Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Founder Nancy Russell, 1932-2008

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Cynthia Winter* Chair
Bob Hansen* Chair Elect
Maria Hall Vice Chair
Karen Johnson Secretary/Treasurer
Angie Moore At-Large Member
Rick Ray* At-Large Member
Priscilla Turner At-Large Member
Chris Beck
Broughton H. Bishop
Bowen Blair, Jr.
Susan Crowley*
Ken Denis
Aubrey Russell
Pat Wall
Mark Waller
Charlie Webster
Polly Wood*

FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE LAND TRUST

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Aubrey Russell President
Bob Hansen* Secretary/Treasurer
Bowen Blair, Jr.
Jim Desmond
Dustin Klinger
Christine Knowles*
Angie Moore

Staff
Nathan Baker* Staff Attorney
Kelley Beamer Conservation Organizer
Justin Carroll Executive Assistant
Peter Cornelson* Field Representative
Kevin Gorman Executive Director
Merrit Hoeh Stewardship Coordinator
Michael Lang Conservation Director
Marilyn Lipro Development Assistant
Kate McBride* Land Trust Manager
Rick Till Land Use Law Clerk
Renee Tkach* Outdoor Programs Coordinator
Sandy Wright Development Director

* Gorge residents

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
Legal Counsel: Gary Kahn
Newsletter Design: Kathy Fors and Kathleen Krushas / To the Point Publications
Editor: Betsy Toll

PORTLAND OFFICE
522 SW Fifth Avenue, #720
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 241-3762

GORGE OFFICE
205 Oak Street, #17
Hood River, Oregon 97031
(541) 386-5268

www.gorgefriends.org

Congressional funding has protected Gorge landscapes like Cape Horn to preserve stunning viewpoints, forested slopes, wildlife habitat, and excellent recreation opportunities.

Photo: Aubrey Russell

Take Action Today!

S
ince the Forest Service’s land acquisition program was launched nearly twenty-five years ago, Friends of the Columbia Gorge has helped secure more than $50 million in federal funding for public purchase of nearly 40,000 acres of Gorge lands.

Each year, the president makes funding recommendations to Congress regarding specific conservation projects. These projects go through a rigorous review with input from members of Congress representing project areas. Due to intense competition for appropriations, only those projects with strong public support generally receive funding.

In honor of the 25th anniversary of the National Scenic Area Act, we hope to secure $1.5 million in federal funding in 2011 for public acquisition of several key Gorge properties that are threatened by development, or will benefit by securing habitat corridors or enhancing recreation.

Please urge Oregon and Washington senators (see below) to support the Forest Service’s land acquisition program in the Columbia Gorge in 2011. Tell them their leadership is critical to helping the Forest Service expand our public land legacy in the Columbia River Gorge.

Active citizen support makes the difference! Your actions for Gorge protection are crucial to our success. Contact your Senators and Representatives using the information below, or check www.senate.gov or www.house.gov for other offices.

Oregon
Sen. Ron Wyden, (202) 224-5244
http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/
Sen. Jeff Merkley, (202) 224-3753
senator@merkley.senate.gov
Rep. David Wu, (202) 225-0855
Rep. Earl Blumenauer, (202) 225-4811
Rep. Peter DeFazio, (202) 225-6416

Washington
Sen. Patty Murray, (202) 224-2621
http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm
Sen. Maria Cantwell, (202) 224-3441
http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/
Rep. Norm Dicks, (202) 225-5916
Email your Congressional Representative by logging on to www.house.gov/writerep/

Cover photo: Rippling landscapes in the eastern Gorge are evidence of massive ice age floods that shaped the region 12,000 years ago. Photo: John Howard, www.byline-skyline.com
Every now and then, a piece of news crosses my desk that takes my breath away. An article in last November’s National Geographic Traveler magazine did exactly that.

National Geographic Traveler had asked 437 expert judges to rank 133 international tourist destinations in terms of their exceptional characteristics related to environmental quality, social and cultural integrity, historic buildings and archaeological sites, aesthetic appeal, tourism management, and outlook for the future. That broad expert panel ranked the Columbia River Gorge in a tie for sixth place internationally.

The Columbia Gorge ranked higher than any U.S. national park, higher than the Tuscany region in Italy, and higher than the Serengeti Plains and Kilimanjaro in Africa. Judges’ comments noted that the Columbia Gorge “benefits from some of the best land-preservation programs in the nation. The historic road that is the gateway to the region is one of the best-managed historic roads in the nation. Despite large numbers of visitors, the region still has pockets of authenticity, and the magnificent natural scenery is well protected.”

