

May 1998 Newsletter

Open Pit Mining Threatens Columbia River Gorge

Public Pressure Needed to Protect Gorge Communities, Environment



*The Gorge Commission approved expansion of this open pit mine east of Washougal in the National Scenic Area. Runoff from the mine affected neighbors' properties and impacted Gibbons Creek, which supports native fish including coho salmon and steelhead trout.
Bergman Photographic Services*

Throughout the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, important natural resources, scenic beauty and community safety are threatened by open pit mining. At least nine open pit mines are operating or proposed in the Columbia River Gorge including areas near Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Archer Mountain, Table Mountain, and Mosier, Bingen, and Dallesport. Mining has also occurred in sensitive areas without permits — serious violations ignored by the Gorge Commission and county officials.

Gorge residents are deeply concerned about how these mines will affect their communities. A recent proposal by the Oregon Department of Transportation to operate a mine near the Mosier elementary school and a neighborhood is opposed by many Mosier residents and the City itself. "Open pit mines are not only unsightly, but deadly attractive nuisances to children," said Ron Carroll, a local landowner. Mosier denied the Oregon Department of Transportation's mining proposal, but ODOT has appealed to the Land Use Board of Appeals.

In April, the Skamania County Planning Commission approved a 250-foot deep, 70-acre mine that will extract 4.5 million cubic yards from a sensitive area below the Red Bluffs and about 1/4 mile from Greenleaf Falls. The Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife found that the proposed mine would affect water resources and sensitive wildlife habitat, and found the county's

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A Letter from Senator Mark O. Hatfield

Earlier this year, Senator Hatfield wrote a letter to Friends of the Columbia Gorge's Board Chair John Reynolds, expressing the Senator's grave concerns for the future of Columbia Gorge protection. Excerpts from his letter follow.

"The state of the Gorge is as tenuous today as at any time in history. While the innovative and historic Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act remains in place, those opposed to its principles of sustainable development, wise use of natural resources and environmental protection are gaining new ground in their campaign to dismantle it. Those whom Congress declared unfit, unwilling or unable to implement a coordinated planning effort and vision for the Gorge are the very same entities who today are on the verge of regaining control over how this national treasure is managed, or mis-managed, for future generations.

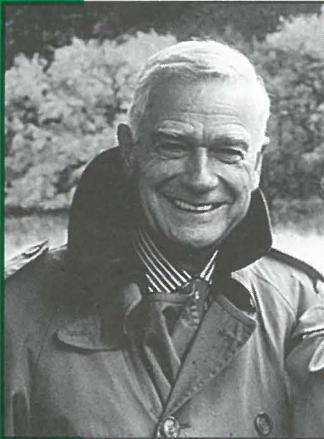


photo: Lauri Aunan

"The crux of our precarious situation is that the importance of protecting the Gorge has lost its place in the hearts and minds of Oregonians and Washingtonians. Broad, visible and vocal public support brought the need for Gorge protection to the forefront of lawmakers' agendas in the 1980s, and only that same level and type of support can bring it back. Unfortunately, those who oppose this Act and the principles for which it stands have gained the upper hand in this battle.

"There is a desperate need for a new grassroots campaign to reenergize the people of the Northwest in support of Gorge protection. As the historically successful leaders of this movement, I believe the Friends of the Gorge are in the best position to accomplish this task and remind lawmakers at the local, state and federal levels why protecting the Gorge is essential . . . Unless we regain the ground we have lost, the institutions and programs we have relied upon to protect the Gorge will be continuously dismembered until the Act is a mere shell of its former self."

photo: Ken Denis



Gorge Watch

Citizen Involvement Update



Seattle Symposium Focuses on Columbia Gorge

In April, Senator Patty Murray and Congressman Earl Blumenauer co-hosted a Columbia River Gorge Symposium in Seattle to raise awareness of issues threatening the future of Gorge protection.

"I hope we all come away inspired to work harder than ever to protect this special place," Murray said. "Tonight we celebrate the Columbia River Gorge and renew our commitment to its continued protection."

