

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Winter 2019 Newsletter



Inspiring
the Next
Generation

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Portland Office:

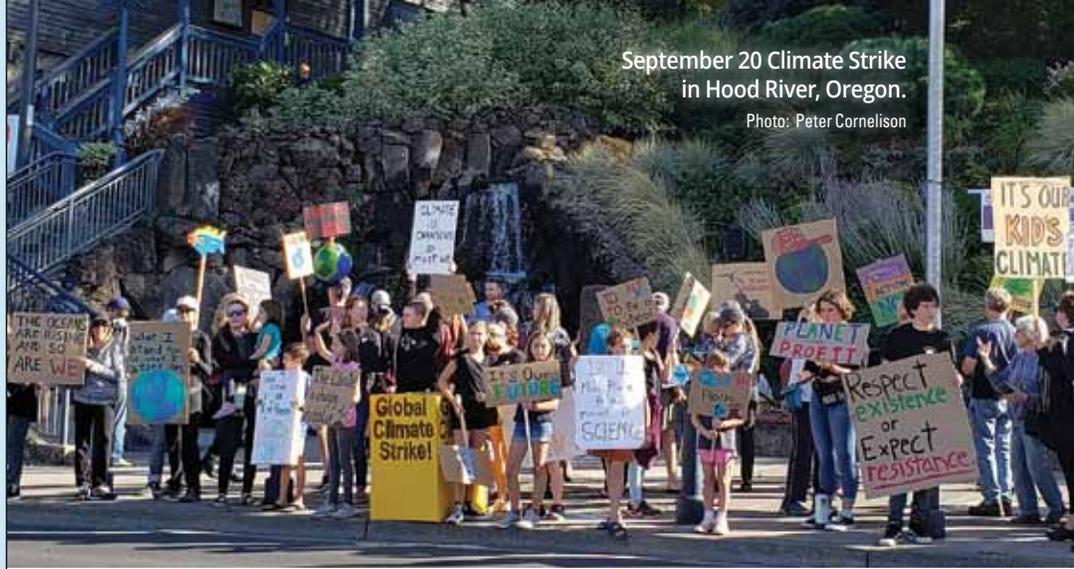
333 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 300, Portland, OR 97204
503-241-3762

Hood River Office:

205 Oak St., Suite 17, Hood River, OR 97031
541-386-5268

Washougal Office:

887 Main St., Suite 202, Washougal, WA 98671
360-334-3180



Take Action: Climate Impacts

On September 20, millions of youth in more than 150 countries took to the streets to demand that leaders take immediate action to address climate change. Incredibly, the management plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area includes no mention of climate change, and its resource protection policies are 30 years old. Gorge Commission staff has yet to make meaningful updates to the plan or create any new strategies for mitigating or adapting to climate change, despite being two years into a mandated plan review process.

Impacts of climate change are already evident in the Gorge. Without action, the situation for salmon and other native species and natural resources will become increasingly dire in the years ahead.

You can help: Write to the Gorge Commission now, urging them to update the Columbia Gorge Management Plan with a strong emphasis on climate change that will:

- Plan for expected climate change impacts on all resources in the Scenic Area, and plan for mitigating or adapting to those impacts;
Increase protection for salmon and other native wildlife and habitats, including protections and restoration of wetlands and increased buffers for streams and waterways;
Protect and promote proliferation of native and rare plants, particularly Native American first foods; and

- Stop urban expansion into protected management areas of the National Scenic Area.

Send your comment letter to:

Columbia River Gorge Commission
P.O. Box 730
White Salmon, WA 98672
gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/contact

Send a copy of your letter to your governor at the address below:

Oregon
Gov. Kate Brown
Office of the Governor
900 Court Street NE, Suite 254
Salem, OR 97301-4047
oregon.gov/gov/Pages/contact.aspx

Washington
Gov. Jay Inslee
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002
governor.wa.gov/contact

WHO WE ARE

Friends of the Columbia Gorge was founded in 1980 by John Yeon and Nancy Russell, with champions led by Senator Mark Hatfield. We work to ensure that the beautiful and wild Columbia Gorge remains a place apart, an unspoiled treasure for generations to come.

