grab the baton from past generations and run like crazy to do everything we can before handing off to the next generation. In June, we lost a valuable member of Friends' relay team when Land Trust Director

Dan Bell passed away from a heart attack at the very young age of 52.

I hired Dan six years ago to run our land trust and he professionalized our organization in ways I couldn't have imagined. He built an amazing staff and ensured acquisitions at Cape Horn, Catherine Creek, Rowena, Beacon Rock, and most recently at Heartleaf Bluffs and below Dog Mountain. His fingerprints are everywhere in the Gorge.

On a personal side, it is not an exaggeration to say Dan was one of the most decent human beings I've had the privilege to be associated with. He found the love of his life, Heather, later in life and they were married for six years. His dogs were his kids and he had a soft spot for basset hounds. For someone with a brilliant, complex brain, he loved living a very simple life. He was a contented man.

Of course, none of us feel contented now. In fact, some of us are downright angry at the unfairness of it all. So I've taken to doing something I've done every week for the past six years and that's chat with Dan. One of the best parts of my job over the years was my weekly chats with Dan as no one made me think harder or laugh harder.

Conversations in my head with Dan always start with him saying in his rich baritone voice, "What's up Kevin?" From there, a wisdom rolls out, a calm above whatever chaos is front and center. Dan tells me to hold tight to that calm. I can hear him saying, "Look, I know this sucks, but I had a great life with no regrets. So celebrate that life, preferably over a beverage and with the people I called my friends. I am so excited to watch what Friends of the Columbia Gorge will do moving forward. If I have any advice for all of you, it is this: do the work, love the work, and love each other."

Kevin Gorman, Executive Director

contents



FEATURE STORY
Controversial Whistling Ridge Wind Project Ends After 22 Years



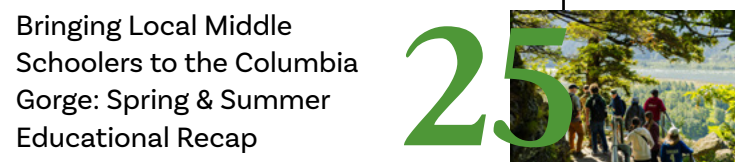
Friends Enjoys Legal Victories in Clark County



From Gorge to Gate: Friends Member Brad Johnson Designs "Terra Cascadia" Art Installation at PDX Airport



Trail Tales: New Signage Elevates Hiker Experience at Friends' Lyle Cherry Orchard



Bringing Local Middle Schoolers to the Columbia Gorge: Spring & Summer Educational Recap



"Caminemos Juntos," a New Outdoor Initiative for the Gorge Latino Community

Photos, top to bottom: Whistling Ridge, Darryl Lloyd; Warta property, Monique Trevett; Brad Johnson at PDX, Brad Johnson; Lyle Cherry Orchard panel, Paloma Ayala; Beacon Rock hike, Monique Trevett; Dalles Mountain Ranch, Andrew Kolkjen



Dan supervised the work of the five other members of Friends' Land Trust team. We asked each of them what made him such a cherished boss, colleague, and friend.

Dan Bell was a visionary land trust director, unafraid of seemingly impossible projects. I always appreciated his meticulous attention to detail and challenging things that he didn't agree with. And, when the sticky notes came out, I knew it was planning time! His legacy will be forever embedded in the Gorge and our hearts.



Renée Tkach

Dan Bell was a protector of the natural world and he loved to get out on the land he worked so hard to conserve. He had a fierce love of rattlesnakes which truly warms my heart to know his passion for conservation wasn't skin deep. Dan was a mentor to me in so many ways and he raised the bar on what I and our organization ever thought we could achieve. You will be missed Dan but know we will do our best to continue your legacy.



Sara Woods

Dan felt like a friend as much as a boss. We could talk about our canine kids, program visions, and budgets all in the same breath—he was just that kind of guy. Supportive, fierce, grounded, witty, and incredibly accomplished. I felt so lucky when our office time overlapped and am forever grateful to have been part of his team.



Sarah Skelly

The Gorge and I owe a great debt to Dan. Dan consistently inspired me with his gumption and commitment to his lifelong pursuit of protecting wild places. Dan was funny, protective, motivating, and compassionate. He was the best boss and friend a person could ask for. I am forever grateful to Dan. I know that he will continue to positively impact who I am as a person and as a conservationist for the rest of my life.



Frances Fischer

Dan was an amazing leader, boss and director. He was one of the good guys. His work was inspiring and wholesome. With Dan, you knew that whatever he was doing he wasn't doing it for himself. His humbleness and dedication to his work will forever be a testament to the man he was, and he will forever inspire not just myself and those he worked with, but generations of people who will visit the amazing properties he managed to save for their benefit.



Josiah Masie

To make a donation in memory of Dan, please visit gorgefriends.org/tribute and enter Dan's name in the dedication field. All gifts will be attributed to the Dan Bell Memorial Fund for Land and Wildlife Protection.

VICTORY FOR CONSERVATION: CONTROVERSIAL WHISTLING RIDGE WIND PROJECT ENDS AFTER 22 YEARS

Text by
Nathan Baker

Senior Staff Attorney

Of the 50 wind turbines proposed on private land, 30 would have been visible from the Strawberry Mountain neighborhood in the city of White Salmon. Photo simulation by Applicant Whistling Ridge Energy, LLC.

A

AFTER MORE THAN TWO DECADES, THE PLANS TO BUILD THE WHISTLING RIDGE ENERGY PROJECT, AN industrial-scale wind energy project once proposed in the central Columbia River Gorge, have finally been ended. The state-issued permit for the controversial project was deemed “expired” in a written order issued on July 17 by the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) after the agency heard from various parties including Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

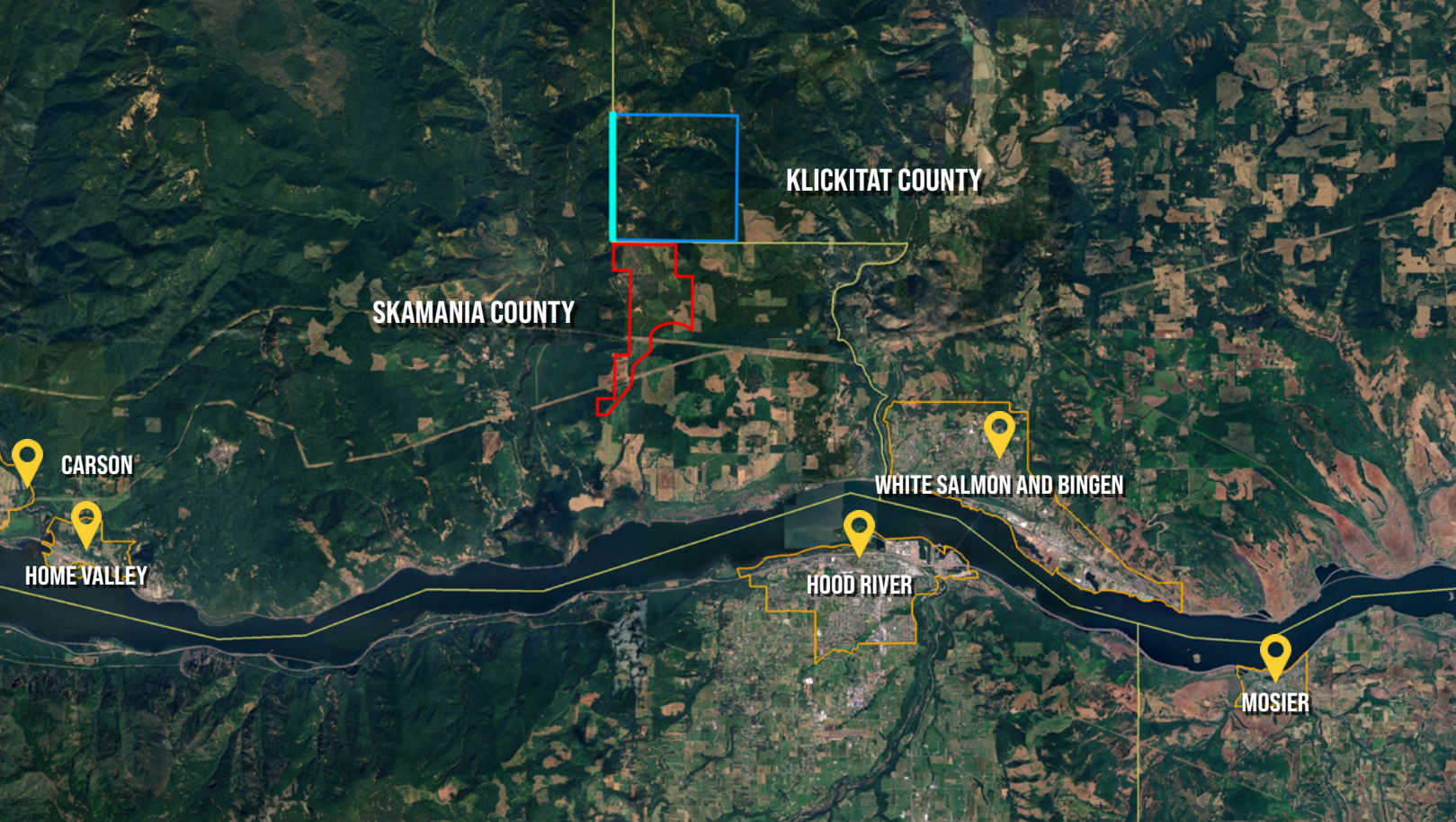
As far back as 2002, the Whistling Ridge project posed serious threats to scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources as well as local communities in the special and unique place where the Cascade Range intersects with the Columbia River Gorge. Proposed along the boundary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and within an area designated for the protection of the imperiled northern spotted owl, the Whistling Ridge project would have (among other problems) marred world-class scenery and harmed endangered species habitat, with little to no benefit to the people of the Pacific Northwest.