More than 150 people attended the Seattle Symposium including Congressman Adam Smith, Congressman Jim McDermott and WA Commissioner of Public Lands Jennifer Belcher. Members of the public were encouraged to become more active in Gorge issues.

"The impressive public turn out at our recent Seattle symposium, and the conversation that ensued, reinforced what most of us know to be true: people here in the Northwest care about the future of the Columbia River Gorge," said Congressman Blumenauer. "There is a collective regional pride in this national treasure. From this pride stems the sense of responsibility to make certain that the Gorge is protected for our generation, and generations to come." ■

Commission Watch Citizen Action Network

by Kristin Reese

The Commission Watch Citizen Action Network (CAN) is designed to involve more local residents in land use decisions that impact the future of Gorge protec-

tion. CAN team members will be involved in monitoring activities of the county commissions as they relate to protection of lands within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Commission Watch will be working with county commissions including Multnomah, Wasco and Clark and the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

Thanks to all who responded to our call for Commission Watch Citizen Action Network participants. We will be sending out the Activists Resource Guide very soon. Your involvement is needed to let decision-makers know that the Columbia River Gorge is a priority! If you would like more information about how you CAN make a difference, contact Kathy Armstrong at (503) 241-3762 or by email at focg@teleport.com. ■

Open Pit Mining Threatens Columbia River Gorge

continued from front cover

approval of the mine "inconsistent with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area ordinance standards for protection of wildlife resources." Final approval by the County Board of Commissioners is pending.

The Gorge Commission is required by law to monitor activities of counties and take steps to ensure compliance with Gorge protection laws. On the run from severe budget cuts in the state legislatures, and under attack from county officials and local legislators, the Gorge Commission is failing to ensure county compliance with the law, and has virtually ceased enforcement activities, leaving the Gorge open to exploitation and damage.

"We don't mine our national parks; why should we do the same kind of things to the Columbia Gorge?"

Vancouver resident Roger Cole is concerned: "The Columbia River Gorge is in name and in truth a national treasure, of the caliber of our great national parks. We don't mine our national parks; why should we do the same kind of things to the Columbia Gorge?"

Public pressure is needed to protect Gorge communities and resources from damage by open pit mines. Please write to your county commissioners, state and federal legislators, and local newspapers and tell them you want the Gorge protected from irresponsible mining.

For more information, contact Friends at (503) 241-3762 or focg@teleport.com. Ask for *Friends of the Columbia Gorge Activists' Resource Guide*. ■

Washington DNR adopts Columbia Gorge Forest Protection Rules

Agencies, Timber Companies and Conservationists Reach Consensus

by Michael Lang, conservation director

After four years of negotiations between government agencies, the timber industry and environmental groups, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has adopted new rules to enforce forest protection guidelines for Special Management Areas in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

The new rules were adopted by the Washington Forest Practices Board at a ceremony in Stevenson, WA. The rules affect about 11,700 acres of private,

state and county land on the Washington side of the Gorge. More than 70,000 acres of Scenic Area federally owned land is off-limits to commercial timber harvest.

Thanks to the leadership of Jennifer Belcher, Washington's Commissioner of Public Lands, and the commitment of the involved parties, private and state forests in the Special Management Areas (SMA) of the Columbia River Gorge will be better protected from unsustainable forest practices.

Although Scenic Area forest protection guidelines were adopted by the Gorge Commission in 1991 and by the U.S. Forest Service in early 1992, agencies disagreed on who should carry out permitting and enforcement.

Two years ago, the DNR approved a 140-acre clearcut that did not comply with laws that forbid large-scale clearcutting on SMA lands in the Gorge. Environmental groups, the Gorge Commission and the Forest Service filed appeals of the DNR decision. The Forest Practices Appeals Board upheld the decision and the issue is now before the Washington State Superior Court. The adoption of the new state rules will help avoid future appeals and lawsuits.

Friends hopes that all of the groups involved in the negotiations can continue to work together in promoting ecologically sustainable forest uses and protecting the magnificent resources of the Columbia River Gorge.