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Cover: Student participants in Great Gorge Wahoo! Photo: Nick Wiltgen

Director's Letter

In September, my wife and I traveled to Italy for an extended “empty nest” vacation. It was the first time in our nearly three decades together that Michelle and I have taken that much time away. We had an unforgettable trip loaded with hiking, sightseeing, and unexpected surprises. I even ran into a Friends member at the Genoa train station!

Of all we experienced on the trip, one memorable afternoon at a public square in Florence, Italy, brought me right back home: watching a group of high schoolers protesting climate change and taking their elected leaders to task. On that very same day, nine time zones away, students in Portland, Hood River, and all over the Northwest were leading their own climate strikes. Youth all around the world rose up in unison.

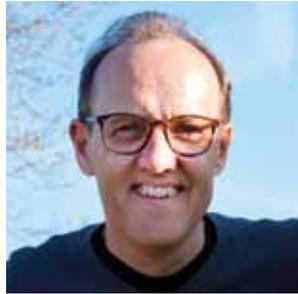


Photo: Bruce Pentland

Friends’ work with youth, highlighted in this newsletter, underscores the responsibility we all share to pass along our passion for conservation to those who follow us. Our *Explore the Gorge* program came out of a discussion with two longtime members wondering “whether or not the next generations would give a damn.” *The Great Gorge Wahoo!* was developed when a bereaved couple wanted to create a positive

“Our younger generations are ready and eager to protect the Columbia Gorge as well as the planet.”

legacy following the tragic death of their son. That program expanded a few years later, when a board member decided to honor her deceased husband who had been a longtime Friends volunteer.

Both youth outdoor education programs are now nearly a decade old and have given thousands of students experiences they would not otherwise have had. Many of the kids highlight these trips as their favorite middle school memory.

I have witnessed several well-intentioned nonprofit organizations fade into irrelevance because they were unable to transfer the passion and commitment of their founding leaders to future generations. We will not make that same mistake. In fact, the transition is already underway at Friends of the Columbia Gorge. We have several staff whose parents are my contemporaries. Our younger generations are ready and eager to protect the Columbia Gorge as well as the planet.

Despite these turbulent times – or maybe because of them – I’m inspired by the younger people who will fill my generation’s shoes in the years to come. They are already proving themselves to be voices that must be heard.

Kevin Gorman, Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org



Youth in Florence, Italy, in September. Their banner translates to “Climate Emergency Declared.”

Photo: Kevin Gorman

Inspiring the Next Gen

Stan Hall, Digital Content Specialist, stan@gorgefriends.org



For St. Andrew Nativity School history teacher Alex Park, the importance of connecting kids to nature became apparent while teaching at a Jesuit school in the South Side of Chicago. After returning home to Portland, Park jumped at the opportunity to work with Friends Executive Director Kevin Gorman in developing a new partnership with St. Andrew to take students out to the Gorge. “I always teach about the Missoula Floods and Native American history to seventh graders. That’s how Kevin and I first figured out a basic set up for the Gorge trip and how it could fit into the curriculum,” said Park.

Over the past 11 years, Friends’ outdoor youth education programs have grown and evolved. *Great GorgeWahoo!* serves low-income middle school students from Portland, some of whom have never

set foot in the Gorge before. *Explore the Gorge* helps middle schoolers across the Columbia River in Washougal, Washington, who otherwise wouldn’t have outdoor school. Together, the two programs have introduced the wonders of the Columbia Gorge to more than 3,000 children.

Explore the Gorge

At the end of their sixth grade school year, in between year-end testing and summer break, nearly 300 students in the Washougal School District can be found out of their classrooms, using their senses to make their way through natural landscapes in the Gorge. Dedicated naturalist volunteers guide students outside, teaching about the Gorge’s unique qualities and providing space for kids to make discoveries on their own. Gazing up from the Hamilton Mountain trail they imagine the Ice Age

floods covering the top of Beacon Rock – called *Che che optin*, meaning “navel of the world,” in Chinookan. Distinguishing native plant species in the forest, they learn to identify the edible ones, tasting ripe thimbleberries, miner’s lettuce, and more.

