

# FRIENDS <sup>OF</sup> THE COLUMBIA GORGE

FALL 2020

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a yellow praying mantis. The mantis is perched on the person's index finger. The person is wearing a blue jacket. The background is a blurred crowd of people, suggesting an outdoor event or festival. A white, wavy line graphic is positioned above the mantis.

Widening the Lens

# FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

## WHO WE ARE

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.

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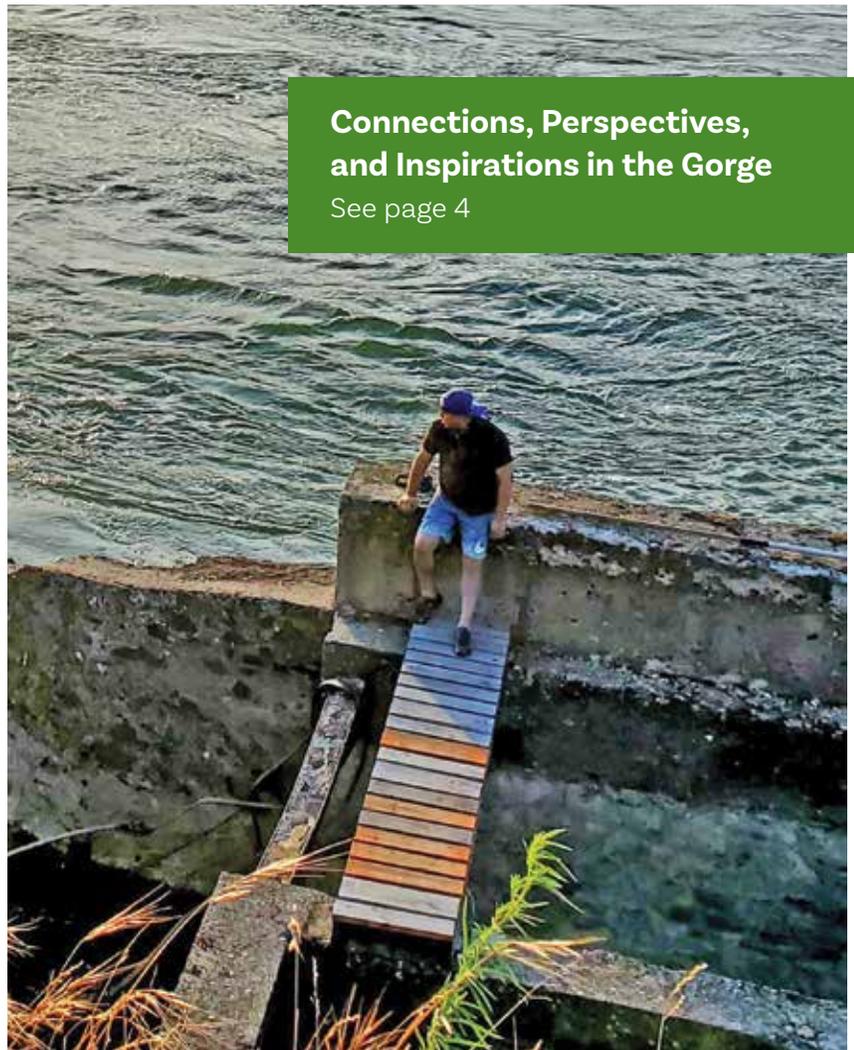


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## Connections, Perspectives, and Inspirations in the Gorge

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Cover: St. Andrew students learning about nature in the Gorge. Photo: Nick Wiltgen

# Director's Letter

I grew up in a nine-person house heated by a single wood stove. Most weekends my dad and my brothers and I were out in the woods cutting, hauling, splitting, and stacking firewood.

Typically, the roar of chainsaws drowned out all other senses, but one time Dad abruptly stopped the mechanical screeching and pointed over the lake to a hovering kingfisher. Suddenly, sight and smell moved to the forefront and, mesmerized, we quietly observed the flashes of blue and green feathers. For just a moment, our taskmaster father shut down the noise and we experienced what was truly around us.

Today, a roaring pandemic, assaults on civil liberties, and thundering racial injustice block my senses. I crave nature again, to clear my head and focus my thinking. And for me, accessing nature is simple. I have the means and I also have the privilege of knowing that no one will attempt to deny me that access because of the color of my skin.