The Washington DNR also manages hundreds of acres of state forest land within the General Management Area (GMA) of the Columbia River Gorge. Timber sales on these lands are exempted from the protection standards in the National Scenic Area Act and have resulted in road building and clearcutting along the Pacific Crest Trail and in other sensitive areas. Friends of the Columbia Gorge is hopeful that the DNR will take the next step and incorporate ecologically sustainable management practices on state forest lands in the GMA. ■



This forested landscape near Archer Mountain has added protection thanks to the new DNR rule.



Continued reform of forest management by the DNR is needed to prevent clearcuts like this one along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

photos: Michael Lang

Gorge Commission Releases Growth Report

One-Third of New Developments on Farm and Forest Land Signals an Alarming Trend

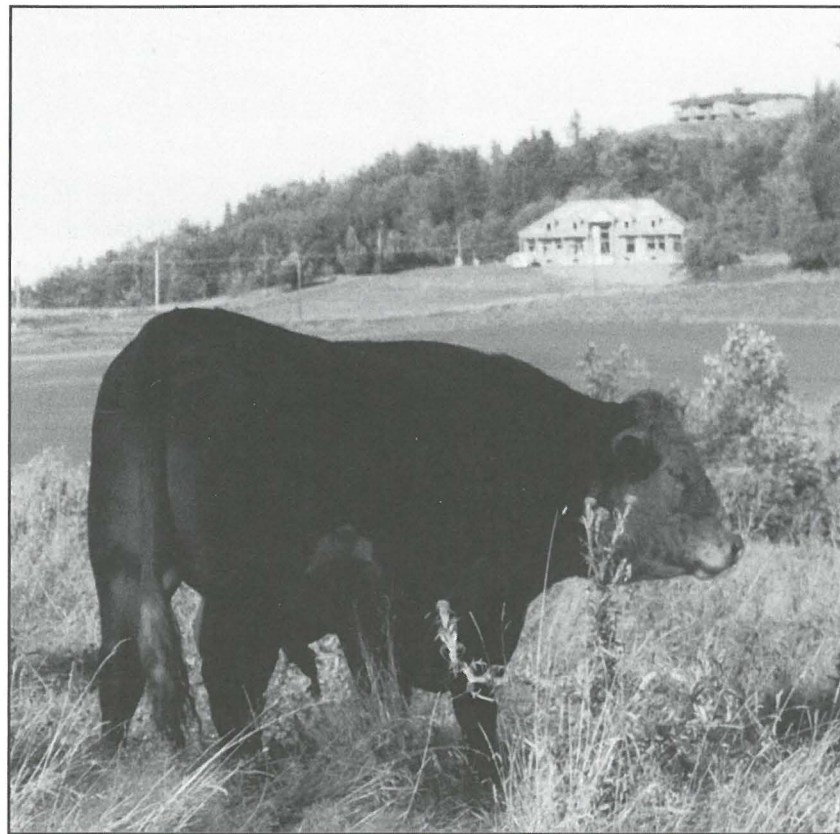
by Michael Lang, conservation director

The Gorge Commission staff has released a report on growth trends in the Columbia River Gorge. The report indicates that nearly 1/3 of all houses built since November, 1986 are on lands currently zoned for agriculture or forest uses. This residential sprawl conflicts with farm and forest uses and compromises natural resources and the scenic beauty of the Gorge.

The report was originally intended to help the public assess the effectiveness of Gorge protection laws. In 1997, the Commission adopted plans for a growth rate/build-out report that consisted of three components: 1) measurement and evaluation of growth and development on rural lands in the Scenic Area, 2) comparison of the growth rate in rural areas to growth in urban areas, and 3) determination of development potential (a build-out study) in the Gorge under current land use laws. However, the Commission's report, released in early April, lacks information on urban growth, does not include a build-out study, and fails to analyze the cumulative effects of development allowed under current laws.

A 1996 study conducted by Friends of the Columbia Gorge revealed that new development in the Gorge is

concentrating in rural lands, rather than in designated urban areas as directed under the National Scenic Area Act (NSA).



