

FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

Winter 2001 Newsletter

photo: © Larry Geddis

The National Scenic Area Management Plan requires the protection and enhancement of suitable habitat for these species. New development is allowed only when it can be demonstrated that it will not adversely affect habitat.

In similar ways, the Management Plan calls for protection and enhancement of scenic, cultural, and recreation resources. The Plan also protects farmland, forestland and open spaces from conversion to residential, commercial or industrial development. The Management Plan defines the extent of protection and enhancement and also defines what land uses and new developments will be allowed in the Gorge.

Despite the requirements of the National Scenic Area Act, more than 600 new dwellings have been built in the Scenic Area since 1986, and the current Management Plan will continue to allow more development.

With the upcoming plan review, the Commission is under significant pressure from opponents of Gorge protection and certain legislators to loosen restrictions and allow increased residential and commercial development within the National Scenic Area. However, the Commission has not yet assessed the potential impacts of full development under the existing

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Gorge Protection Rules Set for Review and Revision

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

For those who love the Columbia Gorge, it is more important than ever to actively support stronger Gorge protection.

Over the next year, the Columbia River Gorge Commission will review and revise the guidelines that protect the scenic beauty and natural and cultural heritage of the Columbia River Gorge. These guidelines are contained in the Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The guidelines are uniquely tailored to this national treasure, the nation's first National Scenic Area.

The Columbia River Gorge encompasses five major ecosystems in a mere 85 miles, providing habitat for 800 species of flowering plants, 15 of which are endemic to the Gorge, and more than 60 wildlife species listed as sensitive, threatened or endangered.

protecting the gorge

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Annual Report**

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Executive Director's Letter

As I was putting together our annual report and reflecting on the passage of another year, one of the three original founders of our organization, Dave Cannard Sr., shared a story that seemed appropriate to pass along to you.

In the final days of 2000, Dave was visiting a friend in the hospital and noticed the name of one of Friends' original board members, Yvonne Montchalin, listed as a patient. Though Yvonne was very sick, she was willing to visit with him.

Entering her room, Dave saw a woman so ill he barely recognized her. The initial shock dissipated as the visit rekindled memories for both of them regarding the enormous effort they undertook to ensure federal protection of the Columbia River Gorge.

Yvonne was a Skamania County resident with large landholdings. As a founding board member of Friends of the Columbia Gorge, she worked hard to convince the Washington Congressional delegation that Gorge protection was essential.

As Gorge protection was being considered, Yvonne told a room of Skamania County residents and then-Senator Slade Gorton that owning land does not give us the right to do whatever we want. The land transcends ownership and deeds; we are merely custodians for the future. Yvonne's words and actions were instrumental in convincing every member of Washington's Congressional delegation to support the 1986 Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act.

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Dave understood the gravity of her statement and said, "Well, I trust you're going to a much better place." Yvonne smiled and replied, "If I've played my cards right."

Yvonne Montchalin died later that evening and I suspect she did play her cards right. She played a critical role in protecting one of this country's most spectacular natural treasures. In her honor, Dave contributed \$1,000 to Friends' endowment, so the memory of Yvonne as well as the efforts of Friends will continue in perpetuity.

Though Yvonne is not with us in 2001, her vision, tenacity and spirit will remain in the forests and cliff faces of the Gorge for decades to come.

Sincerely,



Kevin Gorman
Executive Director

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Mission Statement

Friends of the Columbia Gorge shall vigorously protect the scenic, natural, 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

Spring Wildflower Hikes!

A great opportunity to see the Gorge

Friends of the Columbia Gorge presents its Spring Wildflower Hike Series for 2001, following the Gorge's wildflower season. Participants must be in good physical condition as all hikes are somewhat strenuous.

Carpools: All depart from Gateway/99th Ave. Park & Ride, SE corner of lot, at 8:00 AM. Near corner of NE 99th Ave. & Pacific St.: From I-84 eastbound, take Exit 7; turn immediately right onto 99th Avenue. From I-205 take Exit 21A (Glisan St.) and turn left from Glisan onto 99th.

