

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Winter 2015 Newsletter

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Friends of the Columbia Gorge

FOUNDER NANCY RUSSELL, 1932-2008

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Link to us on Twitter and Facebook
 from our website: www.gorgefriends.org

Winter at Catherine Creek. Photo: Cheryl Hill



Take Action!

Help Save the Land Water Conservation Fund!

This fall, Congress allowed the Land Water Conservation Fund, or LWCF, to sunset. That decision ended a half-century legacy of bipartisan work to fund parks, sports fields, and open space lands across the United States.

Funded by oil and gas drilling fees, LWCF revenues were mandated to support land and water projects that benefit all Americans. In the Columbia Gorge, LWCF funds were crucial to protecting places like Catherine Creek and Cape Horn, and restored sections of the historic Columbia River Highway. Those sites would not be open to the public without LWCF funds.

Despite the sunset, members of Congress on both sides of the aisle want to revive and permanently fund LWCF, and Northwest Congressional delegates are leading the way. Our senators and representatives need to hear from constituents who value LWCF and want to see this important legacy continue.

Please contact your elected officials and tell them how LWCF funding has personally benefited you and protected places you love. Each day that Congress does not restore the program, land and water protection programs lose \$2.5 million that should be invested in America's parks and public recreation areas.

Tell Congress that LWCF matters to you! ■

Our Email Action Alerts provide the most timely, effective way to take action for the Gorge. Subscribe at www.gorgefriends.org/subscribe, or call Ryan at 971-634-2034.

Citizen Action Makes the Difference! www.senate.gov or www.house.gov
 Your voice is vital to Gorge protection. Let Congress hear from you.

Oregon

Sen. Ron Wyden, 202-224-5244
www.wyden.senate.gov/contact

Sen. Jeff Merkley, 202-224-3753
www.merkley.senate.gov/contact

Rep. Earl Blumenauer, 202-225-4811
Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, 202-225-0855
Rep. Greg Walden, 202-225-6730
Rep. Peter DeFazio, 202-225-6416
Rep. Kurt Schrader, 202-225-5711

Washington

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www.murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm

Sen. Maria Cantwell, 202-224-3441
www.cantwell.senate.gov/public

Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, 202-225-3536
Rep. Derek Kilmer, 202-225-5916
Rep. Dan Newhouse, 202-225-5816
Rep. Suzan DelBene, 202-225-6311

Email your Congressional Representative from www.house.gov/representatives/find.

Cover: A winter view from Cook-Underwood Road, Skamania County, Washington. Photo: Lydie Boyer

Kevin and daughter, Meghan.

Photo: Michelle Kinsella

Director's Letter

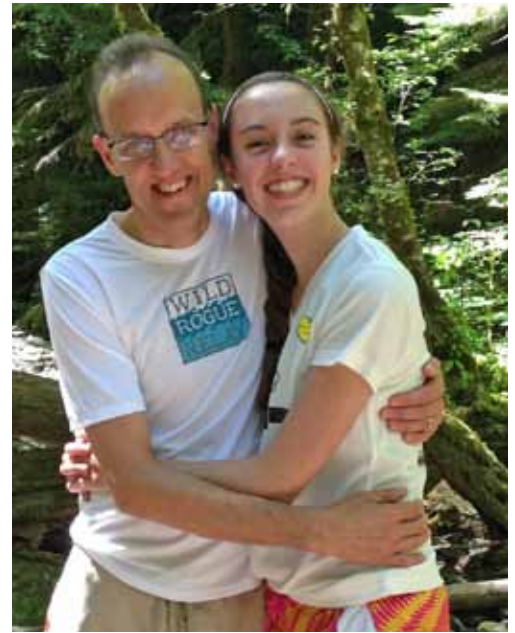
My daughter recently celebrated her sixteenth birthday by hiking in the Gorge with a group of her friends, which pleased me to no end.

I took the girls to Wahclella Falls and as they reveled in a place most had never visited, I got caught up watching two young boys engrossed in exploring the creek with rocks, sticks, and gravel. While part of me thought the boys should be on the trail, not in the creek, their wanderlust took me back to my boyhood on a Michigan lake where I meandered free of trails and signposts. Those times shaped who I am and my career as much as any college courses I took years later. I spent the rest of our hike thinking about those boys and where life will take them.

I share this because protecting the Columbia Gorge is predicated on a conundrum: if people are to become passionate about protecting a place, they need to experience it, smell it, and breathe it in. Yet too many people exploring freely can love a place to death.

This past year, Friends saw that first hand in the Gorge. From early spring through October, the Gorge was buzzing. Trailheads full, parking lots full, restaurants full, businesses happy. But some of the trails got too much "love." Litter, dog waste, and trail erosion left a heavy footprint, overriding the "leave no trace" ethic.