Recently, Friends found that *more than half of the new houses approved by the Commission since 1993 are on lands zoned for farm and forest uses* (Current scenic area land use ordinances were adopted in 1993).

What the Gorge Commission staff is reporting is only the tip of the iceberg. More than 935 new dwellings were approved in rural areas since the NSA passed in 1986, 240 of those in the last four years. The Commission staff's report does not

address how that development may impact farmland, forest land and natural and scenic resources.

Dwindling farmlands convert to trophy homes in the western Gorge. In the background of this cattle pasture in Corbett, a new 5,000 square foot dwelling and a 14,000 square foot dwelling sit on prime farm land, now converted to lots for trophy homes. How many acres of farmland in the Columbia Gorge have been converted to residential development? The Gorge Commission's recent report fails to address this question.

photo: Rick Ray

Friends supports additional funding and increased agency cooperation for the Commission staff to complete more needed studies and analysis. The public deserves to know whether current laws will protect the Columbia River Gorge or if development, such as residential sprawl and open pit mining, is slowly destroying our national treasure. ■

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Friends News...

Friends Spring Hiking Series in Full Swing

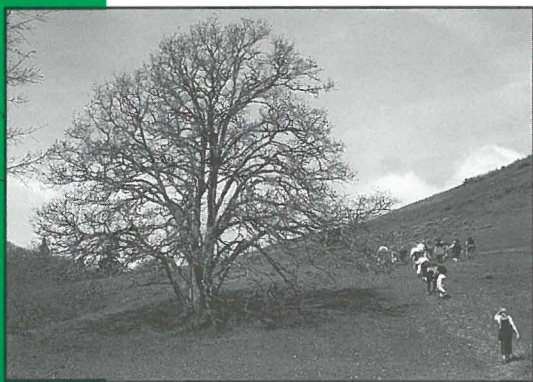
Hiking weekend follows in mid-June

by Nancy Russell

Clear skies and panoramic views set the stage for the first of Friends' 1998 Spring Wildflower Hikes on April 4th. Barbara Robinson, Ray Hayden and Nancy Russell led three groups of happy hikers through the Kreps Ranch and the former Lauterbach ranch (now Forest Service) near Catherine Creek. We started our hike at the Rowland Lake fishing park, making a huge loop across open meadows, along small brooks and through oak woodlands.

These Spring Hikes will continue each Saturday through June 13 (Hamilton Mountain). To receive a copy of the schedule, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Friends' office.

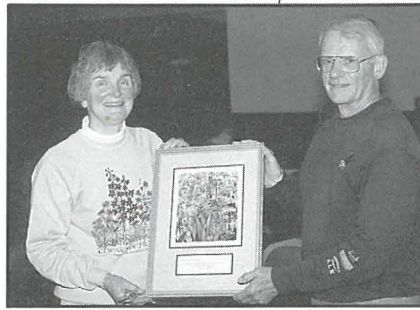
Our hiking season will culminate in the 18th Annual Columbia Gorge Hiking Weekend, June 19-21. We are ex-



tremely pleased to have Columbia Management Company as the sponsor of this wonderful event. Many thanks to Columbia!

Our thanks, also, to intrepid volunteers, Julie Ferreira, Richard Getgen, Marilyn Holsinger and Ray Hayden who have planned the Hiking Weekends for many years. ■

photo: Ken Denis



Board Chair Emeritus Nancy Russell presents Friends' volunteer of the year award to Ray Hayden at Friends' Annual Meeting in March.

Oregon Historical Society Director to speak at Friends' Summer Picnic, July 19

by Nancy Russell

Sunday, July 19, 1998 is the chosen day for the Friends' Summer picnic at Major Creek Ranch, a beautiful and historic property on Major Creek, overlooking the Columbia River, Memaloose Island, Oregon's Memaloose State Park and featuring views of Mount Hood. Lewis and Clark camped here on April 14, 1806, finding a village "of about 100 fighting men of several tribes...collected here waiting for the Salmon."