This exciting recognition comes as we approach the 25th anniversary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act next year. We all can be very proud of what we’ve done to protect this place. But the survey also offered warnings for special places like the Gorge. Noting the reasons that some special places’ rankings decline, the National Geographic website stated, “When people care about the condition of a place, its score tends to go up and stay there.” But, it continued, “when people see a place as a tourism cash cow,” the rankings fall.

The Columbia Gorge has been lauded nationally and internationally for its foresight in curbing commercialism, but it is grappling directly with “tourism cash cow” proposals: a large-scale casino complex the size of 65 city blocks, and an upscale destination resort that would be the largest development built in the Gorge’s protective zone since passage of the National Scenic Area Act.

As we head into 2010 and the new decade beyond, let’s make a firm resolution to keep the Gorge the treasure that it is, for our children, future generations, and our neighbors around the world.

Kevin Gorman
Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org

The list of 133 Sustainable Destinations can be found at http://traveler.nationalgeographic.com/2009/11/destinations-rated/list-text
Countless visitors and observers—local residents, occasional visitors, and world travelers alike—marvel at the astounding beauty and unique characteristics of the Columbia River Gorge. From its breathtaking vistas to cascading waterfalls and sheer basalt cliffs, the Gorge offers all who see it a sumptuous visual feast. Yet, as hikers, photographers, and weekend naturalists ponder the stunning natural beauty, probably the last thing they consider is the one thing that made the Gorge what it is today: geology.

Geologic forces began shaping the Columbia Gorge millions of years ago, as volcanic activity lifted a ridge that became the Cascade Mountains. Molten lava then covered the area in basalt, leaving columnar basalt formations and petrified old-growth snags. Finally, over the ice age period between 8,000–12,000 years ago (mere seconds in geologic time), a series of massive floods scoured the steep V-shaped Columbia River valley into a wider U-shaped gorge that left tributary rivers and streams literally pouring over cliffs, and scattered school-bus size boulders from Montana across the Gorge landscape.

The unique geologic activities that shaped the Columbia Gorge left behind traces that are visible to us in features of the Gorge today. The question is, will those features that tell the Gorge’s natural history be protected for future generations?

In the past year, both the United States Congress and the Oregon Supreme Court took actions that recognize the geologic significance of the Gorge and the importance of protecting the geologic features that exist. But the final decision on protecting all of the Gorge’s geologic resources rests with the Columbia River Gorge Commission. We will be actively involved as that decision takes shape.

Congress recognizes the Ice Age Floods

The 2009 Omnibus federal legislation that included wilderness protection for more than 26,000 acres in the Columbia Gorge also created the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail. This “trail” is not a hiking trail per say, but rather a historical, educational and tourism corridor that will tell the story of the Ice Age Floods that raged from Montana to the Pacific Coast and south to Eugene, Oregon.

The Columbia Gorge was the “pinch point” of these epic floods, and its walls were no match for the force of water that coursed through the deep canyon. Water surged through the narrow valley at a velocity of 65 miles per hour, reaching depths of 700 feet, submerging landforms and tearing away mountainsides. As a result, many of the most dramatic features in the Gorge today were spawned by those ancient floods, most notably the endless waterfalls that cascade off of towering scoured cliffs.

With the creation of the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, the Columbia Gorge will be an important centerpiece for telling the story of the floods. With dedicated funds from Congress and the recent ranking by Smithsonian Magazine of the Ice Age Floods Trail as one of the country’s “10 Most Spectacular Geologic Sites,” protecting the geologic resources of the Gorge is more important than ever.
Oregon Supreme Court encourages protection

While geology enthusiasts lobbied Congress for the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail, Friends of the Columbia Gorge pressed for protecting geologic resources through the courts. In a lawsuit challenging the legality of the revised Management Plan for the National Scenic Area, Friends argued that geologic resources were indeed “natural” and should be given the same level of protection as other natural resources. The Oregon Supreme Court agreed with our position, but deferred to the Columbia River Gorge Commission to make the final decision on protecting geologic resources.