The Black Lives Matter protests and subsequent conversations are exposing painful realities to many of us, including a simple fact rooted in earth: people of color do not have equal, safe access to natural areas that should be open for all.

For this to change—for Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) to have safe, equal access to nature—there

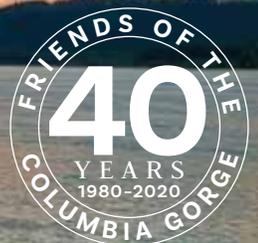
must be BIPOC agency: voices in the room, seats at the table, places in decision-making. Ultimately, it's about power and equity, sharing all pieces of the pie. This critical shift is vital everywhere, but especially relating to a national scenic area. Everyone should be equally welcome and have an equal say in how the area is managed.

Our feature story in this issue (see page 4) highlights conservation professionals of color who are creating their own seats at the table to make sure that nature is accessible to all and that the Gorge is a vibrant, living place for everyone. We're honored they took time to share their stories, reflections, and insights with us.

2020 is a year of tumultuous change, and it also marks Friends' 40th anniversary. It's the perfect time to see our work through a wider lens. Among many other things, spending time in nature is a balm, a healer of the pains and struggles of our world. That balm should be readily available to all Americans, and especially to those who face more pain and struggle than many others can imagine.



Kevin Gorman, Executive Director  
kevin@gorgefriends.org



# Connections, Perspectives, and Inspirations in the Gorge

**Mika Barrett, Stewardship Volunteer Coordinator**

The Columbia Gorge is renowned for its diverse natural ecosystems and habitats, from its temperate rainforests to dry grasslands. Less well-known is the rich diversity in the backgrounds and perspectives of people who live and work in the Gorge and connect with its landscapes and communities. Their experiences reveal the Gorge's ability to bring people together, especially during a year of great disconnection.

**Gabe Sheoships (right) and Sacas Wildbill at a fishing platform on the Columbia River.**

Photo: Courtesy of Gabe Sheoships



## Connection, Culture, and Community

**Gabe Sheoships** is an enrolled Cayuse/Walla Walla tribal citizen of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, tribes with a rich history and contemporary presence in the Willamette Valley. “The Columbia Gorge and the Big River, N’chi-Wana, are a very important place for so many reasons and serve as a corridor of gathering,” Gabe noted. Celilo Falls, a tribal fishing area on the Columbia River that was submerged by the construction of The Dalles Dam in 1957, was a place where Gabe’s grandparents would go to fish and gather. Many Indigenous families live on the river year round and fish in traditional ways to this day.

For many, the Columbia Gorge is much more than a recreation destination. It also encompasses rich cultures, entices gatherings, and fosters community. For Gabe, passing through the Gorge, fishing, and meeting with family has been central in his life. “Our lives intertwine with the rivers, meeting, and gathering. Celilo was a very important place and it still is despite all of the changes that’s happened.” An Indigenous ecologist and educator, Gabe has worked for almost 20 years to challenge students to understand ideas of reciprocity, stewardship, and education in a holistic sense.



## Multiple Trails, Multiple Perspectives

“The Gorge is a place to think, to be in nature, and connect with others,” according to **Adriana Escobedo-Land**, an environmental consultant with the Samara Group. Adriana’s exposure to the Gorge came from her aunt and revealed to her the importance of connecting others with the outdoors. Adriana mentored her family members once they began exploring natural areas outside the city. Her half siblings, whose first language at home was Spanish, helped her realize that information on where to go, what to expect, and how to prepare for

Gorge outings was all in English and can be complicated for first-time visitors; it helps to first learn it from someone you can trust. “For big families with kids, being able to find information about places like Rooster Rock State Park for spending time outside with young kids is important,” Adriana shared. She also learned that people have diverse expectations about Gorge recreation.

Adriana remembers hiking once with her sister, who wanted to jam to music while on the trail. That wasn’t something Adriana typically does, and she found it brought new fun to the experience. “It’s important to recognize where everyone is coming from.” Assumptions about trail etiquette shape opinions about who’s on the trail and how others should behave, but those values aren’t universal. By reevaluating expectations, you can have a great time in the Gorge and others can too, Adrianna noted. “It’s so important for people to connect with the outdoors, so if someone is enjoying their music, then I love to see it.”