From the moment the project was first unveiled, Friends and allies stayed involved and opposed the poorly designed project at every step of the process, including litigation before the Washington Supreme Court and federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. Through our tireless advocacy and litigation, Friends ensured that the project, once proposed to include up to 85 wind turbines, met its demise in three phases over the course of 15 years: 35 proposed turbines were rejected in 2009, 15 additional turbines were denied in 2012, and permission to build the remaining 35 turbines was deemed expired in 2024.

SERIOUS THREATS TO SPECIAL RESOURCES

The Whistling Ridge proposal was without question one of the most controversial, problematic, and environmentally consequential wind energy projects that has ever been proposed in Washington State.

The project would have harmed wildlife by permanently removing thousands of acres of forested habitat, including within a designated special emphasis area for the northern spotted owl, a state-endangered and



The proposed Whistling Ridge project site boundaries were enormous, totaling approximately 5.80 square miles on both public lands in Klickitat County (outlined in blue) and private lands in Skamania County (outlined in red)—equivalent to the combined sizes of the designated urban area boundaries for White Salmon, Bingen, and Mosier (which total approximately 5.81 square miles). Yellow lines denote county boundaries. Orange lines depict urban area boundaries. Image generated in Google Earth.

federally threatened species. Multiple state and federally listed mammal and bird species would also have been affected by the project, including the western gray squirrel, northern goshawk, bald eagle, pileated woodpecker, and numerous migratory bird species. The project site also provides habitat for multiple species of bats. The site was never surveyed for birds during key migratory periods, and many of the wildlife surveys that were performed occurred more than 15 years ago, making them stale and outdated.

The project also threatened severe impacts to scenic, cultural, and recreational resources. The project site is within three miles of the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, the Oregon Pioneer National Historic Trail, the Historic Columbia River Highway (designated as a National Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places, as well as a National Historic Landmark), and the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail.

The project was proposed along the boundary of the National Scenic Area. The immense, 430-foot-tall

turbines would have loomed over the Gorge horizon and would have been visible for many miles in every direction. The project would have permanently altered the scenic landscape within the Columbia River Gorge and Cascade Range in an area that is visited by tourists from all over the world for its unique qualities, including dramatic mountain vistas, steep cliffs, pastoral lands, and the Columbia River. The project site is also surrounded by recreational resources in every direction on federal, state, and private lands.

By diminishing Gorge scenic resources, the project would also have harmed the local tourism economy and negatively affected property values in surrounding communities. In addition, it would have caused substantial traffic and road damage along local roads during construction.

During EFSEC's original review of the project from 2009 to 2012, hundreds of written and oral comments were submitted regarding the project, and 86% of them opposed or expressed concerns about the project. These included multiple adverse comments

from government agencies, including the U.S. Forest Service and National Park Service, given the project's potential impacts to scenic resources and cultural heritage.

A PROJECT OF MANY NAMES

Over the years, the proposed project went through several name changes and project reconfigurations. It was first dubbed the "SDS Underwood Wind Generation Project" in 2002, when PPM Energy, Inc. requested from the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) a 70-megawatt generation interconnection to BPA's energy grid for a new wind energy project on land owned by S.D.S. Lumber Co., LLC (SDS) in southeast Skamania County.

The project was not announced to the public, however, until 2007, when SDS proposed the renamed "Saddleback Wind Farm," which would have consisted of up to 85 industrial-scale wind turbines on prominent ridgelines, including Chemawa Hill, Saddleback Mountain, and Whistling Ridge. Fifty of the turbines would have been sited on private land in southeast Skamania County, and 35 turbines on public land (owned and managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR)) in southwest Klickitat County.

By 2009, the project had been renamed yet again, this time to the "Whistling Ridge Energy Project." That year, the newly created Whistling Ridge Energy, LLC (WRE), an SDS subsidiary, submitted an application to EFSEC for permission to build and operate 50 wind turbines on private land owned by SDS and Broughton Lumber.

POORLY DESIGNED PROJECT

Later in 2009, the DNR rejected SDS's request to build 35 of the wind turbines on public land given the potential impacts to northern spotted owls and their habitat. Many of these turbines proposed on public land would have been built on the narrow Whistling Ridge—some of them literally on top of the Whistling Ridge Trail. Such construction would have forever obliterated a trail that is a source of great solitude and located off the beaten path, yet readily accessible from the central Gorge. DNR's rejection of the 35 turbines on public land left the project proposal with



The Whistling Ridge project would have marred this scenic view from the Grassy Knoll Trail, and from numerous other trails and viewpoints around the region. Photo by Darryl Lloyd.

just the 50 turbines planned on private land (none of which, despite the new project name, would have been located on Whistling Ridge).

In 2012, following a lengthy, complex adjudication and public comment process presided over by EFSEC, former Governor Gregoire denied permission to build 15 of the proposed turbines in order to reduce the project's impacts to scenic, cultural, and natural resources. The governor, however, did grant permission to build the remaining 35 proposed turbines, each up to 430 feet tall.

Litigation ensued thereafter, including in the Thurston County Superior Court, Washington Supreme Court, and federal Ninth Circuit. Although none of the courts reversed the project approvals, the state supreme court did determine that additional project review was necessary and that several issues would need to be resolved by state officials, including impacts to migratory birds, wildlife mitigation, and review of the project's clearcuts and other forest practices. In other words, the legal battles were far from over.

DEAD ON ARRIVAL

From the very day in 2012 when the governor rejected 15 and approved 35 of the Whistling Ridge wind turbines, project representatives began declaring the scaled-down project economically unviable and, for all intents and purposes, dead on arrival. In a statement to the media, WRE announced that the

project was on hold and “unlikely to move forward.”

Indeed, over the ensuing decade, WRE never took any steps to move forward with the project—not even after all litigation involving the project was resolved. In November 2021, SDS transferred the project, the project site, and parent ownership of WRE to Twin Creeks Timber (TCT) and its affiliates without obtaining approval from EFSEC or even notifying the agency in advance about the transfer.

Then, in March 2022, the state-issued permit for the project, called a “site certification agreement” (SCA), expired by operation of law, 10 years after its issuance. The project was officially terminated. Or so we thought.

A FAILED RESURRECTION

Even though the SCA for the Whistling Ridge project expired in March 2022, TCT and WRE waited more than a year and a half after that point to submit two separate, formal requests to EFSEC. Like an



The author taking in the view from Nestor Peak in 2018. The photo shows Mt. Hood in the distance and the Whistling Ridge project site in the middle ground (including Chemawa Hill jutting above the ridgeline in the center of the photo). Photo by Sharon Ross.

attempted voodoo resurrection trick, one of the requests would have revived and extended the life of the expired permit. The other would have retroactively approved the transfer of the permit and the project to TCT as the new parent company. TCT and WRE explained that they were requesting all of this so they could consider whether to eventually build the project, but with even taller wind turbines than had been approved by Governor Gregoire more than a decade prior.

Friends and allies participated thoroughly in EFSEC’s proceedings for reviewing these two formal requests. We noted that the SCA had already expired, and that there was no authority for reviving or retroactively extending an SCA after its 10-year expiration date. We also submitted extensive testimony from expert witnesses explaining the many ways in which building this project—especially with taller turbines than were approved—would severely harm the environment and the public welfare.

Meanwhile, despite repeated requests by Friends, EFSEC staff declined to provide any notice of the pending requests to its official lists of more than 900 people known to be interested in the Whistling Ridge Energy Project. As a result, hundreds of people were completely in the dark about the proceedings.

In the end, EFSEC rejected both of the requests filed by WRE and TCT. In its written order, EFSEC explained that proposed new owner TCT had failed to demonstrate that it had the organizational, managerial, financial, and technical capabilities to build and operate the project as originally approved by Governor Gregoire in 2012. That was especially true given that TCT admitted it had little interest in complying with the governor’s restriction limiting the wind turbine height to 430 feet, but instead would like to pursue even taller turbines. EFSEC concluded that taller turbines would make this a different project, and if TCT wants to pursue a different project, then TCT will need to start over by submitting a new application for a permit.

In an important part of its written decision, EFSEC agreed with Friends and allies that the site certification agreement had “expired without [WRE] starting construction.” That ruling was vindicating, given that Friends had made this argument all along.

The law in Washington gives energy developers 10 years after an SCA is issued to start construction of a project, which is more than enough time. Here, the chronic failures by the Whistling Ridge proponents to pursue the project became its very undoing.