The Columbia Gorge doesn't have gates you can shut. It is a natural corridor for wildlife and human movement, lying just outside a fast-growing metropolitan area where population has increased by 116,000 in just the last five years. This means we need to act and plan. We need to act as stewards who respect the land and encourage others to do the same. Friends will be doing more of that, starting with our spring hikes. And we need to plan for the future. Our *Gorge Towns to Trails* vision is one example – dispersing hikers and encouraging them to leave cars in communities, or even better, take mass transit. Public agencies are now planning for future recreation needs, and partners



like Travel Oregon are helping Gorge communities define sustainable tourism.

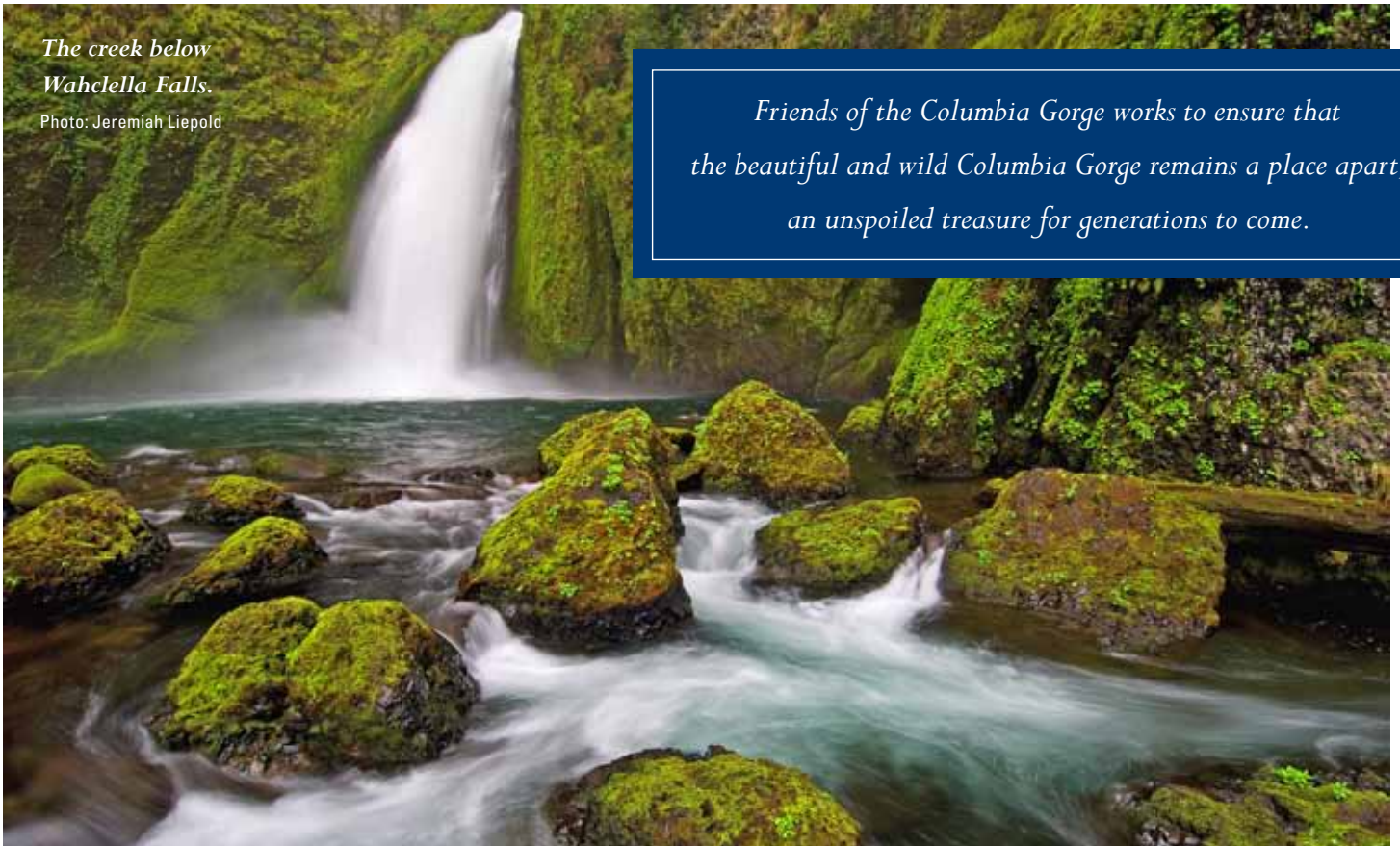
As we welcome newcomers and future generations to enjoy the creeks, forests, and meadows that we love, we all need to act and plan to protect the Gorge. It's our best and only hope.

Kevin Gorman, Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org

*The creek below
Wahclella Falls.*

Photo: Jeremiah Liepold

Friends of the Columbia Gorge works to ensure that the beautiful and wild Columbia Gorge remains a place apart, an unspoiled treasure for generations to come.