Nate Kellar, a language arts teacher at Jemtegaard Middle School, has accompanied students on *Explore the Gorge* field days since its first year in 2008. The program came along when students needed it most, Kellar noted. “By 2008, the previous outdoor school hadn’t happened in maybe 20 years. State funding was gone,” he explained, “but Washougal schools tried to hold it together and give students some kind of similar experience.”

Longtime Friends member Phyllis Clausen, a conservationist with deep roots in the Gorge, recognized the need for a real outdoor school program. Friends staff worked with Clausen to establish the Vic Clausen Youth Education Fund in her late husband’s memory and select the Washougal School District as beneficiary. Grant funding from the Camas-Washougal Community Chest also supports the program each year.

“A lot of kids here are from lower-income households and are isolated from the Gorge,” Kellar said, “because services are all located to the west, heading away from it.”

With *Explore the Gorge*, Friends aims to ensure that all Washougal sixth graders get the chance to establish a real connection to the wonders of the Gorge and create lasting memories. “From this experience, I would want to learn more about the history of the Columbia River Gorge,” a student this year commented. “It helps me tell people more about the history of where I’m from.”

Washougal middle school students at our 2019 *Explore the Gorge*. Photo: Micheal Drewry

eration

“For many of us, it was the first time we were taken into nature and exposed to hiking and appreciating the world around us. Now I am a leader of the hiking club at my school.”

— A St. Andrew Great Gorge *Wahoo!* alumnus

The Great Gorge *Wahoo!*

Founded in 2011, Friends’ *Great Gorge Wahoo!* offers middle school students at St. Andrew Nativity School in Portland two day-long field trips in the Gorge, one in spring and one in fall. St. Andrew provides students from low-income backgrounds with a college-prep education, and the student body includes a high percentage of students of color.

“We have to plant the seed right,” St. Andrew teacher and *Wahoo!* trip coordinator Alex Park noted, “showing them how close and peaceful the Gorge is. We know there are going to be kids saying ‘That was uncomfortable, my shoes got dirty, I don’t want to do that again.’ But more often they come back and say, ‘I had such a great time!’”

Friends’ program is supported by separate funds created in the memories of Matthew Winthrop and Buddy Nobles. Matthew, who died of cancer in 2011, was the son of longtime members Loring and Margaret Winthrop. Buddy was a Friends member and volunteer who passed away in 2013. His wife, Carrie Nobles, serves on Friends’ board of directors.

“A lot of these kids come from tough circumstances,” Nobles reflected this past fall. “Many are already wary and watchful, but I see them getting excited as they compete in the scavenger hunt, dare each other to lick slugs, stand in awe in the misty spray of a waterfall, or ogle the fish ladder at Bonneville Dam. It’s so rewarding to watch as these kids enjoy their special day.”

The Winthrops recently wrote to Friends. “Matt loved the Gorge – its expanse, its beauty, and its vistas. Each time