It would seem unlikely that TCT (or anyone else) might ever propose a new industrial-scale wind energy project at this site. In addition to the many environmental and community impacts detailed above, the Whistling Ridge project site is also within a dedicated flight path utilized by the U.S. Navy, within which new development is limited to a ceiling of 500 feet tall in order to keep the airspace clear and safe for military training exercises. Every year, wind turbines are getting taller and taller to maximize efficiency and energy capacity; these days, 650 feet is a typical height sought by developers in Oregon and Washington. It is improbable that the U.S. Navy would consent to new obstructions (in the form of spinning wind turbine blades) intruding into the airspace.

EXPIRATION BEGETS INSPIRATION: LEVERAGING THE VICTORY

Sometimes bad projects go out not with a bang but a whimper. That was certainly the case with the Whistling Ridge Energy Project. After many years of heated opposition, EFSEC eventually agreed with Friends that the permit had quietly expired. Ultimately, through a series of victories over the course of 15 years, Friends succeeded in keeping the central Gorge free of industrial-scale wind turbines.

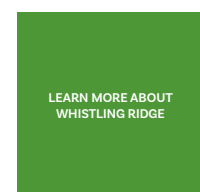
The successes and lessons from stopping the Whistling Ridge Energy Project can be leveraged elsewhere, and are already inspiring Friends’ ongoing legal work. Recently, Friends convinced the new owner-developers of the proposed Summit Ridge Wind Farm in Wasco County—which is controversial in its own right because it threatens many of the same types of resources as Whistling Ridge—to abandon their state-issued permit for that project, which had also expired. But the Summit Ridge developers have not completely given up, and have filed a notice of intent to seek a new permit for a redesigned project at the same site. Friends will remain closely involved in that energy siting process if and when the developers file a formal application.



Friends staff celebrate the legal victories with a hike on the Whistling Ridge Trail. Left to right: Nathan Baker, Kevin Gorman, Noah Dow, Ella Devine, Madison Kenney. Photo by Rudy Salakory.

In addition, the parcels containing the Whistling Ridge site are the last privately owned land in Skamania County that is completely unzoned—where any type of land use and development activities can occur with no zoning restrictions to protect communities and resources. Years ago, Friends filed litigation against Skamania County for its failure to zone these lands, and Friends prevailed in the Washington appellate courts on procedural issues in that litigation. Since Friends filed that case, all other privately owned lands countywide have been zoned except for the Whistling Ridge site—but only because of the limbo status of the wind energy project. Now that the project is officially terminated, Friends will reach out to Skamania County officials to begin the process of finally zoning these last remaining parcels.

Visit gorgefriends.org/whistlingridge or click the button below to learn more about the history of the project. ■



FRIENDS ENJOYS LEGAL VICTORIES IN CLARK COUNTY

by Nathan Baker, Senior Staff Attorney

Although Clark County contains less than 3% of the land inside the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, lately a substantial portion of Friends' litigation has been focused there. Most of this recent litigation has involved two controversial projects: the Zimmerly mining operation and the Norway Green proposed non-farm dwelling. Friends has enjoyed new legal victories involving both projects in 2024.

PUBLIC MINING ROAD REJECTED

North of Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge, just inside the National Scenic Area boundary, lies the Zimmerly property, site of the largest and longest-running land use violations in the history of the National Scenic Area. A veritable tsunami of litigation involving the Zimmerly property commenced in 2017, when illegal gravel mining was started in defiance of National Scenic Area rules and in disobedience of multiple enforcement orders issued by Clark County and Columbia River Gorge Commission staff.

Eventually, numerous cases were resolved in favor of Friends and government agencies, and against the mining violators, by multiple courts. In 2023, Friends prevailed in 12 out of 12 court cases, appeals, and contested motions against Zimmerly.

So far in 2024, Friends' legal victories involving the Zimmerly property have continued. In January, after hearing from Friends, the Gorge Commission declined a request by Zimmerly's attorney to include in the Commission's 2024–25 work plan the consideration of a potential amendment to the Gorge Management Plan that would have relaxed the rules for maintaining existing mining uses in the National Scenic Area.

And at a public hearing on July 16, 2024, the Clark County Council unanimously rejected Zimmerly's request to convert the privately owned SE 356th Avenue into a county-owned public mining haul road. During the county's three-year-long review process, Friends and allies repeatedly called out Zimmerly's request as a "Trojan horse loaded with problems," since Zimmerly was attempting to pass numerous hidden costs, liabilities, and obligations on to the county along with the proposed transfer of the road.

Clark County Council Chair Gary Medvigy summed it up best, remarking that the requested road dedication "is not going to be a public benefit." All five council members voted to reject the road dedication.

Unfortunately, the legal battles involving this notorious mining operation are far from over. Recently,



In July, the Clark County Council unanimously rejected Zimmerly's request to convert SE 356th Avenue, shown here during illegal operations in 2018, into a publicly owned mining haul road. Photo by Peter Cornelison.

Zimmerly filed yet another land use application with Clark County seeking mining permits on the property, even though the prior land use application, submitted in 2020, is currently on appeal at the Gorge Commission. That pending appeal will be argued this winter. Zimmerly has also filed legal claims against multiple neighboring owners of SE 356th Avenue in an effort to seize their portions of the road through adverse possession. Thus, the litigation will continue into 2025.

COURT UPHOLDS FRIENDS' LEGAL VICTORIES PROTECTING GORGE FARMLAND

On May 1, 2024, Clark County Superior Court Judge Derek J. Vanderwood issued a final judgment in an appeal brought by development company Norway Green, LLC. The court upheld Friends' prior legal victories protecting Gorge farmland, thus bringing nearly three years of litigation to a close. Not only did Friends win in all three levels of appeal over that three-year period, we actually improved our legal position each time.

In the first two rounds, both the Clark County Land Use Hearing Examiner, and then the Gorge Commission on appeal, rejected Norway Green's proposal to build a massive "non-farm dwelling" in an existing pasture on a parcel of land zoned Large-Scale Agriculture and located on SE Gibson Road in the National Scenic Area. The project would have permanently converted prime Gorge farmland to residential use, in direct violation of the National Scenic Area Act and its implementing rules.

Norway Green appealed the Gorge Commission's decision to the Superior Court, arguing that its parcel is predominantly unsuitable for agriculture merely because part of the parcel is currently forested, and asserting that Clark County and the Gorge Commission had unconstitutionally taken property rights from Norway

Green and should be required to pay monetary damages to the developer.



Friends' legal victories will help protect prime farmland not only on the Norway Green property, pictured here, but throughout the entire National Scenic Area. Photo by Monique Trevett, Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

Friends helped Clark County and the Gorge Commission defend their decisions from Norway Green's meritless claims. In its decision, the superior court agreed with multiple legal arguments raised by Friends, including a ruling that commercial forestry and commercial agriculture "are inherently compatible with each other, both in fact and under the law." In other words, just because a landowner is currently producing timber from a particular piece of land, that does not mean the same land could not also be suitable for agricultural production.

Ultimately, the court upheld the prior rulings of the Gorge Commission and Clark County that Norway Green had failed to demonstrate that the

parcel is predominantly unsuitable for agriculture, and therefore was not entitled to build a non-farm dwelling on the parcel. Norway Green did not appeal the court decision.

Friends' victory in the superior court enshrines the precedent we previously achieved at the Gorge Commission. This will help protect farmland throughout the Scenic Area from similar development schemes.

With the help of our members, supporters, and allies, Friends will continue to defend the Gorge from land use violators, developers seeking to create illegal loopholes in the Scenic Area rules, and meritless litigation—in Clark County and beyond. ■



Scenes from Terra Cascadia. From top to bottom: Eagle Creek, Horsethief Butte, Mt. Hood, Panther Creek Falls, Columbia Hills and Miller Island, Weisendanger Falls, Cape Horn.

FROM GORGE TO GATE: TERRA CASCADIA

LONGTIME FRIENDS MEMBER AND VISUAL ARTIST BRAD JOHNSON WAS COMMISSIONED TO DESIGN THE LATEST ART INSTALLATION AT PDX AIRPORT, A GIANT L.E.D. DISPLAY DEPICTING SCENES FROM THE COLUMBIA GORGE. EXPLORE THE PROJECT IN THIS Q&A.



The Columbia Gorge's breathtaking beauty has long inspired awe and creativity. When Friends first crafted the title "Share the Wonder" for our current campaign over a year ago, we could hardly have imagined the remarkable acts of support from our donors, partners, volunteers, and collaborators, all united by their joy for this wild and wondrous cherished landscape.

In this issue of Passages, we're honored to feature the inspiring story of Brad Johnson, a longtime Friends member and visual artist whose deep connection to the Columbia Gorge has led to the creation of "Terra Cascadia," a magnificent new animated LED installation at the PDX Airport. Brad's art vividly brings the beauty of the Gorge to life for millions of travelers, and we're so thankful that he will be giving a generous donation to Friends of the Columbia Gorge from his artist's commission.

Deeply inspired by this unique blend of artistry and philanthropy that underscores Brad's commitment to preserving and sharing the beauty of the Gorge, I am grateful for the opportunity to interview him about this remarkable project and his journey. Brad's willingness to also donate his time and photos for this interview sets an inspiring example of how art and philanthropy can intertwine.

