2001 Annual Report
FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

A Year in Review
Accomplishments & Milestones
By Kevin Gorman, Executive Director, kevin@gorgefriends.org

Six million for Gorge land acquisition
After passing federal legislation in 2000 to improve the Gorge's land acquisition program, Congress stepped up in 2001 to provide $6 million to buy critical lands from willing sellers, some of whom offered their lands over eight years ago. Senator Patty Murray and the rest of the Northwest Congressional delegation are to be applauded for their efforts.

Nearly 7,000 acres offered for public protection
As a result of the federal legislation mentioned above, over 187 willing sellers came forward in 2001 to offer 6,700 acres of land for sale to the Forest Service. What the Forest Service doesn't attempt to buy within three years will be rezoned to allow more development, logging and mining. Congress's $6 million appropriation in 2001 gives hope that this opportunity for land acquisition will surpass the threat of future development.

Gorge Commission budget passes Oregon and Washington legislatures
In 2001, the contention over the Gorge Commission budget started like a lion and ended like a lamb as both legislatures passed the Governors' proposed budgets with surprisingly little fanfare. Friends' members and activists helped ensure this by writing hundreds of letters of support. Several members traveled to Salem to testify before Oregon legislators. Perhaps most impressive, a letter of support for the Commission's budget was signed by the county commission chairs of each Gorge county.

Gorge Commission receives more than 1,000 comments supporting strong Gorge protections
The Gorge Commission sought public input in 2001 as part of its review of its management plan. Over one hundred Friends members and activists turned out to the six Gorge hearings, and through email, letters and public testimony generated over 1050 comments in favor of upholding strong Gorge protections. The result was that more than two-thirds of the comments received by the Commission supported strengthening Gorge protections. In 2002, the Commission will focus on key parts of the management plan and even more public involvement will be needed to ensure Gorge protections are upheld.

Friends remains financially strong in turbulent year
In a year marked by national tragedies and a declining stock market, Friends' fundraising efforts held strong, matching or surpassing previous years. Our major donor giving increased by nearly 30% and membership remained steady at 3,000 members. Thank you all for giving us the resources to take on the many challenges facing the magnificent Columbia River Gorge.

photos: ©James Holloway
Major Challenges and Accomplishments in 2000

CONSERVATION & LEGAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

By Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org, & Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

to eat up valuable farm and forest land in the Gorge. Friends has protected farm and forest land by filing legal actions when residential development is approved in violation of the National Scenic Area Act. Several illegal dwellings were stopped because of Friends' land use and legal work in 2001.

Measure 7 fallout

In February 2001, an Oregon judge found that Measure 7, the ballot measure that passed in the 2000 election requiring taxpayers to pay developers to follow land use and environmental laws, was unconstitutional.

Oregonians are now anxiously awaiting the Supreme Court's opinion on the Measure's constitutionality.

If implemented, Measure 7 will devastate Oregon's nationally revered land use planning system and undermine years of environmental protection efforts.

During the 2001 Legislative session, Friends worked with other citizen groups in supporting legislation that would protect Oregon's environment and work to stop "Son of Measure 7" legislation being pushed by real estate development interests.

Friends is an active member of the Oregon Community Protection Coalition (OCPC), a coalition of citizen groups dedicated to protecting Oregon's quality of life from initiatives and legislation that would weaken land use and environmental protection.

Strengthening Gorge protections

Friends mobilized hundreds of supporters to write letters and attend hearings supporting strengthened protections of the Columbia Gorge during the Gorge Commission's review of the National Scenic Area Management Plan.

Fighting for clean air and clear views

Air pollution and corresponding visibility impairment are growing problems in the Columbia Gorge.

In 2001, Friends of the Columbia Gorge worked extensively with agency officials in drafting a work plan designed to protect and enhance air quality and visibility in the Gorge. The Gorge Commission approved the multi-year work plan that will determine the sources of air pollution in the Gorge and take appropriate action to reduce air pollution.

Protecting river corridors from encroaching development

In 2001, Friends participated in five different land use appeals involving illegal development along the Columbia and Sandy Rivers. Friends' work on these appeals has protected fish and wildlife habitat and scenic views, and has deterred future illegal development along river corridors.