In keeping with the setting, Mr. Orloff will speak to us about the planning now underway of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial celebration in 2005-2006. Since 1995, Orloff has been president of the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council, which encompasses an area stretching from Philadelphia to Astoria.

We are pleased also to have as our guest Tom Walsh, Chairman of the Oregon Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Council.

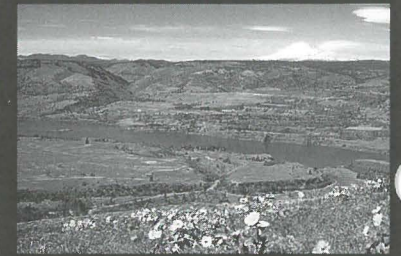
This will be an excellent occasion to introduce our friends and colleagues in the Columbia Gorge to the exciting prospect of this nationally important bicentennial celebration. "Lewis and Clark in the Gorge" is a compelling story

and many landmarks have scarcely changed since the day they camped at Major Creek.

Prior to the picnic, Friends Board Member Chris Beck of the Trust for Public Land will lead a tour of magnificent riverfront properties under option located along the Klickitat River and at Lyle Point on the Columbia at the mouth of the Klickitat.

You will receive an invitation with directions and all the details closer to the time of the picnic. Save the date! ■

photo by Nancy Russell



Membership Form

Join Friends of the Columbia Gorge

- \$35 Family
- \$25 Individual
- \$15 Student/Senior
- Other: \$ _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

YES, I want to volunteer for the Gorge

- Adopt-A-Highway Litter Pickups
- Habitat and Botanical Restoration
- Community Education
- Hiking Activities
- Attending Hearings
- Technical Support
- Other: _____

Mail your membership coupon and contribution to:
Friends of the Columbia Gorge
P.O. Box 40820
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 241-3762

Friends News...

Board Elections

At the March 15 Annual Meeting, members elected the Board of Directors for the next two years. Thank you and welcome to our Board members:

Lester Baskin is an OHSU School of Medicine graduate who is joining Kaiser-Permanente. An avid hiker and photographer in the western Gorge, he looks forward to discovering what's east of Hood River.

Chris Beck is an Oregon State Representative from Southwest Portland and Project Manager with the Trust for Public Land. Chris is nuts about the Gorge!

Michele Coad, a Seattle resident, is a Special Master in King County Superior Court. She has been recognized by The Nature Conservancy for organizing a youth education program and for more than 250 hours of service.

Beth Hulsman is the incoming president of the Portland Metropolitan Area Salvation Army, is on the Advisory Council of the Green House, has been active in the Environmental Learning Center, and is a member of the Portland Garden Club.

Karen Johnson is vice president of Corporate Development with Metro One Telecommunications, and has been active in the City Club of Portland, Hoyt Arboretum Friends Foundation, and SOAR.

These outstanding board members join Chairman John Reynolds, Chair Emeritus Nancy Russell, Vice-Chair Rick Ray, Treasurer Mike Ryan, Secretary Jeanne Norton, and board members Bill Bell, Brot Bishop, Bowen Blair, Ken Denis, Spencer Dick, Nick Dodge, Elmer Lierman, Kate McCarthy and Len Swenson. ■

Gorge, Washington State Board Members Needed

Friends needs new board members from the Columbia River Gorge and Washington state. If you

are interested, please contact Rick Ray or Lauri Aunan. ■

Friends Longtime Staff Marna Moore Retires

In January, Friends board and staff gathered to thank Marna Moore, who retired after 9 years with Friends. In appreciation, the board presented her with a framed print of Harry F. Wentz' watercolor portrait of wildflowers of the Columbia Gorge. "Marna helped Friends out in so many ways and was a great source of support for Gorge protection," said Executive Director Lauri Aunan. ■

Friends Staff Changes

In February, Kymberlee Snow joined Friends as Administrative Assistant/Development Associate. Formerly with the Oregon Natural Resources Council, Kym takes over the membership program from Matt Burke, who left Friends to work with Ride for a Reason, a project of the Cascade AIDS Project. Many thanks to Matt for organizing our successful membership program.