Read on as we delve into Brad's creative process, his passion for the Gorge, the innovative techniques behind his installation, and the lasting impact of his incredible contribution. Through his art and philanthropy, Brad invites us all to appreciate and protect the spectacular, enchanting natural beauty of the Gorge.

Lori Warner
Director of Philanthropy

Editor's Note: With the artist's approval, parts of this interview have been edited for length and clarity. For the unabridged version, click the button on the right.

CLICK/TAP HERE
TO READ THE
FULL INTERVIEW

CAN YOU GIVE US A SHORT SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT?

Yes! Three selected artists—Rebecca Mendez, Ivan McClellan, and myself—each created videos that cycle through huge LED screens at the PDX airport throughout the day, punctuated by computer-generated landscapes created by the Port’s agency dotdotdash. My work will be featured throughout October and November, then will reappear in rotation with the other two exhibitions indefinitely starting January 2025.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THE “TERRA CASCADIA” INSTALLATION FOR THE NEW PDX TERMINAL?

When I was invited to submit a proposal for the media canvases at PDX, I was at work on the visuals for a classical music concert about the Ice Age Floods, sections of which featured the Gorge rendered through animated 3D point clouds which would be projected on large scrims (*editor’s note: a scrim is a piece of cloth or canvas that appears opaque until lit from behind, used as a screen or backdrop in theater and art) between the performers and the audience. Using this technique to depict the natural world is something I have been passionate about for several years. All of a sudden, this new opportunity became a way to supersize everything I was doing: my canvas went from a 26’ wide scrim to two 128’ wide by 23’ high LED displays. The target audience went from 300-500 people watching a single one-hour concert to over 16 million people seeing these landscapes all day, every day for years! I was consumed by excitement for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to bring the region I love—the Columbia Gorge—to life in the new terminal’s monumental canvases.



Now reopened after a five-year closure for renovations, the new main terminal at PDX features 128’ x 23’ LED screens that will display scenes from the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area, including Metlako and Sorenson Falls pictured here. Photo courtesy of Brad Johnson.

HOW DID YOUR PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE COLUMBIA GORGE INFLUENCE THE DESIGN AND CONTENT OF YOUR INSTALLATION?

For the two decades I lived in Portland, the Gorge was my most frequented destination for outdoor recreation, and for the last 10 years I’ve been living in Trout Lake. I knew early on how I wanted to capture and depict the landscapes I would feature in the work, but I needed a structure to work within—some parameters to define the scope of what would be featured.

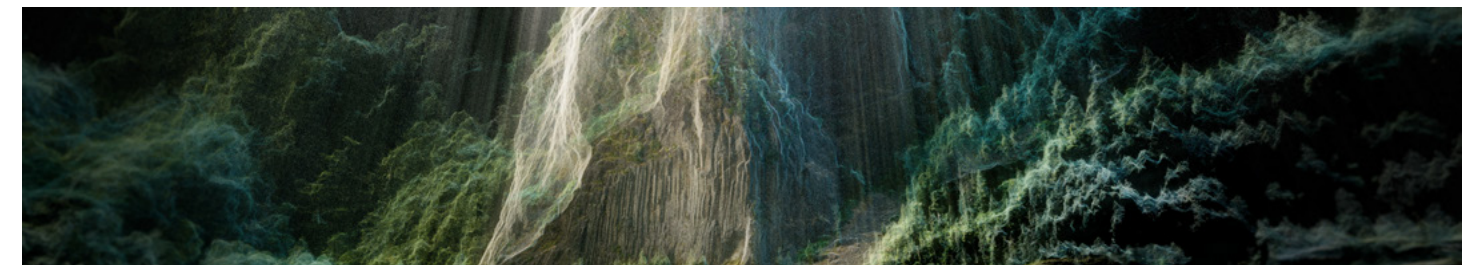
From where I lived and worked in Portland, looking toward the east was always the aspirational view with the volcanoes in the skyline, all the worlds to explore within them, and the Gorge as the conduit in. As the airport is situated at the gateway into these worlds, it seemed natural to me to limit the scope of my consideration to this region: from the tops of St. Helens, Adams, and Hood down to their convergence in the Columbia. One of my first inspirations for Terra Cascadia was John H. Williams’ 1912 book *The Guardians of the Columbia*: the ‘guardians’ are Mount Hood, Mount Adams, and Mount St. Helens and the contents of the book break down to *The River, The Mountains, and The Forests*—a structure that helped frame my curation of location.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE WERE YOU MOST EXCITED TO FEATURE, AND WHY?

I’ve been excited to capture the features of the Gorge that collectively define what is most unique about this place, and for me, the most captivating aspect has been the geology. I love looking at landforms and thinking about how they were created: when you look at something like Beacon Rock it is beautiful and unusual, and then you start to wonder how it came to be. The Gorge is an epicenter of intersecting overlapping layers of geologic history: the Columbia River Flood Basalts, the volcanic Cascades, the massive Columbia and Ice Age Floods that cut through the strata to reveal the mysteries of deep time. The geologic landforms are the most captivating to me—they are the ruins and remnants of stories of how this place came to be. The Oregon writer Barry Lopez remarked in his book *Horizon* “All landscapes are on their way to becoming something else, with incremental slowness and terrifying speed.” There aren’t many places on earth where this is so overt and evident.



Johnson sought to capture a wide variety of Gorge scenes, with a focus on unique geological features like Beacon Rock. Photo courtesy of Brad Johnson.



Beacon Rock in Terra Cascadia. Image courtesy of Brad Johnson.

HOW DID YOU SELECT THE SPECIFIC SCENES AND LOCATIONS FROM THE COLUMBIA GORGE FOR YOUR INSTALLATION?

My first impulse was to think of the displays at the airport as diorama windows into the greatest hits of the Gorge—portraits of the pantheon of places we all celebrate—but I took a different approach early on in the process guided by my personal experiences with place, the capture technology, and the architecture of the terminal.

Scenes that I had a personal connection to were more important than the notoriety of a landmark. What is most enduring to me about the region isn’t just the concentration of attractions we all know, but the many

lesser-known places that are hard to get to, scenes we discover by chance, or views that we might never see without this technology. I wanted to capture the experience of being in a place, of observing it firsthand, and not just what it looked like at a particular moment, but what it looks like from the inside out.

The severe wide-angle aspect ratio of the displays inherently served certain scenes better than others, and the north-south orientation of them inspired a story structure that helped focus what locations to feature. Rather than just playing the same scenes on both screens, I split the videos to feature locations from the Washington side of the Columbia on the north wall, and the Oregon side on the south wall. Both videos share the same rough sequencing: starting with portraits of the volcanoes as you might experience them when you fly out of PDX, the scenes cascade down from alpine glaciers through forests, streams, landforms, and waterfalls to converge along the Columbia. Since the structure and runtimes of the videos are the same, visitors can look across the terminal from one side to the other and see similar kinds of locations, but each is from their respective side of the Gorge.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE PROCESS OF CREATING 3D POINT CLOUDS FROM PHOTOGRAPHS AND HOW THIS TECHNIQUE BRINGS THE SCENES FROM THE GORGE TO LIFE?

All the imagery in Terra Cascadia comes from 3D point clouds I created from over 10,000 photographs captured in the last five years from chartered airplane rides, drone flights, and dozens of hikes. For any given scene, I might capture between 30 to over 300 images with a high-resolution camera, a drone, or an iPhone. What makes the images good for this purpose isn't what traditionally defines a great picture, but rather that I get comprehensive coverage of a scene from every possible angle. I then load the color-corrected images into a photogrammetry application that analyzes all the images and interpolates dimensionality from them. When the program sees the same feature from different perspectives and how it relates to neighboring features, it can extrapolate a 3D scene where every point is in fact a location in space with a color. Millions of these colored points together accurately represent the dimensionality and volume of a scene; where there is no data there is darkness, which is why the scenes are set against black.

The point clouds are then brought into a proprietary "virtual cinematography" application created by the Portland-based team of Thomas Wester, Ben Purdy, and Holly Newlands. This tool gives me the ability to fly customizable cameras through the scenes with a virtual reality headset, apply effects to the points, and render the animation to video. It's like having the most powerful darkroom imaginable: I capture a scene in the real world, then bring it into this toolset to re-experience a place and reveal views that were never possible to witness otherwise. The software evolved as the project progressed and each scene is the result of a choreography between the data I captured and the tool's capability. I couldn't just decide to go capture a place and make a certain kind of animation, I had to find the best way for the location's data to dance with the movement and effects at my disposal.



[Friends] preserves and protects something we care deeply about. After focusing this project on the Gorge, I decided to give part of my commission to Friends. The Gorge has given a lot to me for much of my life and I am happy to give back."

- BRAD JOHNSON



DO YOU SEE A ROLE FOR PUBLIC ART TO PLAY IN FOSTERING A DEEPER CONNECTION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND NATURE?

I like the landscape painter Casper David Freidrich's notion that art is an intermediary between man and nature. The way an artist, writer, musician, or designer conjures the natural world expands how audiences think and feel about a place, the place becomes imbued with other associations, meaning or insight. In all my public art projects—whether material or digital—I have been focused on directly observing something in the natural world, capturing something about it to bring back to my studio where I could process it, respond to it, and create something that others could experience in a different (often urban) context. Hopefully this cultivates reverence for the natural world.