A layer of coal debris blankets land along BNSF tracks near Horsethief Lake.

Photo: Anonymous

Coal Train Pollution Chokes the Gorge

Study finds coal train emissions nearly double that of freight trains

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

Coal trains emit nearly double the amount of pollution produced by freight trains, according to a report released by the University of Washington this October and published in *Atmospheric Pollution Research*.

The study was performed in the Columbia River Gorge during the summer of 2014 by a team of scientists led by Dr. Dan Jaffe, professor of Atmospheric and Environmental Chemistry at the University of Washington. The study results confirm what Gorge landowners, tribal fishers, and recreationists have observed first-hand over several years: coal and coal dust blowing from open-topped coal cars pollutes private property, public land, agricultural land, and waterways, including the Columbia River.

The study examined emissions of diesel particulate matter and coal dust from 293 freight trains and 74 coal trains during a two-month period. The monitoring equipment was installed on private property in Klickitat County, adjacent to Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad tracks. The tracks are also adjacent to the Columbia River.

The study's findings

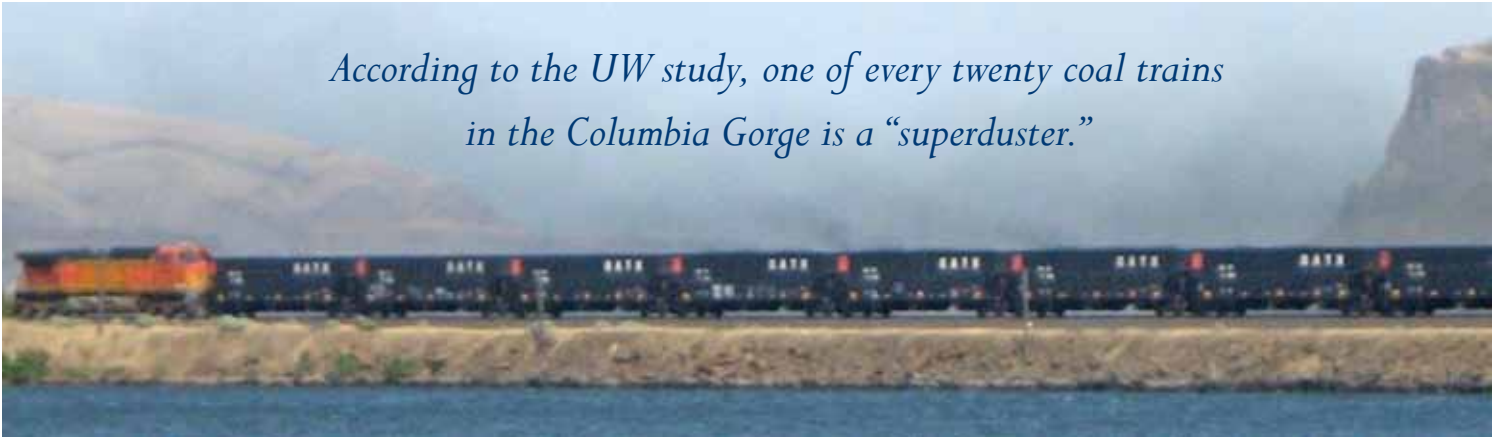
The data collected shows that freight trains increase levels of PM 2.5 – particulate matter less than or equal to 2.5 microns in size – by 8.8 micrograms per cubic meter, while the increase for coal trains jumps to 16.7 mcg per cubic meter. Researchers used video cameras to identify train type and speed coinciding with

emission spikes. Videos of four coal trains also revealed large black plumes of coal dust blowing from the uncovered coal cars. According to the UW study, one of every twenty coal trains in the Columbia Gorge is a “superduster.”

Increased levels of fine particulate matter are associated with a number of ill health effects, including increased cancer rates, respiratory and cardiac disease, and neurodevelopment disorders. The most vulnerable populations are the elderly, pregnant women, children, and people with existing disease.

This University of Washington study confirms that trains transporting coal in open rail cars are spreading toxic pollution throughout the Columbia Gorge and endangering the health of every

According to the UW study, one of every twenty coal trains in the Columbia Gorge is a “superduster.”



A coal train along the Columbia River. Photo: Courtesy of Columbia Riverkeeper

community along the tracks. It also confirms that Burlington Northern’s denial of coal dust dangers, and its claims that spraying surfactant on coal cars eliminates the dust, are smokescreens designed to avoid culpability for its pollution and their responsibility for fixing the problem.

Bringing suit

Every rail car that discharges coal into the Columbia River Gorge is violating federal laws such as the Clean Water Act and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act. In many publicly accessible areas of the Gorge near the railroad tracks, a blanket of coal debris covers the ground and washes into the Columbia River and its tributaries. One such area is in Columbia Hills State Park, near the sacred Native American petroglyph named *Tsagaglalal*, or “She Who Watches.”