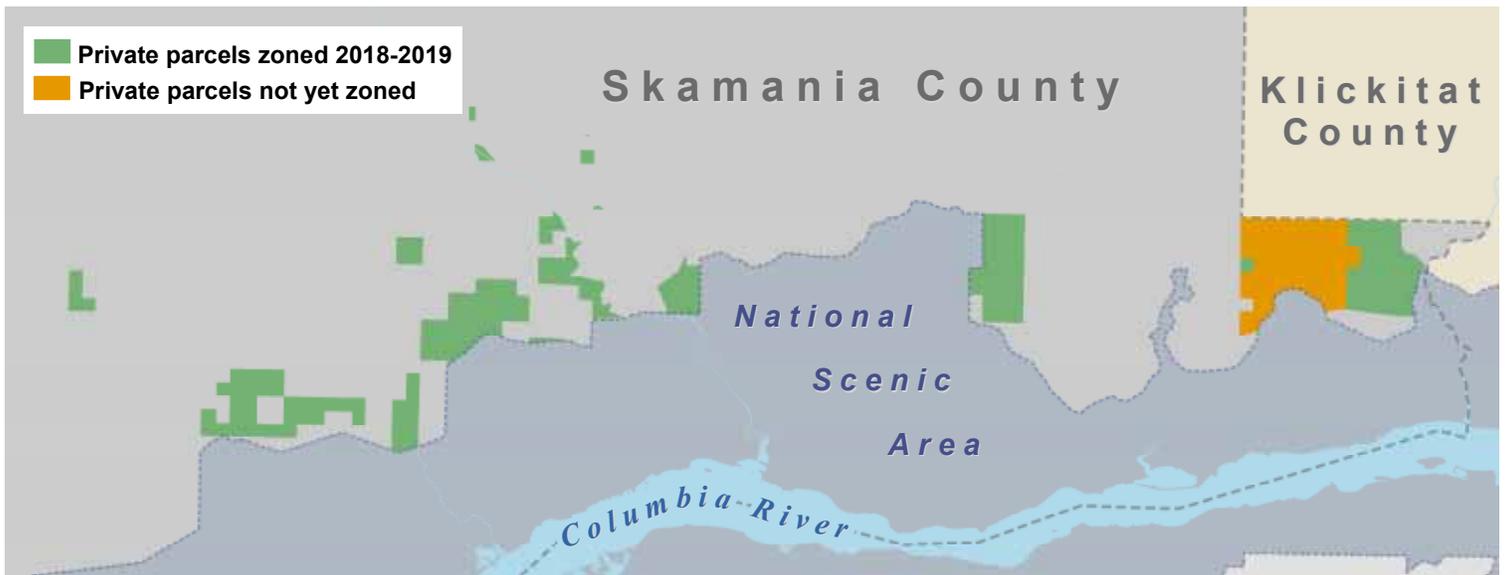


St. Andrew students at Friends’ Dancing Rock Land Trust Preserve for the fall 2019 *Wahoo!* Photo: Brandon Davis

we go on the *Wahoo*, we know Matt would love the experience the students are having. It makes our hearts happy to see it continue. It’s our way of honoring Matt and building hope for the future generations.”

The impact of the experience lasts, too. Former students, some now in

college, have told St. Andrews faculty and staff about fond memories made in the Gorge. “They love these trips,” said Park. “At the end of the year, I ask them about their favorite part of the school year, and often it’s their trip to the Gorge.” ■



Many of Skamania County's recently zoned private parcels are adjacent to the National Scenic Area. Map: Andrew Oldham

Skamania County Makes Progress on Zoning

Nathan Baker, Senior Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

In response to an important Friends victory in the Washington Supreme Court, Skamania County has made progress in complying with state land use planning laws by adopting new zoning that will ensure protection of forest lands throughout the county.

In 1990, the Washington legislature enacted the Growth Management Act (GMA), one of the goals of which is to curb the loss of timberlands. As a rural, “partial planning” county, Skamania County is required by the GMA to designate commercial forest lands in order to best protect these lands for forest uses. In addition, Washington’s Planning Enabling Act (PEA) requires Skamania County to adopt zoning for all of its lands and to adopt development regulations consistent with its comprehensive plan.

Despite these statutory mandates, until recently the county still had nearly 14,000 acres of privately owned lands that had never been zoned. Most of these

unzoned lands contained commercial timberlands, and many of the parcels were adjacent to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. As long as these lands remained unzoned and unprotected for forestry uses, they were left open to large-scale residential, industrial, and commercial development and other uses, without any zoning review.

In 2012, Skamania County repealed a development moratorium that had temporarily protected the unzoned lands and signaled that it was no longer willing to adopt zoning for them. In response, Friends and our ally, Save Our Scenic Area, filed suit against the county for violating the GMA and PEA. In 2015, Friends prevailed in the Washington Supreme Court, which upheld Friends’ rights to sue the county.

Following the Supreme Court’s decision, the parties agreed to put the litigation on hold so the county could work with all stakeholders to comply

with state planning laws. Over the past two years, the county has made significant progress, adopting zoning for approximately 85 percent of the 14,000 unzoned acres, thereby providing fairness and certainty for Skamania County landowners about the uses allowed in their communities.