## Inspiration in Nature, Generation to Generation

**Ann Harris**, a Hood River resident for over 20 years, leads Oregon State University Extension’s Gorge Master Naturalist program.

Ann grew up listening to her father’s stories about his camping trips. “I tried to think about how my parents became so open to going camping when this was not a thing that most Black people did then—and isn’t now,” she recently noted.

Later, Ann learned that her father had been a counselor at Camp Atwater, the oldest African American residential camp in the United States. He cultivated a love for nature and passed it on to his family. “It’s really important to have leaders and role models,” Ann said, “for people of color to see the possibilities for more participation in outdoor recreation, education, and career opportunities.”

In turn, Ann handed down her father’s experiences and emphasized spending time outside while raising her children in the Gorge. “I always encouraged them to look around, to sit and to observe, and they have both continued that love of nature. For me, one of the greatest parts of the Gorge has been raising my kids here and their immersion in such a beautiful place that is now part of their heart.” ■





# Proposed Changes to Gorge Protection Plan Address Climate, Urban Sprawl

**Michael Lang, Conservation Director**

This summer, the Columbia River Gorge Commission took several steps to address climate change, protect imperiled salmon runs, and curb urban sprawl in its draft revised Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The final draft Management Plan is scheduled for adoption at the September 8 Gorge Commission meeting and includes modest improvements to Gorge protection standards to help ensure the future protection of this national scenic treasure.

## **Salmon habitat and treaty rights**

After receiving thousands of comments urging climate action, the commission has included a new chapter in the draft Management Plan that requires development of a climate action plan. A majority of Gorge Commissioners also support mandating greater protection for salmon by requiring 200-foot protective buffers around seven streams identified as “cold water refuge” by the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency. As water temperatures continue to rise in the Columbia River due to climate change, protecting cool temperatures in tributary streams is increasingly important. Protection of salmon and stream habitat also helps support tribal treaty fishing rights.

## **Better protection for farm and forest Land**

In response to many public comments, the Gorge Commission updated standards to protect farm and forest land from conversion to residential uses. We know that climate change is already increasing the frequency and intensity of forest fires in the region. Limiting the building of new dwellings in forest land protects people and property from forest fires and reduces the risks of human-caused fires.

## **Urban development and sprawl**

The Scenic Area Act allows minor revisions to the 13 urban area boundaries drawn by Congress. The Gorge Commission drafted new policies defining “minor revision”

as the lesser of 20 acres or 1 percent of an urban area at any one time, and a cumulative cap of the lesser of 50 acres or 2 percent of the land area of the urban area. The commission also clarified the act's requirements for a regional analysis of urban lands and development capacity.

Some local officials in the Gorge oppose these policies, clinging to antiquated notions that growth requires sprawl. Overall, the large surplus of existing vacant urban lands in the Gorge is sufficient to meet the needs for urban development for many decades to come.

### Shaping the Gorge's future

The Gorge Commission expects to finalize the Management Plan updates in September. The final draft plan is a step in the right direction. Friends urges the Commission to take the long view and adopt clear new policies to build climate resilience, protect habitat and scenic views, and prevent urban sprawl. ■



A dipnet fisherman pulls salmon from the Klickitat River.  
Photo: Tom and Marianne Nelson | NelsonNature.com

# Steigerwald Restoration Begins



Dan Bell, Land Trust Director

Construction is now underway on the multi-year effort to reconfigure the existing Columbia River levee system at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge. For seven years, a group of Gorge partners have collaborated to restore habitat that was cut off from the Columbia River by a levee in 1966. Friends

of the Columbia Gorge is one of those partners, and without our purchase of Steigerwald Shores through the *Preserve the Wonder* campaign, this extraordinary restoration project could not have happened.

This is the largest restoration project ever undertaken in the Columbia River estuary. Once it is complete, the project will open up nearly 1,000 acres of river habitat along Gibbons Creek to support salmon and lamprey.