With our allies, Friends is currently asking a federal district court judge in Seattle to find Burlington Northern in violation of the Clean Water Act, to order the railroad to stop polluting the Columbia River and other waterways with coal, and to assess financial penalties for every incident of coal entering a waterway without a permit. This lawsuit is expected to go to trial in 2016. Friends and co-petitioners are represented in the suit by Charles Tebbutt.

Dangerous proposals

In addition to the ongoing illegal discharge of coal into the Columbia River by Burlington Northern, three proposals for coal export terminals in the Northwest are still pending.

These proposals would increase coal shipments through the Columbia River Gorge by up to 100 million tons per year. This translates to twenty-five to thirty additional loaded coal trains every day.

One of the proposals, Millennium Bulk Terminal in Longview, Washington, would bring 44 million tons of coal per year through the Gorge in uncovered coal cars. Massive loads of coal would then be stored on the banks of the river, to be transferred later onto huge ocean-going vessels bound for power plants in Asia.

Growing opposition

Public opposition to Northwest coal export terminals continues to grow. Recent polling shows that the more citizens and area residents learn about coal export proposals, the more likely they are to oppose the plans. The Power Past Coal coalition, of

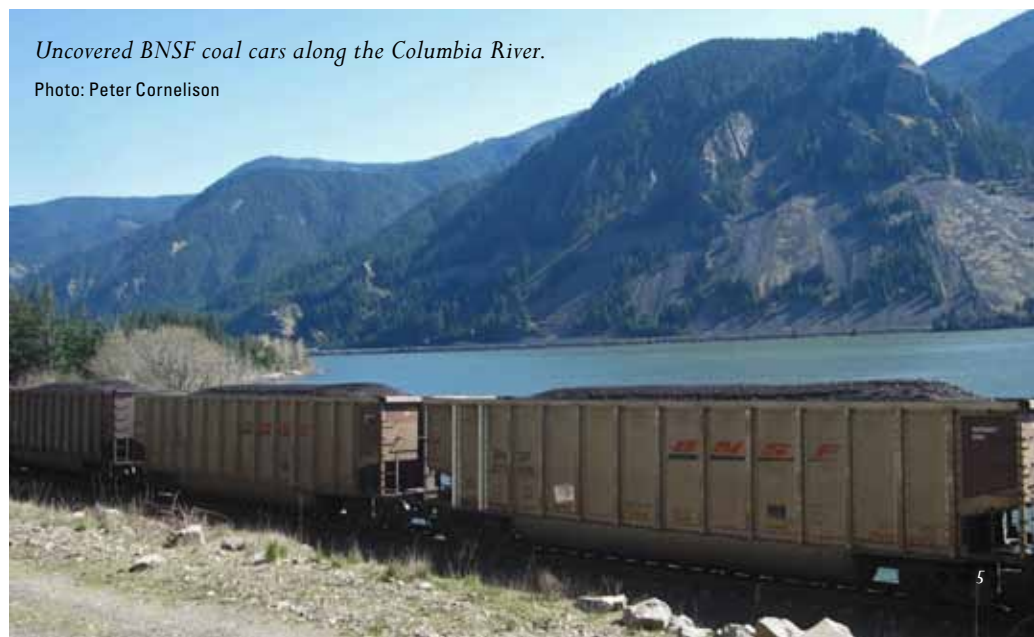
which Friends is a member, has polled voters since 2013 to gauge support or opposition to these proposals. In less than three years, opposition in Washington State has increased by 18 percent. This fall, 56 percent of polled voters oppose the export plans, with 39 percent in favor. A solid 40 percent of voters strongly oppose the terminals.

Due to the extensive environmental impacts of these proposals, public controversy, and mounting opposition, the releases of draft environmental impacts statements for these proposals have been delayed until 2016.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge is working with the Power Past Coal coalition to bolster public opposition to coal export terminals and to support the transition to a clean energy economy for our region. For more information, see News & Updates at www.gorgefriends.org. ■

Uncovered BNSF coal cars along the Columbia River.

Photo: Peter Cornelison



Friends Challenges Whistling Ridge Project in Federal Court

Controversial wind project would harm Gorge resources

Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

In early September, Friends of the Columbia Gorge and Save Our Scenic Area, or SOSA, filed an appeal in the federal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The appeal challenges a recent decision by the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to allow the proposed Whistling Ridge Energy Project to connect to BPA's energy grid.

The Whistling Ridge project is proposed along the boundary of the National Scenic Area, within an area designated for protection of the northern spotted owl. The project would mar world-class scenery and harm endangered species habitat, with little to no benefit to Gorge citizens.