For second meeting places for hikes, what to bring, and further information, check out www.gorgefriends.org or call our office at 503-241-3762 to receive a hike flyer.

General Information: Prior sign-up not necessary. Hikes are not canceled due to rain. (Weather is often drier east of Hood River.) Participants accept responsibility for their own safety.

MARCH 17 - Memaloose Hills Loop, OR
Wildflower expert Barbara Robinson and Aubrey Russell will lead a Memaloose Hills ramble when Grass Widows are in full flower. Loop starts at Memaloose Rest Area, climbs to a hilltop with beautiful views, eastward through wildflower meadows, descending to east end of Rest Area. Hike 5-6 mi., with 800-ft elevation gain.

MARCH 24 - Catherine Creek West, WA

Barbara Robinson and others will lead us up wildflower-studded slopes west of Catherine Creek to magnificent views of the Columbia. Hike 5-6 mi., with 1000-ft elevation gain.

MARCH 31 - Lyle Cherry Orchard, WA

Aubrey Russell and Friends' Board member Ken Denis will lead us up a series of benches (1000-ft elevation gain in first mile), then east across a woodland plateau to an abandoned cherry

orchard. Great wildflowers and river views. Hike 5-6 mi., with 1400-ft elevation gain.

APRIL 7 - Rowland Lake, WA

Nancy Russell and wildflower guide Ray Hayden will lead this hike west of Catherine Creek. Loop north of Rowland Lake includes historic wagon road, emerging on open plateau at 1300 feet. Hike 7 mi.

APRIL 14 - Catherine Creek East, WA

Ray Hayden and Larry Gabriel will lead us past a natural arch to views from the open plateau, descending through wildflower meadows. Hike 6 mi., with 1600-ft elevation gain.

APRIL 21 - Seven Mile Hill, OR

Hike with Gorge enthusiasts Caroline and Ken Bailey and Bill Daniels to this prime wildflower area and witness its recovery from the 1998 fire. Our leaders will take us to the top of this ridge for great scenery and views of the river. Hike 5-6 mi., with 1200-ft elevation gain.

APRIL 28 - Castilleja Hill to Memaloose Hills, OR

Wildflower experts Russ Jolley, Nancy Russell and Friends' Board member Rick Ray will lead us to wildflower meadows in Memaloose-Rowena area. Hike 5-6 mi., with 800-ft elevation gain.

MAY 5 - Deschutes River Loop, OR

Ross Edginton will lead us up to terrific views encompassing four counties. High desert flora and fauna abound. Return along past historic riverside sites. Hike 8 mi., with 750-ft elevation gain.

MAY 12 - NEW! Cook Hill, WA

Wildflower guidebook author Russ Jolley and Native Plant Society member Carroll Dubaur will lead us up to steep-sloped hanging meadows above the Columbia River. Great views, hike 5 mi., with 1500-ft elevation gain.

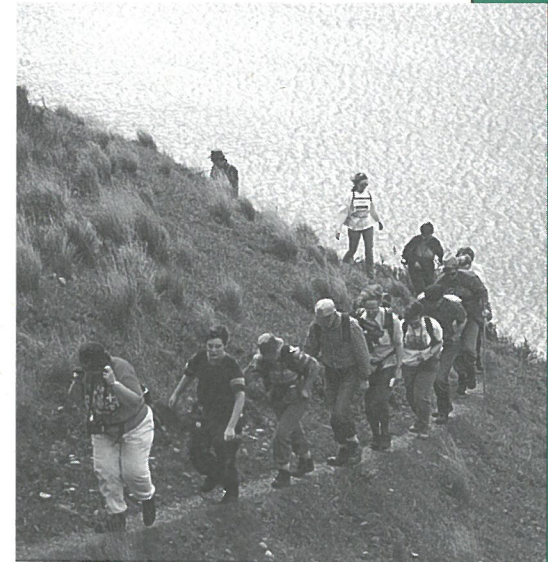
MAY 19 - Weldon Wagon Road, WA

Gorge enthusiast Ray Hayden will lead us

up open wildflower slopes with views of the idyllic White Salmon River. Hike 7.5 mi., with 1500-ft elevation gain.