The full refuge is scheduled to reopen in the spring of 2022, and an improved trail system will include an additional mile of walking path along the Steigerwald Shores property, through the newly restored 200-acres of floodplain.

For all of the latest updates on the Steigerwald floodplain restoration project and public access to the National Wildlife Refuge, visit [refuge2020.info](http://refuge2020.info). ■



# Adapting Land Management for Uncertain Times

Land Trust Director Dan Bell and Land Trust Associate Frances Fischer

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Adaptation is fundamental to ecosystems. The beautiful wildflower meadows in the Gorge are a product of eons of pollinators and plants interacting. Plants and pollinators typically evolve slowly in adaptation to small changes. Other times, a disturbance occurs and the change is immediate. A wildfire might wipe out a meadow, so species have to adapt quickly in order to survive.

This has been a year of change and adaptation at Friends—and not the slow kind. Volunteer activities and visits to the Gorge’s amazing spring wildflower bloom were shut down by Covid-19 pandemic stay-at-home orders. Nature adapted to the new realities, and in our absence this spring and summer, the bees and the flowers did what they do. Friends must adapt as well.

Closing our public trails and delaying stewardship was only the beginning. Planning to re-start these core programs safely was more challenging. But it also presented new opportunity: a chance to adapt.

At places like the Lyle Cherry Orchard preserve, we had to think about trail use in a whole new way and focus differently on visitor risk. Among other things, we needed new signs explaining how to stay safe and respect others on the trail. New signs presented a new opportunity. For the first time, we developed trail signage in English and Spanish. This was an initial step in a journey towards making our trails more accessible and welcoming to all visitors. Going forward, all of Friends’ trail signage will be bilingual.

Our stewardship team also had to adapt to our new social environment and develop a different approach for volunteer events. We needed to adapt in a way that put the safety and health of our staff and volunteers above all else.

By late summer, with new safety protocols in place we were able to resume small, physically distanced work parties. We are also pilot testing a program that allows volunteers to complete stewardship work at specific sites on their own schedule.

Together, our new systems for multilingual safety signage and small, physically distanced stewardship efforts are important steps forward to adapt, make our work safer, and create preserves more welcoming to all. We are not sure what the future holds, but we will keep working to ensure everyone has a chance to experience those wildflowers and bees in the years to come. ■

Volunteers Jean and Colin Zylka talk with Sara Woods at a May stewardship work party. We’re sad to note that Colin, a dedicated Gorge volunteer, died unexpectedly in July. He will be missed by all at Friends. Photo: Mika Barrett

# Ed Cleary Connects to Nature through Photography

Rowena sunrise. Photo: Ed Cleary

## Pam Davee, Director of Philanthropy

Forty years ago, Ed Cleary hiked to the top of Mt. Defiance with a singular goal: to capture a photo of the spectacular view with spring wildflowers. Instead, he got something much more dramatic.

Before beginning his ascent, Ed observed a strange phenomenon. The sky to the east was dark with lots of unusual colors, but it was completely clear to the west. It turned out to be an opportune day to have brought his tripod and trusty camera. It was May 18, 1980, the day Mount St. Helens erupted.

That same year, a scrappy organization called Friends of the Columbia Gorge was formed and a six-year fight to pass The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act began. Ed eagerly followed Friends' efforts to pass the act and decided early on that he wanted to be part of the only organization working to protect the Columbia Gorge that he loved so much.

For Ed, nothing is as enjoyable as spending time out in the Gorge, capturing photos of memorable moments to share with others. This year, however, since the coronavirus emerged as a serious threat, he has been staying home and staying safe. It has been difficult, but his lifetime of remarkable Gorge photography allows a connection to nature that wouldn't otherwise be possible at this time.

When Ed was asked recently about what aspects of Friends' work he believes are the most important, he said simply, "All of it." When pressed, though, he feels that the most important at this point in time is our legal and advocacy work to block coal and oil terminals. As he put it, "If climate change isn't addressed, nothing else matters."



An ardent conservationist, Ed feels that we must not lose old-growth forest, because wild areas are critical for the human condition. He has put his conservation ethic into action with his decision to leave a legacy gift to Friends, declaring, "I am making my gift to Friends because I want people in the future to be able to see and do what we see and do in the Gorge now. It will be an uphill battle. But it is worth it."