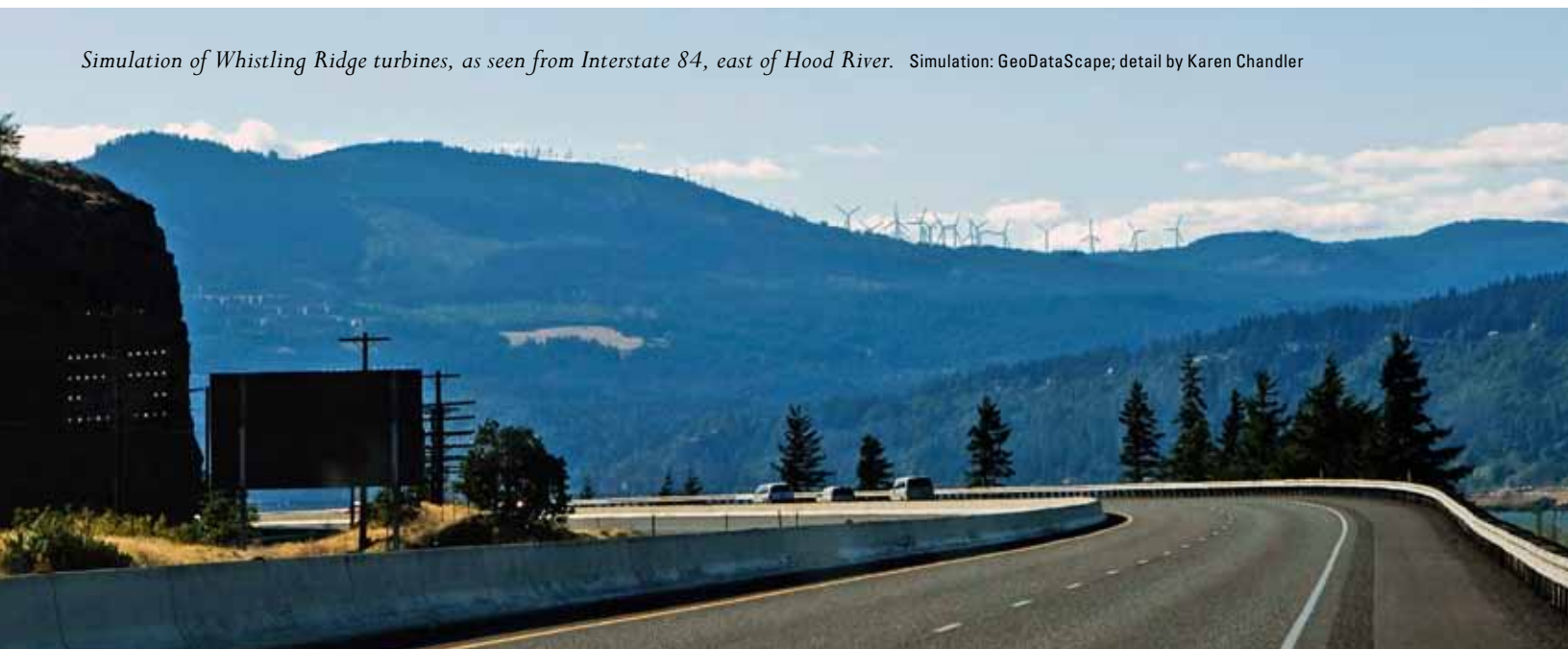
Friends and SOSA are challenging the BPA's decision because the agency failed to adequately inform the public about the environmental impacts of the controversial wind project. In fact, BPA lifted entire chapters from the project developer's application and placed this misleading and biased material virtually unchanged into BPA's environmental impact statement.

The Whistling Ridge project would be visible for many miles within the National Scenic Area. As many as thirty-five massive wind turbines, each up to 430 feet tall, would loom on the rim of the Columbia Gorge, along a

high ridgeline in Skamania County. The spinning blades and flashing warning lights of the project's turbines would be highly visible from a number of public vantage points, including Interstate 84 east of the City of Hood River.

The Whistling Ridge project would also negatively affect forested habitat that is vital to more than ninety bird species and at least two species of bats, and would permanently remove hundreds of acres of habitat from a designated Northern Spotted Owl Special Emphasis Area. In 2010, several spotted owl detections occurred in the immediate vicinity of the project site. In addition,

Simulation of Whistling Ridge turbines, as seen from Interstate 84, east of Hood River. Simulation: GeoDataScope; detail by Karen Chandler



New Executive Director for the Gorge Commission

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

The Columbia River Gorge Commission has selected Krystyna Wolniakowski as its new executive director. Her strong leadership experience and three decades of conservation and management background will be a boon in this position.