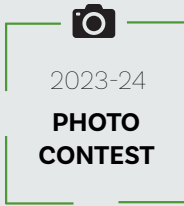
Brad Johnson shows off his 3D point clouds creation depicting Starvation Creek Falls at Terra Cascadia. Photo courtesy of Brad Johnson.

I once worked with Kent Weeks, the Egyptologist and founder of the Theban Mapping Project that mapped, documented, photographed, and archived the archeology of Thebes. He said, "Preservation starts with documentation...if you don't know what you have how would you know to preserve it?" That really resonates with me about art and nature. Ironically his project in 2001 was my first introduction to working with point clouds, and photogrammetry was mostly developed and utilized for documentation and preservation.

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES AND REWARDS OF WORKING ON SUCH A LARGE-SCALE PROJECT WITH TWO 128'-WIDE LED WALLS?

The scale of these screens is awesome and beyond anything I ever imagined working within. I've made large-scale public art installations and have done immersive scenography for 45th Parallel concerts on 26'-wide

(interview continues on page 19)



Grand Prize Winner

(see next page for photo)

DAVE EDWARDS NOYES
PORTLAND, OR

MOSIER PLATEAU Dave Edwards Noyes, a schoolteacher from Portland, Oregon, is the grand prize winner of “GorgeGram: Framed in Beauty,” Friends’ ninth-annual photo contest. Edwards Noyes’ grand-prize winning photo was taken in spring 2023 at Mosier Plateau Trail on the Oregon side of the Columbia River using a Sony ILCE-7RM3A Mirrorless Camera with a 24-70 mm lens. “I was not expecting this gorgeous scene to unfold before me when I visited Mosier Creek Falls for my first time in spring 2023,” said Edwards Noyes, a music teacher at Sojourner Elementary in Milwaukie. “The gnarled wisdom of the oak, the golden evening sunlight catching in the arching branches and the new grass, and the trail meandering through it all made me stop in my tracks. In that moment, so perfect, I felt a sincere gratitude to be in the midst of such splendor. I’ve hiked hundreds of miles up the creeks and along the cliffs of the Columbia River Gorge, and still this beautiful landscape continues to surprise and inspire.”

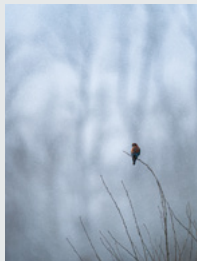


FULL GALLERY: To view full-size versions of all prize-winning and honorable mention photos, visit gorgefriends.org/photocontest or click the button below.

CLICK/TAP HERE
TO VIEW ALL WINNERS
AND HONORABLE
MENTION PHOTOS



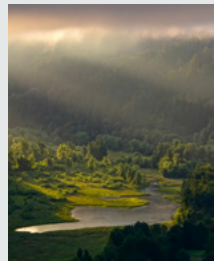
Wildflowers & Wildlife
JACOB BEGIS



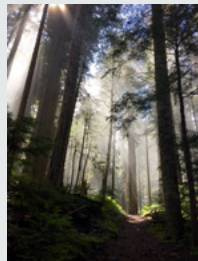
Scenic Eastern Gorge
SUSAN CONKLIN



Scenic Western Gorge
DREW TORRENTE
(MAGAZINE COVER)



Camera Phone Photography
JOHN HALL



Waterfalls
MATTHEW NORMAN



Underwater
JOHN KUTASZ



Night
JARROD LYMAN



Friends’ Staff Pick
GREGG KERBER



screens, but this is a different story altogether. It's a rare opportunity to bring landscapes you love to life at such a scale, and from the moment I was awarded the project I was committed to make the most of it. Scale helps impart the presence of place, especially many of the monumental landforms featured in the work. That scale can be daunting however when movement comes into play: what might be a normal sweeping camera move on your large computer monitor can become overpowering or bewildering when it rips across 128 feet.

The creative challenge I faced throughout the project was maximizing the number of scenes I wanted to include with the minimum amount of movement required to show each one off. The beauty of working with point clouds is being able to see something from several different angles, to be able to see through the semi-transparent surfaces and behold its sculptural, volumetric properties. Scenes needed to be seen from a pivoting, orbiting, or tracking camera, and these movements take time: too much time on any one scene meant less scenes, but throughout the process working with the Port and their team at dotdotdash I got to experience different versions on site at different points in the process and ultimately featured over 60 scenes in 30 minutes of footage split between four videos.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE YOUR ARTISTIC VISION WITH THE TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF WORKING ON A HIGH-PROFILE INSTALLATION LIKE THIS ONE?

I approached this project from the outset with a focus on making the best experience I could specifically for this installation. I would use similar media in different ways for different contexts. I have an obligation to the content and the audience. My goal is to be able to revisit any of the scenes I included and feel that what I find beautiful, sublime, or exceptional about them was served in what I made—to drive by Table Mountain when the sun rakes across the faces in the morning and say 'I got that'...that I didn't let Table Mountain down. Ultimately a project like this really isn't about me, it's about the 16 million people per year underneath the screens waiting to go through TSA—you have to craft something for that mindset. The screens are unavoidable and nearly impossible to ignore: there are only two ways to the gates and these portals are flanked by the screens. I had to tune what I made for that reception.

WHAT IMPACT DO YOU THINK THIS HIGH-PROFILE INSTALLATION WILL HAVE ON THE VISIBILITY OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS?

The Gorge is one of the region's most cherished natural resources, and to me it is the keystone element of our natural heritage. I hope this installation helps contribute to our community's valuation and stewardship of the Columbia Gorge.

CAN YOU SHARE ANY MEMORABLE MOMENTS OR INSIGHTS FROM WORKING ON THIS PROJECT THAT STOOD OUT TO YOU?

This project has truly been a career-creative-life honor to be part of. It drew on the experience of my 20-plus year career with Second Story, the Portland-based interactive media studio I co-founded with my wife and creative partner Julie Beeler who produced Terra Cascadia. I got to collaborate with Thomas Wester, Martha Almy, and others I worked with at Second Story over a decade ago, something I never imagined happening again. It drew on my ongoing observation and documentation of the Gorge and my art practice, and it provided the most unbelievable canvas on which these things could converge, in a venue of spectacular beauty with more eyeballs on it than everything I have ever done combined, times 10!

To experience and observe a place that means a great deal to you, then capture what is most remarkable about it with technology that helps reveal the inherent beauty of a place, then share it with millions of people that are passing through here, with this amazing seductive display, it has been a dream to be part of this.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE THE DONATION TO FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE WILL ACHIEVE, BOTH FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THE GORGE?

My wife Julie Beeler and I have been giving to Friends of the Columbia Gorge for many years—it is an organization that preserves and protects something we care deeply about. After focusing this project on the Gorge, I decided to give part of my commission to Friends. The Gorge has given a lot to me for much of my life and I am happy to give back.



ANIMATION: Watch a sample of the Terra Cascadia animations by visiting bradjohnson.com/terra-cascadia or by clicking the button at right.

CLICK/TAP HERE
TO WATCH
AN ANIMATION



Not all the scenes are specific geological formations or waterfalls. Some, like the snowy alpine forest seen here (construction photo above, animation screenshot below), simply show environments characteristic of the region. Photos courtesy of Brad Johnson.



Trail Tales

Text by Sara Woods, Stewardship Manager
& Melissa Gonzalez, Outdoor Programs Manager

FRIENDS IS PROUD TO INTRODUCE NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART TRAIL SIGNAGE—THE FIRST ON A FRIENDS PRESERVE—THAT MAKES LYLE CHERRY ORCHARD ONE OF THE MOST INTERACTIVE TRAILS IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST. SEVEN INTERPRETIVE PANELS OFFER INSIGHT INTO THE RICH HISTORY OF THE PRESERVE AND THE COLUMBIA GORGE AS A WHOLE THROUGH MULTIMEDIA CONTENT FOCUSING ON INDIGENOUS LEGENDS OF THE GORGE, WILDFIRE ECOLOGY, GEOLOGICAL HISTORY, AND MORE.



The four-year process to bring educational interpretive signage and trail markers to the public finally came to fruition on April 2, 2024. On a sunny morning in Lyle, Washington, we were joined by members of the Friends community and honored guests to inaugurate our new state-of-the-art trail signs at our Lyle Cherry Orchard preserve. Together, we explored the natural and cultural treasures of the preserve through bilingual signs spanning the seven-mile trail system.

This milestone was a long time coming, and we were

proud to introduce these signs, the first on a Friends preserve, to our supporters and the local community. The journey to bring these trail signs to life included applying for permits, researching and writing the content for each panel, hiking the trail to determine optimal locations, and collaborating with partners to ensure the content was as enriching for hikers as possible. When Friends members, community members from Lyle, and our panel collaborators joined us in early April for the unveiling and guided hike, we were ecstatic to share the results of this long and intentional process.