We agree, Ed. Thank you for your devotion to the Gorge!

Ed Cleary loves nature in all seasons. Photo: Courtesy of Ed Cleary



Autumn at Eagle Creek. Photo: Nick Wiltgen

# Special Gifts

May 1 through July 31, 2020

## IN HONOR

**In honor of Debbie Asakawa**  
Carl Asakawa

**In honor of Gwen Farnham**  
George Post

**In honor of Patrick A. Goeckner**  
Beth L. Parentice

**In honor of Debbie Hess**  
Eric Hess

**In honor of Carolyn Huber**  
Ann Rothschild

**In honor of Chris Laskowski  
and Kelly Lenox**  
Amy Medeiros  
Cindy Newman  
Pamela Taylor

**In honor of Marcy and Paul Lee**  
Patricia Mizutani and  
Richard Rosenhaft

**In honor of Mehdi and Roudi**  
Gwen Farnham

**In honor of Fred Rothchild**  
George Cummings

**In honor of Craig Smith**  
Richard and Virginia Youngflesh

**In honor of Michael Tejadilla**  
Fran Moga

**In honor of Rick Ray**  
Steve Law and Dawn Robbins

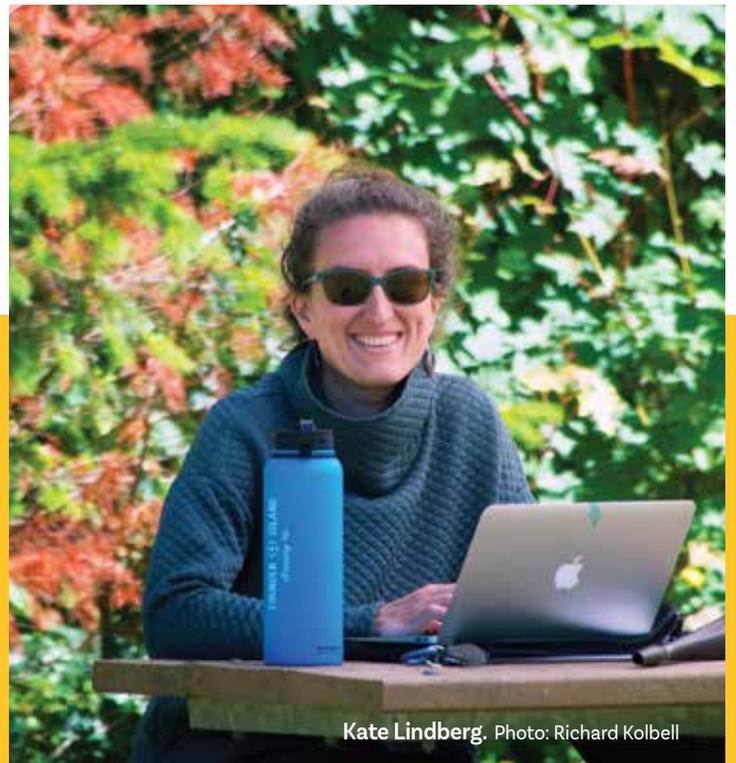
**In honor of Sage Ringsage**  
Brendan Soule

## SUMMER CHANGES

Paige Unangst, Finance Director

This summer, we say “au revoir” to Kate Lindberg, our outdoor programs and publications specialist. Kate joined Friends in 2014, bringing an easy-going demeanor and broad knowledge of the Columbia Gorge. In her tenure, she increased the scope of our hiking program and strengthened our family-friendly hikes as well as our biking, kayaking, and rafting events. Kate raised the standards of our outdoor youth education program with an updated curriculum, and earlier this year began assisting in production of our printed publications.

When Kate took family leave this spring, a dedicated volunteer, Coila Ash, was hired as an interim replacement. In July, Kate decided to step back from the demands of her job, to be with her growing family during these uncertain times. We’ll miss her



Kate Lindberg. Photo: Richard Kolbell

enthusiasm and humor and the passion she brought to her work, and we hope to see her volunteering and sharing her love of the Gorge in the future.

Thanks to Kate for her six years of service and to Coila for stepping in and stepping up for Friends during this important time.