Gorge Commission Executive Director Krystyna Wolniakowski.
Photo: Jeff Gersh, NarrativeLab

The Gorge Commission is a bistate agency established by Congress and the states of Oregon and Washington to enforce the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act on nonfederal lands. The Gorge Commission has thirteen members: the six Gorge counties each appoint one member, the governors of Oregon and Washington each appoint three members, and one nonvoting member is appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. Gorge Commission members select the executive director. The Commission conducted a national search this year that yielded seventy applications, and Krystyna Wolniakowski rose to the top of a strong list of finalists for the position.

Krystyna Wolniakowski served as Regional Director of the Western Partnership Office of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation in Portland for more than fourteen years, creating and managing conservation grant-making programs in seven Western states. Her work included the launch of the Washington State Community Salmon Fund, the Alaska Fish and Wildlife Fund, and the Oregon Governors Fund for the Environment. As a member of the National Fish Habitat Board, she oversaw the development of regional collaborative partnerships throughout the U.S. for protecting and restoring the nation's freshwater and marine habitats. She recently served as science adviser for development

of the statewide Focused Investment Partnerships Program for the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board.

In August, Krystyna Wolniakowski received the Knight's Cross of Merit Award from Poland, the highest honor given by that country for international cooperation. The honor recognized her decade of work in philanthropy and

development of environmental partnerships in post-communist Poland, between 1990 and 2000. This recognition was the first ever given for achievement in conservation.

Ms. Wolniakowski recently stated:

"The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is a global gem that is important for its biodiversity of fish, wildlife, and plant species, extraordinary scenic views, unique cultural resources, and its world-renowned recreational opportunities. It is also a place where people live and work. I am excited to be part of the Commission, to collaborate with local communities, business, agencies, the four Columbia River Treaty Tribes, and the public in Oregon and Washington, to create and implement our vision of conservation and economic vitality in this region."

Friends of the Columbia Gorge interacts regularly with the Commission and its staff, and we're pleased that the Commission was able to attract someone with Wolniakowski's breadth of experience for this key position. We look forward to working with the new director, her staff, and the Commissioners to continue protecting and enhancing the resources of the Columbia River Gorge and supporting Gorge communities. ■

the project has never been surveyed during key migration periods for sensitive migratory birds, even though these species are likely to be struck and killed by the wind turbine blades.

Friends supports responsible development of renewable energy sources, but the Whistling Ridge proposal is irresponsible. This project is not worth sacrificing the unique scenic beauty and wildlife of the Columbia River Gorge.

Friends and SOSA are represented in the appeal by the Law Office of David H. Becker, as well as Gary K. Kahn of Reeves, Kahn, Hennessy & Elkins. ■





How Saving the Trees Saved a Forest

Kate McBride, Land Trust Manager, kate@gorgefriends.org

In 2002, before the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust even existed, Friends assisted a Gorge landowner attempting to sell his 365-acre property to the United States Forest Service. Friends even sent a staff member with the property owner to Washington D.C., to lobby for funding for Gorge land acquisition.

All went well, but just as the funds for the Forest Service's Gorge program were about to be released, the Iraq war was launched. Funding for conservation programs was diverted and the land was not purchased.

Ten years later, this same landowner reached out to our new land trust to discuss selling us a portion of that same property, a parcel wedged within a twelve-mile corridor of public land, to provide a key corridor for wildlife habitat as well as future

trail development. After several months, however, those negotiations, too, did not culminate in a purchase.

This past spring, the landowner approached the land trust again. His mother had passed away, and with a large estate tax bill looming, he faced the difficult choice of either selling the property or logging his land. The roads were ready to be cut and loggers had been hired.

The timing was fortuitous. Our land trust had the funds available because an amazing donor had stepped up just a month earlier with a very generous donation for land. But there was still a significant obstacle: the property needed to be divided before we could purchase it and there was no way a land division could be implemented before the seller's tax deadline.

Faced with losing this property a third and probably final time, one of our land

trust trustees had a brilliant idea: if we couldn't buy the land right away, maybe we could buy the trees first and the land later. Purchasing the trees or "timber rights" does not require a land division and the vast majority of the land's value is in the trees. The landowner agreed, and with just weeks left before the tax deadline, our purchase of forty acres of trees went through.

Forty acres of beautiful forest that couldn't be saved by Gorge protection rules were in fact protected because of a very generous donor and the resourceful, out-of-the box thinking of a Friends land trust trustee. With the moment seized and crisis averted, we are now working to subdivide the property so the trees and soil can be reunited under one protective ownership. ■

Pristine Duncan Creek flows near our recent land trust acquisition. Photo: Debbie Asakawa

Maegan Jossy, Outreach Manager, maegan@gorgefriends.org



Give Starthistle the Boot!