Upon arriving at the preserve, we hiked a quarter mile to the orientation panel where we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Friends Executive Director Kevin Gorman spoke about the recent history of the preserve, followed by Gorge Towns to Trails Project Manager Renée Tkach, who shared insights into the creation of the educational signs. We were grateful to be joined by three of our panel collaborators, including award-winning Indigenous flutist Sherrie Davis, who performed “Canyons in the Wind,” an original song inspired by the hills of Lyle Cherry Orchard; Ed Edmo, a Shoshone-Bannock elder, storyteller, and poet raised in Celilo Falls; and his son John Edmo. John performed a ceremonial

focus on Indigenous legends of the Gorge, wildfire ecology, geological history, and more via multimedia content such as songs, poems, spoken word, art, and short videos. As hikers trekked along the Discovery Loop, they enjoyed sweeping vistas of the Gorge and the start of wildflower season, where flowers such as desert parsley and balsamroot welcomed our guests.

What comes next now that we have introduced educational signs at one of our preserves? Our land trust team plans to create similar educational panels at other public Friends preserves, beginning with Mosier Plateau next year. Our goal is to make our land more accessible by educating visitors about each



Left: Sherrie Davis and Ed Edmo share a moment together at the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Right: A hiker scans the QR code on the Geology Drama interpretive panel at Lyle Cherry Orchard. Photos by Paloma Ayala.



chant, followed by Ed sharing native legends. By scanning the QR codes on the “The First Stewards” panel, hikers can hear Ed’s poem “Mountain” and “Canyons in the Wind.” Ed then cut the ribbon on our orientation panel, signaling the start of our hike to view the panels.

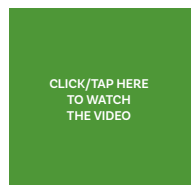
preserve’s unique natural and cultural resources. You too can now experience our state-of-the-art educational panels by visiting Friends’ Lyle Cherry Orchard Preserve. Hit the trails with your friends and family, and we hope you come away with a new appreciation for this special place.

After the ribbon cutting, Friends Stewardship Manager Sara Woods and Kevin Gorman led the first group of hikers on the five-mile “Discovery Loop” trail, where all educational signs can be seen. Renée Tkach and one of our panel collaborators, Ice Age Institute Geologist Lloyd DeKay, followed shortly with the second group of hikers.

The seven interpretive signs along the Discovery Loop offer insights into the rich history of the preserve and the Columbia Gorge as a whole. The sign themes



SIGNS IN THE GROUND: Click the button below to watch a short Instagram reel from sign installation day.



EXPLORE THE SIGNS

The educational panels at Lyle Cherry Orchard are best experienced by hiking at the preserve. However, the trail is one of the steepest and most strenuous in the Gorge, so people with mobility impairments may not be able to do it. If the trail is inaccessible to you, click the buttons below to view the content for each panel.



THE FIRST STEWARDS

“Mountain,” a poem by Shoshone-Bannock storyteller Ed Edmo, accompanied by “Canyons in the Wind,” an original song by award-winning Indigenous flutist Sherrie Davis.

CLICK/TAP HERE



LEGEND OF THE GORGE

A legend of the creation of the Columbia Gorge, told by Jefferson Greene, a linguist, artist, and storyteller from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs.

CLICK/TAP HERE



WIND TUNNEL

A legend of the four winds of the Columbia Gorge, told by Jefferson Greene. Set on an exposed hill that experiences strong winds.

CLICK/TAP HERE



GEOLOGY DRAMA

An immersive audio tour of the geological features that surround Lyle Cherry Orchard, recorded by Ice Age Institute Geologist Lloyd DeKay. Set on a cliffside vista with views toward the Gorge.

CLICK/TAP HERE



THE OAKS

“The Oak Tree,” a famous poem by Johnny Ray Ryder Jr. Set in a dense stand of Oregon white oak trees.

CLICK/TAP HERE



WILDFIRE ECOLOGY

An animated video exploring the wildfire cycle, illustrated by Carrie Van Horn of Heartwood Visuals. Set in the location of the 2021 Lyle Hill Fire.

CLICK/TAP HERE



WILDLIFE SUPERPOWERS

Text and videos exploring five species that are found at Lyle Cherry Orchard: Peregrine falcon, Western gray squirrel, Western fence lizard, Western rattlesnake, and Lewis’ woodpecker.

CLICK/TAP HERE

BRINGING LOCAL MIDDLE SCHOOLERS TO THE COLUMBIA GORGE: SPRING & SUMMER EDUCATIONAL RECAP

by Kenzie Hammond, Youth and Community Education Specialist

THE GREAT GORGE WAHOO! 7TH GRADE (EASTERN GORGE):

The Winthrop family's commitment to Gorge education ensures that this annual trip remains an unforgettable experience for all involved. Thank you to the family members who joined us this year to experience firsthand the joy and curiosity this trip brings to students.

On April 15, 2024, we took 23 seventh-grade students from St. Andrew Nativity School on a field trip exploring the Eastern Gorge. The day began at Eagle Creek, Oregon, with a short hike led by U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Park Ranger Joshua Daker. Students learned about fire ecology and the recovery process following the Eagle Creek fire. Before leaving, Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW) staff provided a brief tour of the Eagle Creek hatchery operations.



Seventh-grade students from St. Andrew Nativity School participated in a hike at Eagle Creek (top left), a raptor discovery program at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum (bottom left), and a tour of Friends' Dancing Rock Preserve with our late Land Trust Director Dan Bell (right). Photos by Monique Trevett and Kenzie Hammond, Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

Our next stop was Horsethief Lake State Park in Washington, where students had lunch and used binoculars to observe nesting bald eagles. Afterward, we met Friends' late Land Trust Director Dan Bell at Friends' Dancing Rock Preserve. He led the students on a short walk to the preserve's kolk pond, a unique Ice Age feature. Dan shared the geologic history of the preserve, provided insight into his work with the land trust, and answered many enthusiastic questions from the students. Although teaching youth was a bit outside Dan's wheelhouse, he was always up for a challenge as a passionate team player with a natural ability to present and lead, regardless of age, which made him fantastic with the kids on this day. It was an honor to have Dan be a part of The Great Gorge Wahoo and for this group of students to experience his legacy at a preserve he worked so hard to protect.

To conclude the day, the students visited the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum, where Raptor Education Coordinator Morgan Olson gave a private presentation featuring Killer, the red-tailed hawk. This exciting experience allowed the students to learn about a bird of prey up close. Before boarding the bus, the students explored the museum's exhibits and completed a scavenger hunt. Overall, our staff, partners, and generous donors had an amazing day sharing the magic of both the Western and Eastern Gorge. We look forward to hosting a similar trip this fall. A final thank you to all the staff and partner educators who dedicated their time to teaching St. Andrew Nativity School students about the wonders of the Gorge.

THE GREAT GORGE WAHOO! 8TH GRADE (WESTERN GORGE):

Thank you to Carrie Nobles for the generous donation that makes this annual trip possible, and to all the educators who took the time to work with the eighth-grade students of St. Andrew Nativity School.

On May 10, 2024, we took 28 eighth-grade students from St. Andrew Nativity School on a field trip focused on the Western Gorge. Having shared time with this class the previous year, it was a joy to introduce them to the wonders of the Gorge once again. Students remembered their last field trip and were eager for this year's new Gorge Wahoo adventures. As per tradition, we began our day at Vista House at Crown Point. Former Oregon State Parks (OPRD) Region Manager and current Friends Board Member Kevin Price shared the history of Vista House and the surrounding area, his experiences working in Oregon State Parks, and the importance of public lands, instilling a sense of the importance of public land ownership in the students.

Our next stop was Benson State Recreation Area, where students rotated through three stations: macroinvertebrates led by USFS Park Rangers Hannah and Mia, a photography station led by Gorge photographer Paloma Ayala, and mammal ecology led by OPRD Park Ranger Miranda Mendoza. After the rotations, students enjoyed a beautiful lunch by the lake. On the way to our next location, we made a stop at Multnomah Falls, allowing the students to take photos and marvel at the impressive waterfall. No Western Gorge trip is complete without a visit to Multnomah, and for many students, it was their first time seeing it.

We then arrived at Bonneville Lock & Dam, where a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers ranger led the students on a private tour of



Eighth-grade students learned how to take nature photos, watched birds through binoculars, and tested water quality. Photos by Monique Trevett, Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

the powerhouse and the fish ladders. To end our day, we met with WDFW Salmon Biologists Elise Olk and Jenna Hymas who led the students through an engaging and athletic “Salmon vs. Dam” obstacle course race. The students got to stretch and showcase their athletic abilities in this educational game. The day was beyond dreamy, and the students had a wonderful time.

EXPLORE THE GORGE 6TH GRADE (BEACON ROCK):

A special thank you to our longtime donor and friend Phyllis Clausen, who passed away last year at the age of 99, for her commitment to fund this annual program.

On May 30-31 and June 5-7, 2024, we held our biggest education event of the year, requiring an all-hands-on-deck effort to make it possible. We engaged over 200 sixth graders from Washougal’s Jemtegaard and Canyon Creek Middle Schools in five days filled with educational activities. The students were split across two different sites within the Beacon Rock State Park system: Hamilton Mountain and Doetsch Day-Use Area, rotating through multiple unique educational stations.