While many individual geologic features of the Gorge, such as cliff walls, are protected, many others are not. Glacial erratics, enormous boulders that traveled in the floods for more than a thousand miles, are not protected, per se. Geologically significant kolk ponds—circular ponds carved out by ferocious “water tornados” during the floods—have no more than a 50-foot development buffer. The Dancing Rock property recently purchased by Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust includes a dramatic kolk pond on land that had once been slated for residential development.

If the story of the Gorge’s geologic history is to be told to future generations, protection of geologic resources is imperative. For visitors who cherish the Gorge today, and for those who can learn from it in the future, we must make sure these crucial traces of history remain intact.

Kolk ponds such as this one on Friends’ Dancing Rock property were left by forceful whirlpools during epic floods that inundated the Gorge 12,000 years ago. Photo: Darryl Lloyd

Iconic Multnomah Falls in the western Gorge plunges 620 feet down sheer cliffs left by ice age floods. Photo: Diana Karabut
Columnar basalt cliffs and wide plateaus mark the largest landscape yet donated to the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust. Given to the Land Trust in 2009 by the estate of Friends founder Nancy Russell, the property lies adjacent to Lyle, Washington and includes part of the town itself. The property covers more than 500 acres, etched by the Lyle Cherry Orchard Trail.

In 1990 Nancy and Bruce Russell began purchasing land east of Lyle. Over the next fifteen years, they acquired twelve separate tax lots comprising what is now called the Lyle Cherry Orchard. An old homestead at the east end bears testament to the remains of what was once a pioneer orchard. The property also holds remnants of a century-old “convict road.” Worked on by convict labor in 1910, four years before the Historic Columbia River Highway was begun, the road was never completed.

With sprawling oak woodlands, the Cherry Orchard provides ideal habitat for deer, turkey, and western gray squirrels, but Nancy’s primary intention was to create a public trail to the top. She started the project in the 1990s and later hired trail-builders to open a new route up from the pull-out on Washington SR 14, east of the Lyle tunnels. The new route traverses the hills rather than climbing directly up the steep slope.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge has led spring hikes on the property for nearly two decades, and two hikes are scheduled this season (see brochure). The land boasts abundant wildflowers from late March to early May, and stewardship teams are working to eliminate star thistle, an invasive plant that is new to the property.

Excellent views of the Cherry Orchard can be seen from across the river at Tom McCall Preserve and Rowena Plateau, just above the Historic Columbia River Highway east of Mosier. From this vantage point, the entire Cherry Orchard, including 1000-foot cliff walls scoured into shape by ice age floods, is in full view.

The Land Trust’s priorities for this spectacular property are to keep it open to the public for hiking, preserve habitat for wildlife, and protect its scenic vistas for generations to come. See our hiking brochure or check www.gorgefriends.org/hikes for this spring’s outings at the Cherry Orchard.
Outreach and Activities

The U.S. Forest Service has produced its final decision for the future of the Cape Horn Trail, and Friends of the Columbia Gorge commends them for their work. The resulting plan will protect wildlife habitat and the natural beauty of the area, while expanding the recreation opportunities that this majestic landscape offers to the public.

Over the past ten years, Friends has worked to facilitate land acquisition, collaborating with the Forest Service and Cape Horn Conservancy, a community group, to ensure that the trail will offer hikers a world-class recreation opportunity. Countless hours were spent carefully analyzing existing trails, possible re-routes, community issues, and safety concerns to shape the final decision for the trail.

A seasonal closure of the lower trail will be in effect January 1 through July 1, to protect sensitive species. We will announce volunteer work parties this spring to help with trail work and maintenance.

Tour de Fleur!

The City of Lyle is holding its first annual “Tour de Fleur” on Saturday, May 1, to showcase the area’s wildflowers, hikes, scenery, local foods, and great wines. Start the day with breakfast at the Lion’s Club before heading out on the trail – Friends’ Cherry Orchard and Klickitat Trail hikes are part of the Tour. After your hike, come back to the Lyle Activity Center to enjoy food, wine, crafts, and entertainment. See www.gorgefriends.org/hikes for hike details.

Vision for Cape Horn

Renee Tkach, Outdoor Programs Coordinator
renee@gorgefriends.org

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative
peter@gorgefriends.org

Long Shadow Photography: Darryl Lloyd

Photographer Darryl Lloyd and his twin brother Darvel grew up on a Mount Adams ranch and developed a passion for mountains, nature, world travel, and color photography. Darryl and his camera have gone around the globe twice, and wilderness experiences enrich his images. “I try to embed my own emotional and physical experience in the photos,” Darryl says. “I hope that my exhilaration and joy of being there become a part of every photograph!”