MAY 26 - NEW LOOP! Tooth Rock-Wauna Viewpoint- Eagle Creek, OR

Join Ken Denis on this trail from the Tooth Rock Trailhead. Ascend to Wauna View-point by historic routes for views of the mid-Columbia. Return via suspension bridge over Eagle Creek and Historic Columbia River Trail. Hike 5.5 mi., with 930-ft elevation gain



JUNE 2 - Dog Mountain Loop, WA

Richard Getgen will lead us to meadows on the upper slopes of classic Gorge summit. Cascade views from Puppy Lookout. Hike 7 mi., with 2900-ft elevation gain. Trailhead parking pass required.

JUNE 9 - Hamilton Mtn Loop, WA

Tim Hibbitts will lead this hike during Hamilton Mountain's prime wildflower-blooming period, past waterfalls, rock outcroppings, and far-ranging views. Hike 9 mi., with 2200-ft elevation gain.

JUNE 16 & 17 - 21st Annual GORGE HIKING WEEKEND

Brochure will be available from Friends of the Columbia Gorge by May 15, 2001. ■



Conservation and Legal Program Highlights

In the courts and in the field...

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

Skamania County Warned of Legal Action for Poor Enforcement

Frustrated by Skamania County's continued failure to enforce Gorge protection laws, Friends issued a 60-day notice of intent to sue the County

for a pattern of failure to implement and enforce the National Scenic Area land-use ordinance and failure to adhere to decisions and orders issued by the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

Despite receiving \$390,000 from the Washington State Legislature in 1999 for the purpose of improving implementation of their National Scenic Area ordinance,

Skamania County's Planning Department has continued a pattern of issuing approvals for development in clear violation of

the National Scenic Area ordinance. In a recent development application, the acting planning director allowed the developer to write the county's staff report and conditions of approval on what appeared to be official county stationery.

While Friends of the Columbia Gorge is pursuing negotiations with Skamania County officials to resolve these issues, it may take more than dollars and dialogue to change this pattern of violating Gorge protection laws. ■

Bea House Update

The Washington Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the Bea case on November 30, marking the first time Friends has participated in a case before a state supreme court. Friends' attorney Gary Kahn did an outstanding job in the face of repeated difficult questions from the justices, particularly Justice Sanders, a veteran property rights lawyer. Gary explained that the Gorge

Commission had authority to step in once it discovered the Beas' numerous illegal actions (such as changing the house's location through lot line adjustments and removing required screening vegetation) and Skamania County's failure to enforce its Scenic Area ordinance.

We are hopeful that a majority of the nine justices will vote to hold in our favor by affirming the lower court's ruling. The decision should be issued in early 2001. ■

Cluster Development Update

On December 12, the Gorge Commission heard arguments on our appeal of a permit allowing a cluster development in Skamania County. Friends appealed this permit because the applicants were granted a "bonus house" for clustering, yet failed to meet the legal requirement of providing special benefits to the parcel's forestland not attainable through conventional development. The landowners stated that they would willingly attach a forest management plan to the deed in order to ensure that the forestland remains undeveloped. The Gorge Commission voted unanimously to postpone the matter for ninety days while Friends and the landowners work together to draw up a forest management plan. ■