At Hamilton Mountain (Upper Picnic Area & Campground), the stations included:

- Herpetology station run by me, Kenzie Hammond
- Pika walks with Cascade Pika Watch Volunteers Linda Steider and Leslie Trabant



Sixth-grade students from Jemtegaard and Canyon Creek Middle Schools learned about Gorge botany from Friends’ Youth and Community Education Coordinator Kenzie Hammond (left), hiked up Beacon Rock (top right), and tested water quality on the Columbia (bottom right). Photos by Monique Trevett, Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

- Orienteering with OPRD Park Ranger Miranda Mendoza, Washington State Park staff members Ryan Reynolds and Breanna Hild, and USFS Park Rangers
- Photography station with Hood River photographer Paloma Ayala (see green box on next page)

At Doetsch Day-Use Area, students cycled through:

- Macroinvertebrate station with Friends’ Outdoor Programs Manager Melissa Gonzalez, Friends’ Stewardship Volunteer Coordinator Sarah Skelly, and USFS Park Rangers
- Birding 101 station with Jackson Wolfe and Ken Pitts from Vancouver Audubon, and volunteer Jackson Keyser from Washington State University
- Ecology games station with USFS Park Rangers
- Geology station with USFS Park Rangers
- Geology hike up Beacon Rock

This event was truly a collaborative effort. Explore the Gorge wouldn’t be possible without the countless hours our staff, partners, and volunteers dedicate to making this a quality outdoor education experience for these students. Nearly 30 people, comprising Friends staff, community partners, and five organizations and agencies, contributed to this spectacular educational event. I have no doubt that these students will remember this trip for the rest of their lives. ■

♥ STUDENT PHOTOGRAPHY FAVORITES ♥

We asked students from our youth programs to submit their favorite photos they took at the nature photography station. Check out some of our favorites below.



INTRODUCING “CAMINEMOS JUNTOS,” A NEW OUTDOOR INITIATIVE FOR THE GORGE LATINO COMMUNITY

by Melissa Gonzalez, Outdoor Programs Manager

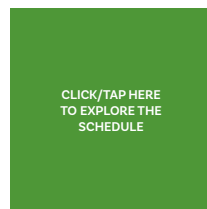
Led by Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Caminemos Juntos (Spanish for “Let’s Walk Together”) is a year-round program that connects the Latino community in the Gorge with nature through a series of culturally relevant guided outdoor events. Breaking down barriers to access by providing free transportation, outdoor education, and family-friendly access to safe recreation, Caminemos Juntos will help create personal and intergenerational connections to nature, develop and support Latino-led outdoor recreation and conservation initiatives, and build a more inclusive and diverse outdoor community in the Gorge.

As a Latina leading recreation efforts in the Gorge over the past four years, I noticed a lack of community-focused outdoor events. This is where Caminemos Juntos was born—providing opportunities for Latinos in the Gorge to gather as a community and connect with nature close to home. The need for a program like Caminemos Juntos is clear when considering the significant gaps in access to nature, known as “The Nature Gap.” About 74% of communities of color, including Latino communities, live in areas with limited access to parks, forests, and streams, compared to just 23% of white communities. This means Latino families often struggle to find nearby natural spaces. Additionally, Latino and Black communities are nearly four times more likely to live in areas with fewer natural amenities, leading to higher health risks from pollution and urban heat islands.

Despite living just a short drive away from beautiful natural spaces, Latino communities in the Columbia Gorge still face numerous barriers to accessing the outdoors. These include a lack of awareness about local outdoor opportunities due to insufficient information in Spanish, financial constraints such as transportation and gear costs, and a lack of representation and feeling unwelcome in predominantly white outdoor spaces. Recognizing these challenges, Caminemos Juntos was created to help bridge this gap and provide equitable access to nature.

Beyond providing access, Caminemos Juntos offers recreational activities that foster a deeper connection to nature, promoting stewardship and conservation efforts. The program nurtures personal and intergenerational bonds through shared outdoor experiences, which are vital for building a strong community and a sense of ownership and protection for the outdoors. Follow our journey as we launch this program and work to make the Columbia Gorge a more inclusive and equitable place to visit.

We will kick off with our first bilingual event on Saturday, September 21, during Latino Conservation Week. Stay updated on our events at gorgefriends.org/caminemosjuntos or by clicking the button below.



Poster art by Aki Ruiz (akiruiz.com).



Eventos Para La Comunidad Latina del Gorge



Registración

gorgefriends.org/caminemosjuntos

Para obtener más información sobre estos eventos, contacta a Melissa Gonzalez

WhatsApp +1 239-404-9248

Un Programa De

**FRIENDS OF THE
COLUMBIA
GORGE**

**HOPPY HIKERS SHARE THE WONDER:
FROM TRAILS TO TRIUMPH**

In an inspiring demonstration of collective passion and community spirit, the “Hoppy Hikers” have blazed a new trail in creative giving. This enthusiastic hiking group recently collectively raised \$25,000 to support Friends of the Columbia Gorge, helping to preserve a spectacular parcel of land known as Heartleaf Bluffs, Friends’ newest preserve and the centerpiece of the Share the Wonder campaign. With its grand twin bluffs, sweeping views, pristine stands of climate-resilient Oregon white oak, and the charming heartleaf buckwheat that inspired its name, Heartleaf Bluffs is an irreplaceable gem that calls for protection.

To secure the 100-acre Heartleaf Bluffs property for \$2.5 million, the Wonderful Acre Club was created as part of Share the Wonder. This initiative allows each \$25,000 donation to symbolically represent the preservation of one acre of this extraordinary land, ensuring it remains safe from the threat of irresponsible development.

The Hoppy Hikers’ challenge successfully raised \$25,000 for the Wonderful Acre Club and serves as a creative model for community spirit and collective impact. By turning their passion for hiking in the Gorge into a generous donation, they are helping ensure this heart-grabbing landscape endures for the next generation of hikers.

THE STORY OF THE HOPPY HIKERS

In 2014, a group of retirees came together with the idea of taking a hike once a week. They established a few guidelines: the hikes should be within a 90-minute drive from home, the group should always stop at a fork in the trail to make sure they stay together, and whenever possible, they should enjoy a beer at a local pub after the hike. It took about a year to settle on a name, but eventually, they toasted to becoming the “Hoppy Hikers.” Recently, the Hoppy Hikers celebrated 10 years of hiking, which when added up, means they’ve hiked the distance from Portland to Boston. In celebration of that milestone, one member initiated a match challenge for the Share the Wonder campaign. The Hoppies rallied together and pitched in \$25,000 in support of the Gorge and the Wonderful Acre challenge.

One group member describes her experience with the Hoppy Hikers as transformative, sharing that she knew little of the Columbia River Gorge and all its wonders before joining the group in late 2017. Through the weekly



The 1,600-foot summit of Angel’s Rest—the wondrous destination of the Hoppy Hikers’ most recent 5-mile adventure. Photo by Joanna Pisarski.

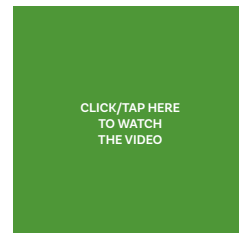
group outings, she realized just how many different hikes there were, where the lesser-known waterfalls could be found, and the ideal times and locations for taking in the awe of the Gorge’s unique spring wildflowers. Thanks to the group’s collective knowledge and encouragement, she became confident in hiking independently and developed her own favorite Gorge spots.

Their success in transforming hiking adventures into a significant conservation effort is a powerful reminder that groups, large or small, can achieve extraordinary things when driven by a common passion.

To date, the Wonderful Acre Club has secured 60% of its \$2.5 million goal to preserve Heartleaf Bluffs. If the Hoppy Hikers have motivated you to organize your own group initiative, please get in touch—I’d be eager to collaborate with you. Together, we can all preserve the remarkable landscapes that make the Gorge a place of wonder.

Lori Warner | Director of Philanthropy
lori@gorgefriends.org | 971.634.0594

P.S. There are many ways to join Share the Wonder at any giving level! Explore options such as the Wonderful Oaks Club, Wonderful Trails Club, budget-friendly monthly giving, gifts of stock, QCDs, and more by visiting sharethewonder.gorgefriends.org/give or by clicking the button below.



WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT



As you drive through the Gorge this summer, you may notice dozens of large white birds, especially around The Dalles Dam. Despite being far from the coast where they are typically associated, we have pelicans! The **American white pelican** (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) can be found all along the West Coast of the United States, but in recent years, their presence in the Gorge has increased. During the summer months, sightings of up to 200 pelicans aren’t uncommon. The pelicans here are non-breeding adults or sub-adults. The Dalles Dam, situated between two major breeding colonies in Arlington, WA, and Portland, OR, naturally serves as a favored spot. Biologists initially worried that the pelicans might be feeding on salmonids due to their proximity to the dam, but fortunately, studies have shown this is not the case. Further research will look into their full dietary habits in this region. American white pelicans have a wingspan of nine feet and are distinguished by their all-white plumage with black flight feathers and a long orange beak, setting them apart from great egrets. They typically hunt in shallow waters, from lake shores to riverbanks and wetlands, using their pouches as nets to scoop fish from the water, and after a successful catch, tilt forward to drain water from their pouch before swallowing their prey whole. Although their diet primarily consists of fish, in wetland environments they may also consume salamanders and crawfish. These birds often hunt in flocks and are known to fly in “V” formations when traveling long distances. While the American white pelican is categorized as least concern in terms of conservation status, they are highly sensitive to human disturbance, often abandoning nests rapidly under such circumstances.