Darryl established Long Shadow Photography in Hood River in 1997 and produces greeting cards, maps, and posters. His photos have appeared in major publications including National Geographic and Popular Photography, and he has received awards for his fine art images.

An avid Gorge lover, Darryl has donated countless photos to groups working to protect the Gorge and other exceptional landscapes. With Long Shadow Photography, Darryl Lloyd is a strong presence in the Gorge’s thriving arts community. View his work at www.LongShadowPhoto.com, and on page 5 of this newsletter.
One of the most compelling stories of the Columbia River Gorge is the story of public land acquisition. Since the passage of the National Scenic Area Act in 1986, the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies have acquired nearly 40,000 acres in the Columbia River Gorge for resource protection and public enjoyment. These purchases, both large and small, have preserved open space, scenic views, and wildlife habitat, allowed future trails, and protected Native American cultural resources.

From east to west, the story of public land acquisition in the Gorge is evident. The two western gateways to the Gorge – the Sandy River Delta in Oregon and Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge in Washington – were once zoned as industrial lands; habitat and resources were not protected. Today, more than 3,000 acres of these Gorge wetlands are protected, and enhancement efforts by the Forest Service and U.S. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife are bringing back migratory waterfowl.

As the primary agency authorized by Congress to purchase new lands and add them to the public domain, the Forest Service depends on appropriations by Congress for its land acquisition program. Those funds are allocated from the Land and Water Conservation Fund in the annual budget. President Obama and Congress are already crafting their 2011 budget and deciding which programs to support.
Friends Successfully Challenges Unlawful Cluster Development

Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

On January 12, Friends of the Columbia Gorge prevailed in an appeal of a Skamania County decision that unlawfully approved a three-lot residential development in violation of Gorge zoning rules. The development was approved under the “cluster development” rules, but failed to follow the mandatory criteria.

Cluster developments are groups of dwellings clustered together on a small portion of a tract of land, leaving the remainder of the tract protected from development. In exchange for following special, rigorous criteria, developers can be awarded “bonus” dwellings and smaller parcels than would otherwise be allowed.

During its deliberations on the appeal, the Columbia River Gorge Commission reaffirmed several key rules that apply to cluster developments in the National Scenic Area. First, all new dwellings in a cluster development must be closely clustered together.

Second, the new dwellings in a cluster must be sited to protect resources – such as western gray squirrel habitat – in a manner not available through conventional development. According to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, increased residential development has been a primary factor in the decline of western gray squirrel populations.

Third, where possible, residential driveways and utilities should be consolidated to protect resources. Finally, at least 75% of the overall property must be permanently protected from development. The Gorge Commission held that, in this case, compliance with these four rules had not been demonstrated.

The Gorge Commission also reaffirmed that site plans for proposed development in the Scenic Area must be accurate and complete before they are reviewed by government agencies and the public at large. Here, the county deemed the application “complete” only one day after it was submitted, despite a number of deficiencies. The Gorge Commission held that the county’s failure to ensure complete and accurate application materials resulted in a decision that was not based on substantial evidence.

Given the multiple shortcomings in the county’s decision, the Gorge Commission remanded the matter back to the county.

Friends’ success in this appeal has helped raise awareness that cluster developments, when not properly planned, can lead to excessive development that negatively affects wildlife habitat, scenic views, native plants, and cultural resource sites in the Columbia Gorge.
Annual Meeting Set for April 11

Friends of the Columbia Gorge’s 29th Annual Meeting is set for Sunday, April 11, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Skamania Lodge. Mark your calendar and plan to join us to hear about our latest successes and challenges, honor our Volunteer of the Year, and mingle with other supporters.

Dennis Stillwell, who has created the most comprehensive hiking resource in the Pacific Northwest, will be our keynote speaker. With his website, NWHiker.com, and his “70 Virtual Hikes” CD, Dennis connects people to great hiking opportunities throughout the Northwest. His recently-updated Columbia Gorge CD, featuring topographical maps and nearly 3,000 photos, will be on sale at the meeting. Dennis will share tales from the trail, including dramatic stories of surviving a heart attack at the top of Munra Point, and encountering a cougar up above Multnomah Falls.