About 2,000 acres of privately owned unzoned lands remain, all located in north Underwood. These lands include the approved site for the Whistling Ridge Energy Project, a controversial wind energy project that received approval from the State of Washington many years ago, but which has not been pursued. If the Whistling Ridge developers do not begin construction by March 2022, the permit is slated to expire. Accordingly, Skamania County has agreed to revisit the zoning of the remaining 2,000 acres by 2022, and the parties have agreed to postpone the litigation until then. ■

Young Gorge Leaders Call for Climate Action

Friends supports community leaders advocating for climate policy reforms

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, peter@gorgefriends.org

Ever since Friends' founding, our organization has worked to engage and educate youth in protecting, stewarding, and preserving the Columbia River Gorge. Our youth hikes and outdoor education programs might be better known, but Friends also has a long, proud tradition of working with young leaders interested in community advocacy.

We were honored when youth leaders in both the Gorge and Portland reached out to us to support activities planned for the September worldwide climate strike, inspired by 16-year-old Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

In the Gorge, Friends worked with Lillie Tomlinson, coleader of the Hood River High School Earth Action Club, and community leaders to support and advise on plans for the day-of climate strike rally.

More than 200 people attended the September 20 event at Hood River's Overlook Memorial Park. Tomlinson, Rev. John Boonstra, and newly appointed Hood River Mayor Pro Tem Kate McBride

addressed the crowd, calling for local action from Gorge leaders to address the climate crisis. Tomlinson led participants in a demonstration expressing Gorge youth's concerns about the dire threat that climate change poses to their future.

In Portland, Friends staff helped organize an advocacy skills workshop for the public, with a special emphasis on the importance of the Columbia River Gorge Commission incorporating climate-change response into its 2020 Gorge Management Plan. Friends volunteers also gathered more than 200 signatures during the day opposing the Zenith Energy oil terminal expansion in Portland.

Building on community energy following the climate strike, Friends has continued to help amplify voices of Gorge youth and community leaders speaking out on the threat of climate change to the Gorge. On September 23, those local leaders addressed the Hood River and The Dalles city councils, urging passage of dual resolutions to declare a climate emergency and demand greater regional collaboration

on the threat of climate change. Numerous supporting op-eds and letters to the editor were also submitted to local news media.

Gorge youth and community climate activists wrapped up their initial climate strike actions by offering



A young Gorge climate striker.

comments at the Gorge Commission's October 8 meeting in Cascade Locks. The management plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, which is currently under review, contains no mention of climate change. Youth and community leaders at the meeting urged the Gorge Commission to include mandatory steps in the 2020 management plan to support climate resilience in the Columbia Gorge in the years ahead. ■



Hood River's Climate Strike action featured speakers, activity planning, a march, and climate education. Photos: Eric Strid

Finding a Safe Home at Turtle Haven Preserve



THIS SEPTEMBER, 16 young western pond turtles were released into the wild at Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust's Turtle Haven Preserve. The 64-acre area in southwest Washington was acquired by Friends as part of its recently completed *Preserve the Wonder* land acquisition campaign. The preserve provides prime habitat for western pond turtles.

The first-ever release of juvenile turtles at Turtle Haven was a high point in Friends' ongoing collaboration with the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Oregon Zoo.

Thanks to the cooperative efforts of these agencies, the Gorge's western pond turtle population has increased from approximately 150 to more than 1,000 in the last 20 years. Well, make that 1,016 now.



Learn more and watch video at gorgefriends.org/turtlerelease



Education and hands-on engagement at the turtle release in September.

Photos: Vince Ready | Lasting Light Photography

Gorge Panel Rules Mine Operation Illegal

Decision is a victory for Friends and neighboring landowners

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, Michael@gorgefriends.org

ON AUGUST 13, the appointed members of the Columbia River Gorge Commission overturned a Clark County hearing examiner's decision and found that the Zimmerly quarry near Washougal, Washington, is operating without valid National Scenic Area permits. The appeals were filed by Friends of the Columbia Gorge and several neighboring landowners near the quarry site.