Ensuring enforcement of Scenic Area laws

In the Bea case, the Washington Supreme Court disagreed with the method the Gorge Commission used for enforcing the scenic area rules, but provided several alternative methods for enforcing these rules and underscored the importance of protecting Gorge resources. Everyone recognizes that the Bea house is marring views in violation of scenic area laws, and that substantial measures are needed to bring it into compliance. Friends has remained involved in pending enforcement actions regarding the Bea house.

Protecting farm and forest land from illegal sprawl

Urban sprawl from the Portland and Vancouver metro areas threatens
Friends Volunteers in 2001
By Tiffany Newton, Field Organizer, tiffany@gorgefriends.org & Betsy Toll, Volunteer Coordinator, betsy@gorgefriends.org

In November, after months of gathering public input, the Gorge Commission adopted a list of 13 Plan Review Issues and 13 Plan Review Cleanup Tasks. Check www.gorgecommission.org/Publications.html to see adopted lists. Thanks to the outstanding efforts of our members and supporters, many issues that Friends championed were included in the lists.

In 2002, as the Gorge Commission continues its work on Plan Review, public input will be critical at every step. For more information about participating in Plan Review, contact Tiffany Newton at 541-386-5268 or tiffany@gorgefriends.org

Friends’ members, supporters and activists demonstrated their strong commitment to protecting the Gorge throughout 2001.

▲ Friends’ hiking programs engaged 115 volunteer leaders and shepherds throughout the year.
▲ Spring Wildflower Hikes drew 550 Gorge enthusiasts throughout spring.
▲ Gorge Hiking Weekend saw 675 hikers participating in 40 different events June 16-17.
▲ Our new Late-Season Hikes drew 35 people for four hikes in September and October.
▲ More than 100 volunteers participated in 10 stewardship projects from Bridal Veil Falls in the west end of the Gorge to Dalles Mountain Ranch in the east, and half a dozen places in between.
▲ Volunteer phone-bankers made 775 phone calls urging supporters to write letters and attend meetings.
▲ Through volunteers and mailings, 3,000 Gorge Commission scoping forms and another 800 postcards and sample letters were distributed.
▲ Email action alerts kept 225 Gorge activists up-to-date on the issues.
▲ Supporters sent 200 letters and emails to state legislators urging support of the Gorge Commission budget, and more than 1,000 comments to the Gorge Commission urging strong protections in Plan Review.
▲ More than 125 Friends’ supporters turned out to meetings and hearings to show their support for protecting the Gorge.
▲ Speakers Bureau and tabling volunteers presented our slide show and information about our programs at 24 events to an estimated 3,500 people.
▲ Office volunteers assisted with the legal research, data entry, mailings, filing, copying, phone work and other nuts-and-bolts program support activities that are central to the success of our Gorge protection work.

OUTREACH
Gorge Commission begins first-ever review of Management Plan
In 2001 the Gorge Commission began its first ever review of the Management Plan. The process began last May with scoping meetings in each of the Gorge counties. Well over 100 members and supporters of Gorge protections turned out to voice their firm support of Gorge protections. In addition to the public meetings, the Commission also solicited public comment via letters and email. In all, Friends’ members and supporters generated more than 1,000 comments in support of strong Gorge protections.
The Fundraising Year-in-Review
By Jane Haley, Development Director, jane@gorgefriends.org

Support for Gorge protections increased over last year, despite a downturn in the economy. Unaudited figures to date show a nearly 30% increase in major donor gifts this year. Membership renewals were strong, ending the year slightly ahead of our goal. During the year we received nearly $85,000 in two separate bequests from members who had designated Friends as a beneficiary in their wills.

Total membership for the year 2001 is 3,050, and while most of our members live in Oregon and Washington, we enjoy support from Gorge lovers around the country.

Our sincere thanks go out to all our members for their generous, ongoing support of our efforts to protect the incomparable Columbia River Gorge.

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Friends of the Columbia Gorge
photo: ©James Holloway
Thank you for making Columbia River Gorge protection a reality.

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