REI recently awarded Friends a \$15,000 grant to help develop an integrated weed management plan for yellow starthistle at our land trust's Lyle Cherry Orchard property. In addition to coordinating several work parties to remove this noxious weed, we're installing four boot brush stations at trailheads. Using boot brushes before and after hiking minimizes the introduction and spread of noxious weeds. Stay tuned for details about work parties this coming spring to remove starthistle and install the final two boot brushes at this beautiful property. ■

Stewardship Coordinator Sara Woods, second from left, and volunteers, with the newly installed boot brush at Lyle Cherry Orchard. Photo: Stan Hall

Join our Online Community

For breaking news, ways to get involved, insider stories, and more, sign up to stay informed, at www.gorgefriends.org/subscribe.

Action Alerts: Conservation updates and ways to take action.

Hiking E-news: Guided hikes, trail alerts, stewardship, and seasonal hikes.

Monthly E-news: News and updates, upcoming events, and featured stories.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter, too!



Klickitat Trail in winter. Photo: Diana Karabut

Give a Gift of the Gorge this Holiday Season!

These are great gifts for Gorge enthusiasts, and a portion of sales benefits Friends. Visit our online store at www.gorgefriends.org/holidaygifts.

- 2016 Columbia Gorge Calendar by photographer Peter Marbach
- A Woman Alone by author John Harrison
- Curious Gorge by Scott Cook
- Friends of the Columbia Gorge short-sleeved shirts
- Gift Memberships
- Kidding Around the Gorge by Ruth Berkowitz & Lisa Kosglow
- National Geographic Columbia Gorge Waterproof Trail Map
- Wildflowers of the Columbia Gorge by Russ Jolley

Sunset near Beacon Rock.

Photo: Jeremiah Leipold

And the Winner Is . . .

Congratulations to Jeremiah Leipold, Grand Prize winner of Friends' 35 & Gorgeous Photo Contest!

Jeremiah's ravishing photo of a Gorge sunset, taken from the edge of the Columbia River at John B. Yeon State Park, took the top prize. Participants in the 35 & Gorgeous Photo Contest submitted nearly five hundred inspiring images of the Gorge. "Photo of the Month" winners, April through September, included Scott Christianson, Bruce Croffy, Sherri Irish, Jeremiah Leipold, Keri Sprenger, and Yeng

Tang. As Grand Prize winner, Jeremiah will receive an outdoor photography class for two from Outdoor Viewfinder.

Special thanks to Gorge photographers Greg Lief, Michael Horodyski, and Jason Waicunas for their assistance. These outstanding photographers contributed technical expertise to help staff select the winners. Our Facebook and Twitter followers got involved as well, selecting category winners for Gorge Views, Gorge Life, Selfies, Waterfalls, and Wildflowers/Plants.

Many thanks to everyone who participated this year!

Kate Harbour, Membership Coordinator
kateh@gorgefriends.org

Creating a Legacy

Many people first fall in love with the Columbia Gorge when they're on a trail. For Si Simonson, it happened on the water.

When Si moved to Portland thirty years ago, he was active in the Island Sailing Club, and he first fully appreciated the Gorge during frequent sails near Vancouver. Looking eastward, he would sit in awe of the expansive river and towering tree-lined cliffs in the distance.

Si grew up exploring the Berkshires of western Massachusetts, and today he's restoring forty-nine acres of oak habitat on his land near Corvallis. He sees these conservation values as his parents' legacy.

Since Si doesn't have children, he wants to be sure his own legacy will make a real difference. When he thought about it, he

kept coming back to those transformative experiences he had sailing on the Columbia.

"The definition of legacy," Si said recently, "is the impact you have after you're gone. If the Gorge is lost to development, we will never get it back."

Including Friends in his estate plans is Si's way to "make sure there are a few more trees where there could be condos instead," and that others can experience the majesty of the Gorge the way he first did, decades ago. We're honored and humbled that he has chosen Friends of the Columbia Gorge to carry out his legacy.

To learn more about creating your own Gorge legacy, contact Friends Development Officer Pam Davee at pam@gorgefriends.org or 971-634-2036 or at www.gorgefriendslegacy.org. ■



Si Simonson with a mythical friend.

Photo courtesy of Si Simonson

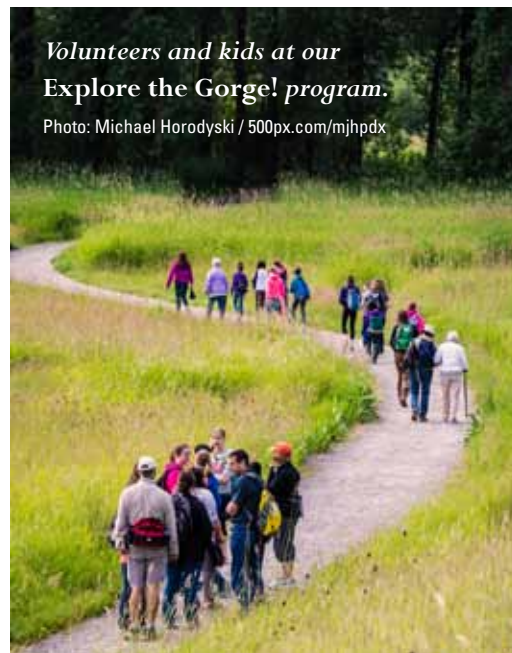
Thank you, Guardians and Conservators

On a beautiful fall evening, Friends' Conservators and Guardians of the Gorge gathered for an annual appreciation event, "An Evening with Friends." Conservators and Guardians are only 2.5 percent of our membership but contribute nearly 60 percent of our donations. Thank you, Conservators and Guardians! You are the true driving force behind Gorge protection. ■



Conservators and Guardians enjoyed a special program with Friends board and staff members.