Gorge Commissioners ruled on four of the assignments of error brought forward by Friends and the neighbors. The commission ruled on a 10-1 vote that the mining is not a legally existing use. Commissioners unanimously voted that the county hearing examiner had not properly evaluated whether the former mining site was predominantly revegetated prior to the initiation of the illegal mining. On another 10-1 vote, commissioners ruled that the hearing examiner had erred in finding that the county lacked jurisdiction to determine whether a prior 1993 decision by the Gorge Commission was still in effect. Finally, commission members voted 8-3 against a motion that would have established that Friends and the neighbors had standing to participate as parties in the hearing before the hearing examiner. The final written order, issued on October 16, also upheld Clark County's enforcement and stop work order.

The decision marks a step forward in efforts to stop illegal mining in the National Scenic Area. Mining operations have been partially curtailed, but the mine's operators, Nutter Corporation, continue to illegally haul rock out of the site and through a residential neighborhood.

Thus far, the Gorge Commission staff has not taken any enforcement measures to



Aerial view of the Zimmerly mining site inside the western National Scenic Area boundary near Washougal, Washington. Photo: Friends of the Columbia Gorge archive.

implement the commissioners' decision. This is just one example of many where the Gorge Commission has not enforced against egregious violations of Gorge protection laws.

At the commission's monthly meetings in September and October, several commissioners raised concerns over the commission executive director's failure to follow the Scenic Area Act and administrative rules that require enforcement against violations in the National Scenic Area. One commissioner stated that the commission's credibility is on the line. On two separate occasions, motions were passed directing the commission director to take enforcement steps against the quarry operators. To date, the director has not implemented those orders.

Under the federal National Scenic Area Act, citizens are limited in their ability to file enforcement lawsuits. In this case, citizen suits are not authorized directly against violators, but instead only against counties or the Gorge Commission for failure to enforce or comply with mandatory provisions of the law.

Friends and the neighboring property owners have put the Gorge Commission director on notice that we may have to file a lawsuit against her, seeking a court order compelling her to fulfill her enforcement mandate. After all, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is only safe when its leadership enforces laws that protect this national treasure for future generations. ■

Susan Brickey: Leaving a Legacy and Living it Now

Pam Davee, Philanthropy Director, pam@gorgefriends.org

Susan Brickey is truly a one-of-a-kind woman with a seemingly endless zest for life. After a consuming career in healthcare administration, where she worked on the team that created the Providence Health Plan, Sue remains as surefooted in life as she is out on the trail.

Sue was determined not to let her retirement come with a sense of loss or lack of purpose. She has fully devoted herself to hiking, cycling, kayaking, and creating music with friends. In just the past few years, she has traveled to Japan, France, New Zealand, Peru, and Bolivia with her partner to further explore these passions of hers.

Sue clearly has a penchant for adventure, but she always loves returning to the Columbia Gorge, her cherished home. She still remembers experiencing the western Gorge for the first time when she was 13 years old. The gushing waterfalls, lush green landscape, and unique geological features blew her away. Having grown up in



Photo: Friends of the Columbia Gorge

eastern Washington where the topography can be described as “rolling” at most dramatic, the Gorge’s towering basalt cliffs were new and completely breathtaking.

Sue’s hope for the Gorge is that it will stay as lovely and magical as it is now, so others can experience and enjoy it in the future. The Gorge is where she has been

able to discover new passions and achieve personal dreams, and it’s also a place where she can share her legacy. That’s why Sue is including Friends of the Columbia Gorge in her estate plans.

What clinched the decision for Sue was learning about Friends’ ambitious *Gorge Towns to Trails* initiative for a 200-mile loop trail around the Gorge that will connect communities, rural areas, and trails.

Understanding the potential that trails have to bring revenue to small communities, she wanted to see that happen in the Gorge. Her legacy gift to Friends will help complete and maintain the system’s trails, promoting sustainable economic development as well as protecting the place she loves.

Sue’s generosity and foresight will protect the Gorge far into the future, benefiting generations of people she doesn’t even know.

Thank you, Sue! Your cheerful, infectious spirit and enthusiasm for the Gorge are inspiring. ■



Table Mountain from Cascade Locks. Photo: Jozsef Urmos | panojoe.ursos.net



Nature + Nurture

Friends of the Columbia Gorge 5th Annual Photo Contest

This place is called the Columbia River Gorge National *Scenic* Area for a reason. The Gorge is one of the best nature photography spots in the continental United States, and with this spectacular piece of nature comes the responsibility to steward and nurture it.