TRIBUTE GIFTS

March 25, 2024 - August 15, 2024

In honor of Debbie Asakawa
Mindy Loebner

In honor of Nathan Baker
Eric Lichtenthaler & Dixie Stevens

In honor of Teresa Robbins & Keith Brown
Ted Klump

In honor of Stuart H Berg
Ken Berg

In honor of Susan B. Campbell & John R. Campbell
Kathryn L. Campbell

In honor of Elizabeth Chadwick
Michele Frisella

In honor of the Hoppy Hikers Club
Lori Warner

In honor of Fernanda Gwinner
Dana Plautz & John Sprietsma

In honor of Jill Josselyn
Barbara & Jack Geltosky

In honor of Kyle Johnson
Melissa Merryman

In honor of Crystal King
Heidi Davis

In honor of LaJean & David
Denise Berrian

In honor of Preston Michie
Sydney Berwager

In honor of Team Philanthropy
Lori Warner

In honor of Janice Reitz
Chris & Max Reitz

In honor of Helen Robinson
Kathy Tack

In honor of Russ & LK
Kathryn & Gary Foubister

In honor of Nancy Russell
Shemaya Blauer

In honor of Friends Volunteers
Prathibha Nandagudi

In honor of Barbara Acker
Carole Breck

In memory of Sue Alperin
Julie Noonan

In memory of Dan Bell
Randa & Jonathan Abramson; Nathan Baker; Elizabeth & Kay Brooke-Willbanks; Julie Falk; Casey Gatz; Fernanda & Brandon Gwinner; Don & Julie Hendrixson; Marci Krass; Haley & Tom Lebsack; David McDonald; Anne & Ernest Munch; T.J. Orr; Felicia Phillips; Heather Schrock; Mark & Virginia Stern; Kate Swabey; Kaola Swanson; Doug Thiesies; Deborah Traver; Carol & Vern Edwards

In memory of Edna Mae (Clark) Chapman
Susan Abel

In memory of Phyllis Clausen
Nathan Baker

In memory of Vic Clausen
Debra Clausen; Sidney Clausen & Robin Rexius

In memory of Joseph Dean
Pamela Abernathy; Marcie Colledge; Debbie Schulstad Foster; Angie Freyer; Peter Jarvis; Joel & Angela Nigg

In memory of Stacy Dunn
Stephen Mbah

In memory of John Hacker
Janet & Mike Gossum; Jerry & Sandra Joyner; Julie & Scott Ransdell; Cubb & Debbie Stokes; Ellen Varden; Kirk Vowell

In memory of Margaret E. Henderson
Linda Holden

In memory of Kathleen Maunder
Angelika Beissmann

In memory of Jay Nelson
Mark Engelking; Anonymous

In memory of Kathleen Parry
John Parry

In memory of Barbara Pollock
Samuel Crosby; Christine Stock & David Holz; Jim & Diane Thomas

In memory of Rick
Inclusion Inc.

In memory of Margery Robertson
Cascade Prime Timers

In memory of William Slater
Nick Seagraves & Pamela Dixon

In memory of Dick Springer
Jan Coulton

In memory of Scott Tegtmeyer
Martha Tegtmeyer

In memory of Mason Van Buren
Elizabeth Newcomb

In memory of Matthew Winthrop
Joan Ercolini


In memory of Karen Yano
Tim Hohl

NEW ITEMS IN FRIENDS' SHOP


LATEST PRODUCTS



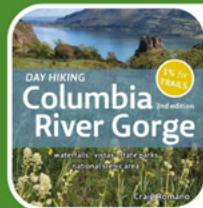
Wool Felt Hand-Stitched Pennants
\$60
★★★★★



Heartleaf Bluffs Wall Poster
\$20
★★★★★



Friends Beanies
\$26
★★★★★



Day Hiking in the Columbia Gorge
\$22
★★★★★

Shop now at gorgefriends.org/shop

INTRODUCING SMOKEREADYGORGE.ORG



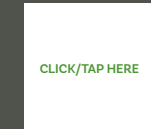
SmokeReadyGorge.org is a new resource developed collaboratively by the Oregon State University Extension Service in Wasco County, the Hood River County Health Department, and the Healthy Gorge Initiative that works toward public education around clean air in Wasco County, Hood River County, Skamania County, Klickitat County, and beyond. It was created to protect our health and prepare for future smoke events.

Click/tap the buttons below to visit SmokeReadyGorge.org and to watch short educational videos on preparing for smoke events with Grace Wesson, the Air Quality and Food Systems Coordinator at OSU Extension Service in Wasco County.

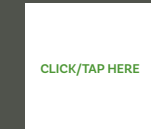
WEBSITE



VIDEO PART 1



VIDEO PART 2



Share the Wonder.

It's far more than a name for our campaign. It's an ideological beacon that guides our work every day, and an ethos that underpins the reality that the Gorge is for all only if we join together to make it so.

Now, the time is right to acquire new properties, restore Cape Horn and Catherine Creek to their full potential as spaces for both wildlife and people, and forge new Gorge Towns to Trails connections.

Share the Wonder is our moment to unite around a common vision for the future of the Gorge that we all hold dear. By investing in the campaign, you join an inner circle of citizen conservationists who fuel our work to preserve this ecological wonder for today and future generations. We are grateful to have you on our team, and welcome you aboard the journey to write the next chapter of the story of Gorge conservation.

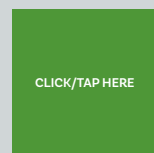
Make a gift to help ensure that the Gorge stays wondrous, wild, and open to all for generations to come.

Explore the campaign, learn more about ways to give, and make your contribution by visiting sharethewonder.gorgefriends.org or by clicking the button on the right.

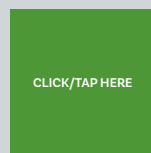
CLICK/TAP HERE TO VISIT THE SHARE THE WONDER WEBSITE.

SUMMER GORGE FRUIT DRINK SERIES

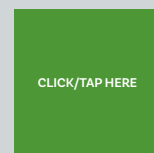
We invited Ben Perri, the head bartender at Hood River's Celilo Restaurant & Bar, to share some of his favorite alcoholic and zero-proof drinks made with fruit found on the Gorge's Fruit Loop. These recipes are all easy to make at home with seasonal fruit. Click/tap the buttons below to watch a tutorial for each drink.



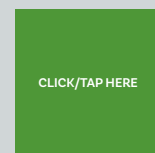
RASPBERRY BRANDY



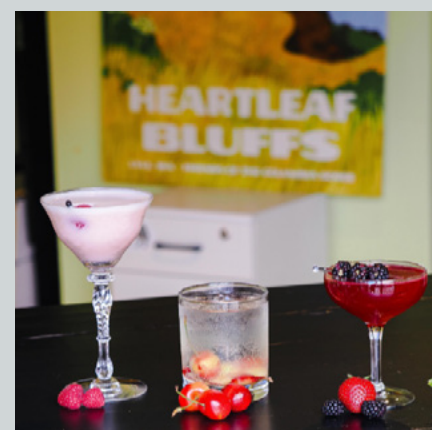
BLACKBERRY MOCKTAIL



CHERRY SMASH



STRAWBERRY MOCKTAIL



FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

123 NE 3rd Avenue Suite 108, Portland, OR 97232

gorgefriends.org |    @GORGEFRIENDS

Nonprofit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Portland, OR
Permit No. 2623

GIVE YOUR WAY

DONATE TO SHARE THE WONDER BY PHONE, MAIL, OR ONLINE

**Thank you for joining us to protect the Columbia Gorge.
We're honored to have you on our team. Your support makes our work possible.**

- To donate by phone or connect with our philanthropy team to learn more about ways to give to our Share the Wonder campaign, including stocks, QCD gifts, or donor-advised funds, call **503.241.3762**.
- Please address mailed donations to: Friends of the Columbia Gorge, 123 NE 3rd Ave., Suite 108, Portland, OR 97232, with checks payable to "Friends of the Columbia Gorge."
- Give now or make a donation pledge online on Friends' secure website at sharethewonder.gorgefriends.org/give or by clicking the button on the right.
- Credit card gifts: Friends accepts Visa, Mastercard, and American Express. Make one-time gifts or schedule monthly installments.

CLICK/TAP HERE
TO VISIT
THE WEBSITE

Balsamroot and Lupine at Columbia Hills © Sharon Philpott

There are many ways to include Friends of the Columbia Gorge in your legacy plans. When you include Friends in your will or estate plan, you're making an investment in the future of the Gorge's wondrous and wild living places for generations to come.

We would be happy to talk with you about the Norman Yeon Legacy Circle or other gift planning options. Call **503-241-3762** or email Lori Warner at giftplanning@gorgefriends.org.



Passages is a triannual publication produced for members and supporters of Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

Founded in 1980, Friends of the Columbia Gorge is the only conservation organization entirely dedicated to protecting, preserving, and stewarding the Columbia Gorge for future generations. Friends has offices in Portland and Hood River, Oregon, and Washougal, Washington. Visit gorgefriends.org to learn more. Send inquiries to info@gorgefriends.org or call 503.241.3762.

sharethewonder.gorgefriends.org/give



Printed on FSC-certified, 30% post-consumer recycled paper