## IN MEMORY

### In memory of Judith Abele Baker

Glenda and Scott Burns

### In memory of Kristine Starr Beam

Amy Alpaugh  
Tom Beaver and Mary Bodie  
Helen Duewel  
Julie Edwards  
Andrew Frank and Sally Rosenfeld  
Caryn and Jeff Keeney  
Kathleen Kloenne  
Debbie and Dave Menashe  
Donna Pace  
Sue Sumpter

### In memory of Sandra Cohen

Bruce and Diane Follansbee

### In memory of Elizabeth Colasurdo

Marita Ingalsbe

### In memory of Ron Crisman

John and Marlene Leffel  
Bill McCracken

### In memory of Michael Dale

Donna Gilroy

### In memory of Oliver Dalton

Sandi and Thomas Rousseau

### In memory of Spencer Dick

Blair Hampson  
Bernie and Karen Kuehn

### In memory of Bill Duerden and Frances Ream

Barbara Duerden

### In memory of Anna and Engel Engelsen

Susan Tripp

### In memory of Helen Farrenkopf

Caroline Fajolle  
Becky Garrett  
Linda Mangelsdorf  
Susan and Ted Schneider  
Lynn Tobias

### In memory of Jerry and Susanna Gabay

Susan Gabay

### In memory of Deborah Rachel Goldberg

Marshall Goldberg

### In memory of Reuben Gutoff

Bija Gutoff and Daniel Koch

### In memory of Dave and Margaret Holmes

Nancy Milliron

### In memory of Russ Jolley

Marianne and Tom Nelson

### In memory of Allen King

Kathy Fors  
Ryan Gallagher  
To the Point Collaborative

### In memory of Owen Klinger

Alex and Clare Vonderhaar

### In memory of Molly Majean

Constance Coleman

### In memory of Ed and Eddie McAninch

Margaret Walker

### In memory of Sandy Matthews

Russell and Tanya McDonald

### In memory of John A. and Betty C. Miller

Kathy Cushman and Paul Miller

### In memory of David John Morey

Donald and Shirley Clark

### In memory of Robert H. Murphy

Dana and Ed Murphy

### In memory of Kathleen D. Parry

John Parry

### In memory of Marilyn Portwood

Erlin Bernardo

### In memory of Jim Redden

Donald and Shirley Clark

### In memory of Jerry Reich

Scott Kaufman  
Robert Richardson

### In memory of Derek P. Ressler

Carol Douglass

### In memory of Laura Rose

Diane and Richard Hohl

### In memory of Nancy Russell

Sandi and Thomas Rousseau

### In memory of Don Shannon

Phyllis Clausen

### In memory of Jessie Simmons

Edward and Laurie Simmons

### In memory of Alice Simpson

James Hammond

### In memory of Jeanne and Ken Thorpe

Jan Elizabeth Thorpe

### In memory of Helene Hidden Van Buren

Evans, John, and Mason Van Buren

### In memory of Richard Varner

Matthew Varner

### In memory of Matthew Winthrop

Carlos and Vickie Simpson

### In memory of Colin Zylka

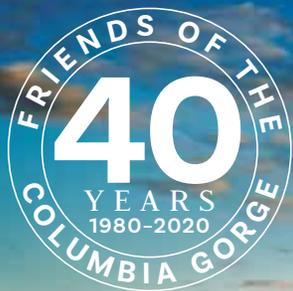
Jane Witten  
Pat and Rick Zimbric

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## Text Alerts: Take Action with Friends

We've made it easier than ever to take action for the Gorge via your cellphone and increase your involvement in Gorge protection, with Friends' text action alerts.

Our text alert system can inform you about special actions focused on texting or calling elected officials and decision makers, or direct you to urgent actions from our website.

We limit our text alerts so we don't overwhelm your inbox. Our goal is to keep you connected and engaged by sending just a few key Gorge protection actions each month.

Join at [gorgefriends.org/textalerts](http://gorgefriends.org/textalerts).

For more information on Friends' advocacy efforts, contact Ryan Rittenhouse at [ryan@gorgefriends.org](mailto:ryan@gorgefriends.org).

Sunrise at Cape Horn. Photo: Jeremiah Leipold