Friends' fifth annual photo contest provides an opportunity to share your best Gorge photos as reminders of this perpetual balancing act. And courtesy of contest sponsor Pro Photo Supply, you could win a chance to upgrade your photography equipment.

Photo submissions are being accepted now through midnight on December 31. For contest categories, guidelines and rules, and tips visit gorgefriends.org/photocontest.

Fisherman in the mist at Dabney State Park,
2018 Photo Contest entry. Photo: Daniel Gomez

Special Gifts *July 22, 2019 – October 31, 2019*

IN HONOR

**In honor of Keith Brown
and Teresa Robbins**
Jill Turner

In honor of Kevin Gorman
Julie Macpherson

In honor of Karen
Christine Loomis and
Susan Welsh

In honor of Nancie McGraw
Mary Bishop

**In honor of
Marguerite Scott
and Brian Scott**
Tracy Scott

**In honor of
Charles Webster**
Bill Lanfri

IN MEMORY

**In memory of
Donald Joseph Barney**
Donald and Shirley Clark

**In memory of
Pastor Nathan Brandt**
Diane and Richard Hohl

**In memory of
Dorothy Lane Denomme**
Diane and Richard Hohl

In memory of Joan Galbi
Daria De Lillo
Mauritz Combs
Gunnar Sedleniek

In memory of Jean Gorman
Bonnie and Samuel Taylor

In memory of Piper Jones
Michelle and Rick Peterson

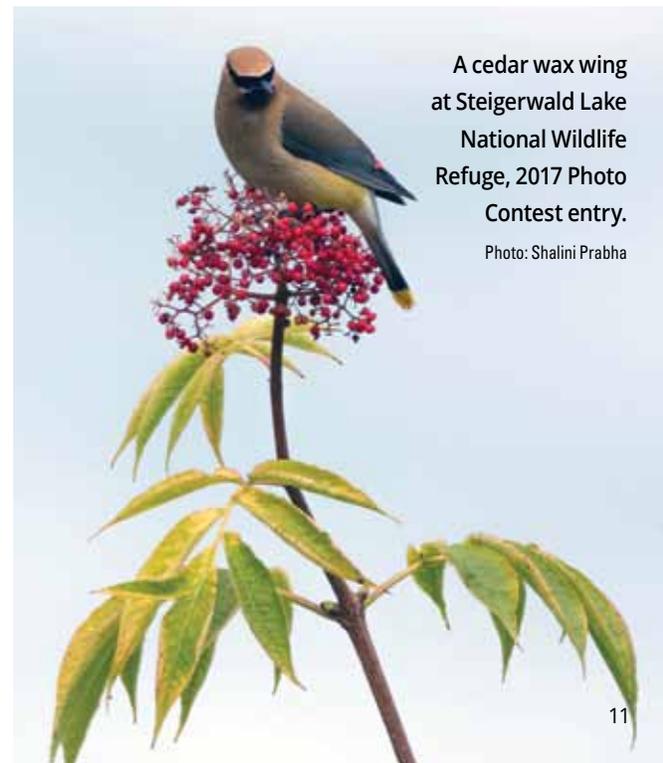
In memory of Nancy Russell
Larry and Susie Black

**In memory of
Earlene Sharp**
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Ronald Garth Talney**
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**In memory of
Leif Vigeland**
Meredith and Robert Amon
Avis Bailey
Jane and Walter Leiman
Michael and Susan Orchard
Conzada Thompson
David and
Marybeth Vigeland
David Wagner

**In memory of
Matthew Winthrop**
Joan Ercolini
John La Vallee
Tom Nelson and
Peggie Schwarz



A cedar wax wing
at Steigerwald Lake
National Wildlife
Refuge, 2017 Photo
Contest entry.

Photo: Shalini Prabha

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

P.O. Box 40820, Portland, Oregon 97240-0820

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and Big Give Days than ever before.

Visit **giveguide.org** before Dec. 31
to win prizes and take advantage of
matching funds that will double your
impact on Gorge protection!

Mount Hood from Catherine Creek,
2015 Photo Contest entry.

Photo: Nick Wiltgen