Jane Haley is Friends' new Development Director. Jane has been Development Director at WaterWatch and Associate Director of the Oregon Environmental Council. "We are looking forward to working with Jane to enhance membership involvement and expand our outreach and fundraising events," said Lauri.

Kathy Armstrong is Friends' new Field Organizer. Kathy comes to Friends from a position as Resource Development Manager at the American Tinnitus Association.

Friend's Outreach Director Kristin Reese will be departing in May. "We will all miss Kristin's energy and sense of humor," said Lauri Aunan. "Kristin's work with Gorge residents and communities has been very important. We can't replace Kristin, but we are committed to continuing her work." ■

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

319 SW Washington St., #301
Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 241-3762

Mission Statement

Friends of the Columbia Gorge shall vigorously protect the scenic, natural, and cultural and recreational resources within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

We fulfill this mission by ensuring strict implementation of the National Scenic Area Act; promoting responsible stewardship of Gorge lands and waters; encouraging public ownership of sensitive areas; educating the public about the unique natural values of the Columbia River Gorge and the importance of preserving those values; and working with groups and individuals to accomplish mutual preservation goals. —Adopted November 20, 1997

Board of Directors

John Reynolds, *Chairman*
Nancy N. Russell, *Chairman Emeritus*
Rick Ray*, *Vice Chairman*
Michael P. Ryan, *Treasurer*
Jeanne Norton, *Secretary*
Lester Baskin
Chris Beck
William Bell*
Broughton H. Bishop
Bowen Blair, Jr.
Michele Coad
Ken Denis
Spencer Dick
Nick Dodge
Beth Hulsman
Karen Johnson
Elmer Lierman*
Kate McCarthy*
Len Swenson*
* Gorge residents

Staff

Executive Director: Lauri Aunan*
Fiscal Manager: Tom Del Savio
Conservation Director: Michael Lang
Development Director: Jane Haley
Development Associate: Kymberlee Snow
Field Organizer: Kathy Armstrong
Land Use Counsel: Gary K. Kahn
Legal Assistant: Amie Wexler
* Gorge resident

Newsletter Contributors

Contributors: Lauri Aunan, Ken Denis, Michael Lang, Rick Ray, Nancy Russell, Kristin Reese
Editor and Layout: Kathleen Krushas

Thank You

for your
special contributions

IN HONOR OF ELAYNE SHAPIRO

Elaine Friedman &
Bob Liebman

IN MEMORY OF

ELIZABETH MARTIN

William & Carol Greer
Alfred & Margaret Mansfield
Milton & Dorothy Clarke
Helen & Charles Kelly, Jr.
Helen Gamble
Virginia Butchart
Mary Janney Huisman
Mary Mansfield Smith

IN MEMORY OF ANN

MASHAFSKY WALTHERS

Phyllis J. Neilson

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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Gorge Calendar

- 
- May 9-
June 13** Friends of the Columbia Gorge Wildflower Hike Series - Saturdays
 - May 10** Oregon State Parks - Mother's Day Flower Stroll - Bridal Veil State Park
 - May 12** Columbia River Gorge Commission Meeting - Skamania Lodge
 - May 16** Oregon State Parks & SOLV - "Down By the Riverside" Annual Clean-up
Dabney & West Mayer State Parks
 - May 22** Columbia Gorge Discovery Center - A Year of Discovery Celebration
 - June 2** Columbia River Gorge Commission Meeting - Skamania Lodge
 - June 19 - 21** Friends of the Columbia Gorge Annual Hiking Weekend (see insert)
 - July 11 - 18** Timberland Gorge Games
 - July 18 - 19** Vista House - 80th Anniversary Celebration
 - July 19** Friends of the Columbia Gorge - Summer Picnic
 - July 21** Columbia Gorge Commission Meeting - Skamania Lodge
 - Aug. 12** Perseids Meteor Party - Rose City Astronomers at Rooster Rock State Park