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photo © Kymberlee Snow

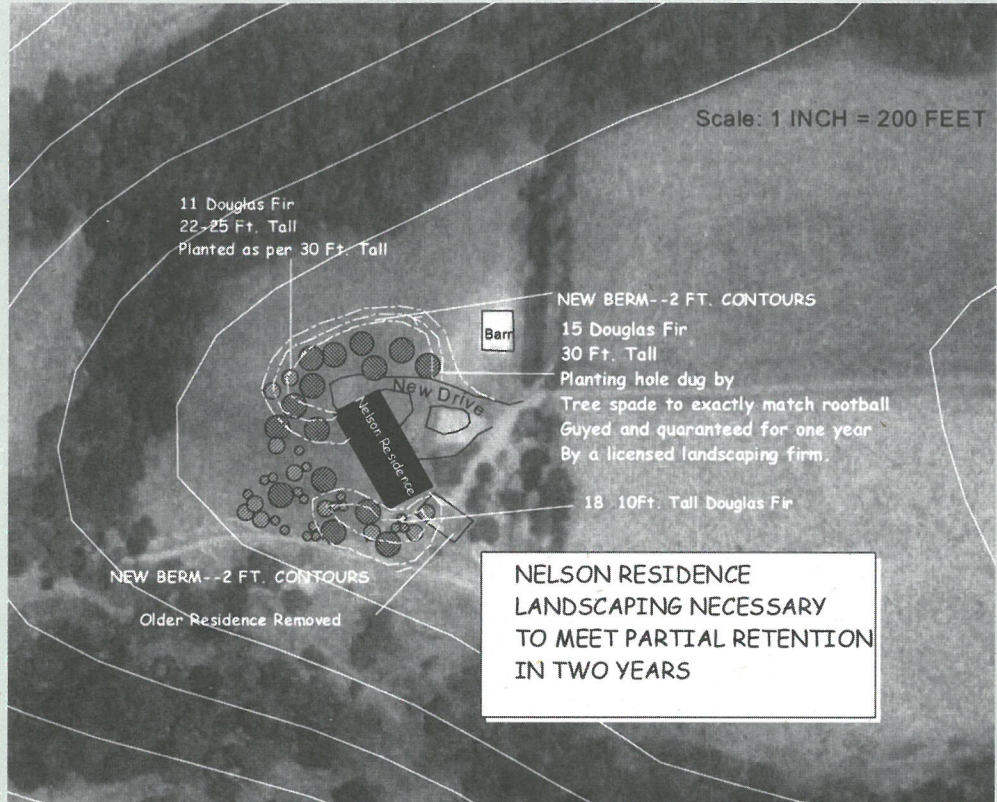


Left: Heading up to Olympia, WA for the Washington State Supreme Court hearing of the Bea case—Field Organizer Tiffany Newton, Development Director Jane Haley, Founder Nancy Russell, Conservation Director Michael Lang, Attorney Gary Kahn, Legal Assistant Jill Desrochers, Staff Attorney Nathan Baker.

Conservation and Legal Program Highlights (continued from page 4)

Nelson House Update

In the last newsletter, we reported on another new house in Clark County that is very visible from several key viewing areas in Oregon including the Vista House at Crown Point, and therefore appears to be inconsistent with the conditions of the County's revised decision. In response to recommendations by the Forest Service and concerns voiced by the Gorge Commission and Friends, the County has issued yet another decision, requiring additional trees to the north, south, and west of the structure, but the decision is ambiguous as to which of the Forest Service's recommendations must be followed. Both Friends and the applicants have appealed this third decision. Friends is asking Clark County to be more clear in requiring the applicants to follow the Forest Service's recommendations so that the visual impacts of the house are adequately mitigated. ■



Landscaping Plan for Nelson residence by the U.S. Forest Service.

Gorge Protection Rules

(continued from page 1)

Management Plan. Nor is there any way to accurately determine long-term effects on the Gorge of weakening the existing rules.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge is leading efforts to convince the Gorge Commission to strengthen, not weaken, its rules. We hope you will add your voice to the call for protecting the splendor of the Gorge for generations to come.

What You Can Do

Write a letter to the Gorge Commission today. You can check the "Get Active" page of our website for a short sample letter

you can use as is or modify. Urge Commissioners to:

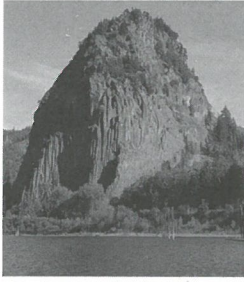
- Conduct a full study documenting the impacts of development allowed under the current Management Plan.
- Close loopholes and improve enforcement of current guidelines that protect scenic landscapes in the Gorge. No more trophy homes marring Gorge vistas!
- Strengthen rules protecting farmland, forestland and open spaces from residential sprawl.
- Update protection for rare plants, wildlife habitat and cultural resources.