Photo: Pam Lindberg



Volunteers and kids at our Explore the Gorge! program.

Photo: Michael Horodyski / 500px.com/mjhpdx

Explore the Gorge!

Our August newsletter included an article about our *Explore the Gorge* youth program in spring. Thanks so much to all the terrific volunteers who contributed ideas, time, and talents to make the program an outstanding success for all the kids. ■

Rainy day view from Cape Horn Trail.
Photo: Friends of the Columbia Gorge archives

Featured Hikes: Best Rainy Day Hikes in the Gorge

Maegan Jossy, Outreach Manager, maegan@gorgefriends.org

Grab your rain gear and hit the trails with our suggested favorites! These six trails are of varying difficulties and can be enjoyed by all abilities.

Cape Horn, WA – This scenic 8-mile loop winds through a leafy deciduous and fir forest that offers a protective canopy on rainy days.

Eagle Creek, OR – Water, water everywhere! Seasonal springs along the cliffs make the waterfall trail in Eagle Creek Canyon a winter wonderland, perfect for testing your rain gear.

Dry Creek Falls, OR – The beautiful trail leading to Dry Creek Falls is less well-known than others, and more protected from rain.

Klickitat Trail, WA – Here's a different spin on a rainy day hike: go to the eastern Gorge, where it rarely rains!

Mosier Twin Tunnel, OR – Your boots won't get muddy as you enjoy the Gorge, strolling this paved section of the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail.

Multnomah-Wahkeena Falls, OR – Lots of people stay home on rainy days, which is all the more reason to hit this popular trail – you may have it all to yourself!

Trailhead directions, map, and detailed hike distances can all be found at www.gorgefriends.org/trails. ■

Special Gifts

July 24, 2015 – October 23, 2015

IN HONOR OF DEBBIE ASAKAWA
BARBARA AND JOHN DEGENHARDT

IN HONOR OF NATHAN BAKER
ERIC LICHTENTHALER AND DIXIE STEVENS

IN HONOR OF GEOFF AND KIERAN CHRISTIE
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IN MEMORY OF MATTHEW WINTHROP
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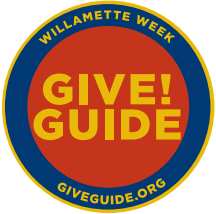
Correction: Our 2014-2015 Annual Report contained errors in our "Statement of Financial Position." The correct figure for Unrestricted – Other Assets is \$4,988,074, bringing Total Net Assets to \$14,690,024, and Total Liabilities and Net Assets to \$14,760,696.



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Know Your Gorge

The Columbia Gorge Park

This year, Friends has noted several one-hundred-year anniversaries that commemorate early efforts to protect the natural beauty and resources of the Columbia Gorge. This cavalcade of important anniversaries ends on a high note.

On December 24, 1915, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture David F. Houston designated 13,873 acres of federal land on the Oregon side of the Gorge as the "Columbia Gorge Park." The secretary declared the park off-limits to timber sales, commercial development, and homesite permits, dedicating its lands to public recreation and the protection of scenery.

The newly created federal park, a division of what was then called the Oregon National Forest, stretched twenty-two miles along the Columbia River Highway, from Warrendale to what is now Viento State Park, and included many of the Gorge's famous waterfalls.

The Columbia Gorge Park is believed to be the first instance anywhere in the country of the Forest Service devoting a sizable area of land solely to recreation. It was also the first of many significant federal efforts over the following century to protect the Columbia Gorge. ■

Background photo: Lush forests surrounding Metlako Falls in Eagle Creek Canyon.

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Local and national leaders at Eagle Creek in July 1915, during a Gorge trip where U.S. Chief Forester Henry S. Graves first announced plans for the Columbia Gorge Park. From left: C. C. Colt, president of the Portland Chamber of Commerce; Henry L. Pittock, publisher of The Oregonian; Chief Forester Graves; Thomas H. Sherrard, supervisor of the Mount Hood National Forest; Samuel C. Lancaster, Columbia River Highway engineer; U.S. Assistant Forester Edward A. Sherman; and Amos Benson, son of local philanthropist Simon Benson.