Enjoy the afternoon with Friends or make it a weekend getaway – Skamania Lodge and the Stevenson area offer wonderful spring attractions and wildflowers will be in bloom. Watch for our Annual Meeting invitation in the mail in March.

Correction
November newsletter: The photo of Seven Mile Hill on pg 5 was taken by Joszef Urmos. We apologize for the error, and we thank Joe for his great photography!
Featured Hike:

Deschutes River Trail, OR

Moderate: 5.2 miles, 700-ft. elev gain

by Ross Edginton

The Deschutes River Trail offers hikers a sample of the high desert ecosystem at the east end of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. After a long winter of rainy days, this arid region at the mouth of the Deschutes River beckons with sunshine, blue skies, and loads of wildflowers.

The loop trail, funded by the Oregon Wildlife Heritage Foundation and built by the Oregon Youth Conservation Corps, begins on the Atiyeh Deschutes River Trail that follows the Deschutes River for 2.2 miles then climbs up to Ferry Springs and past a natural rock arch.

Camping is available at the state park for a modest fee depending on the time of year. After the hike, people may want to travel across the river to the Heritage Boat Launch area and follow the Oregon Trail route back to The Dalles.

Directions from Portland: I-84 east to Celilo Exit 96, turn right, then left onto Hwy 30. Go four miles to the Deschutes River State Park. Drive through campground to farthest paved parking area. Trail starts at the far end of grassy field.

Ross Edginton is president of the Desert Trail Association and has led hikes for Friends of the Columbia Gorge for many years, especially on the Deschutes River Trail.

Special Gifts

October 17, 2009 – January 14, 2010

In Memory of Marion Beals
Kathy Knief

In Memory of Helene Biddle Dick
Elizabeth N. Smith

In Memory of Leslie Fennern
Gloria Ladum

In Memory of Edith Golik
Dennis M. Golik

In Memory of Ned Hayes
Bill and Joan Bailey

In Memory of Mary Huisman
Elizabeth N. Smith

In Memory of Stan and Doris Jewett
Stan Jewett

In Memory of Tor Lyshaiig
Donald E. and Shirley G. Clark

In Memory of Barbara Miller
Mark Miller

In Memory of Nancy
and Bruce Russell
Jan and Louise Leinninger

In Memory of Nancy Russell
Edmund Frank and Eustacia Su
John and Lisa Holtz
Travers Hill Polak

In Memory of Noma G. Underwood
Joan Whiting

In Memory of John Yelon
John and Lisa Holtz

In Honor of Betty Bonham
Carol and Jon Lesch

In Honor of Katharine Diack
David Stearns

In Honor of Wendy Gerlach
Michael Phillips

In Honor of Bob Hansen
Jim Oldfield

In Honor of Jane Harris
Nathan Baker
Chris Beck

Nicholas and Kathryn Dodge

In Honor of James Imhoff
Russell Nelson Jr.

In Honor of Douglas Obletz
Richard Linville

In Honor of Steven Partain
Carlene Partain

In Honor of Steve and Cheri Partain
Alan Partain

In Honor of Aubrey Russell
Michael Phillips

In Honor of Eugene Parker Russell III
Penny Russell

In Honor of Roxane Russell
Ronnie Russell

In Honor of Tom and Tanna Tatam
Bill and Sara Tatam

In Honor of Renee Tkach
Jay Nelson

In Honor of Max Wilkins
Maxine Wilkins

In Honor of Our Native Ancestors
Christy and Maxwell Haase
Know Your Gorge: 
Then and Now

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2011. In commemoration, we are providing windows to the past, from the 1860s up to the early 1980s, presented in tandem with recent images.

In this issue, we spotlight the beautiful 1883 photograph, *Indian Summer on the Columbia* by Carleton Watkins, featured in *Wild Beauty: Photographs of the Columbia River Gorge, 1867-1957* by Terry Toedtemeier and John Laursen, northwestphotography.org.

The companion photo was taken in 2009 by Friends Board Member Bob Hansen. Closely matching Watkins’ Oregon location, Hansen took his photo from a spot directly across from Washington’s Chamberlain Rest Stop.

Hansen noted, “We could see no significant evidence in today’s photograph of man-made change over the last 126 years to this very special landscape. It is my sense this is an indication of success on the part of the Columbia Gorge Scenic Act, the Columbia Gorge Commission, and the Friends of the Columbia Gorge, in protecting this particular landscape.”