- Prohibit new mines and any expansion of existing mines in the Scenic Area.

Columbia River
Gorge Commission
P.O. Box 730
White Salmon, WA 98672

Mail your letter to the above address, or e-mail crgc@gorge.net.

Contact Betsy Toll, Friends' Volunteer Coordinator, to find out how to become more active. Call 503-241-3762 ext. 107. Or e-mail betsy@gorgefriends.org. ■



Funding Gorge Protection

Development Director's Report

by Jane Haley

Mark Your Calendars

Sunday, March 11 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. is the date set for Friends' Annual Meeting. The luncheon meeting will be held at the historic Columbia Gorge Hotel in Hood River. Ms. Yvonne Smith, a Yakama Nation member will speak about the Columbia River Pastoral Letter project. Invitations with more details will be sent to members soon. ■

Save a Tree, Renew on Line

We are pleased to announce that Friends' members can now renew online. The process is simple, saves time, money and resources,

and is done over a secured site for your protection. If you have sent us your e-mail address, we will notify you online when your membership renewal date is coming up. Then all you need to do is log on to our website at www.gorgefriends.org, select the "membership" button on the home page and the "online giving" section to renew.

If you would like to help save resources, e-mail us at info@gorgefriends.org with your e-mail address. Once a year you will receive a note letting you know it's time to renew. ■

Become a "Best Friend" of the Columbia Gorge

Another option for updating your membership each year is to join our "Best Friend" program. With this option, you can spread your membership gift to Friends over time with electronic funds transfers. Many members prefer this option because it is automatic and allows them to make a larger overall gift that is spread out over the year. You can give monthly or quarterly through the "Best Friend" program.

If you would like information about setting this program up you can go to the membership page on our website or call Michele Fuchs at 503-241-3762. ■

Don't Miss the Annual Meeting



The Columbia Gorge Hotel is the site of Friends' Annual Meeting on March 11.

Go In Style

Just a reminder that we have a whole new line of clothing. Check out our beautiful T-shirts, polos, sweatshirts and hats on the web. You will find pictures and ordering information on the membership page under "Gorge Store". This is a wonderful way to show your support for the Gorge. They make great gifts, too! ■

Special Offer to Members

As a member of Friends you are eligible to join the Resource Conservation Federal Credit Union, offering:

- No-Fee Checking
- MasterCard rates as low as 11.5%
- 24-Hour Loans
- Financial Consulting Services
- Vehicle Loans as low as 6.50%

Join Today! Call (800) 547-6636 or visit www.rcfcu.net. ■



Citizen Involvement Update

Friends Outreach & Volunteer Happenings

by Betsy Toll

Spring is a great time to get active!

- Write to the Gorge Commission about Plan Review (see cover article).
- Be a Friends' Hike Shepherd for Spring Wildflower Hikes.
- Volunteer on Friends'

Speaker's Bureau, presenting our beautiful slide show and outlining the importance of Gorge protection.

- Help schedule Friends' presentations (maybe in your

workplace, school, church group or organization).

- Join our Activists' E-mail Listserve to stay active in Gorge protection.
- Volunteer for work parties and restoration projects throughout the year.

For more details and information, check out www.gorgefriends.org; call Betsy at 503.241.3762 x 107, or e-mail betsy@gorgefriends.org. ■



Springtime is Friends' hiking time. Here hikers climb to the Lyle Cherry Orchard. For 2001 spring hikes, see page three.

photo © Ken Denis

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

www.gorgefriends.org

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Portland, Oregon 97204
(503) 241-3762

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(541) 386-5268

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John Reynolds, *Vice Chair*
Nancy N. Russell, *Chair Emerita*
Rick Ray*, *Treasurer*
Ken Denis, *Secretary*
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Michael Lang, *Conservation Director*
Deirdre Murray, *AmeriCorps Member*
Tiffany Newton*, *Field Organizer*
Kymberlee Snow, *Systems Administrator*
Betsy Toll, *Volunteer Coordinator*
* Gorge residents

Additional Support

Legal Counsel: Gary Kahn
Newsletter Design: Kathleen Krushas

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