

# FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

Summer 2004 Newsletter



## Friends Leads Challenge to Revised Management Plan

By Michael Lang, Conservation Director  
michael@gorgefriends.org

Friends of the Columbia Gorge, joined by Columbia Riverkeeper, 1000 Friends of Oregon, and a group of Columbia Gorge landowners and businesses, has filed an appeal in the Oregon Court of Appeals challenging the Columbia River Gorge Commission's recent adoption of the revised Management Plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The revised plan fails to protect the Columbia River Gorge from logging and overdevelopment.

The parties to the lawsuit cite numerous reasons for the challenge, including inadequate protection of scenic landscapes, forests, clean water, and salmon habitat; the increase of industrial and commercial uses; the failure to adequately protect farm and forest land from overdevelopment; and the failure to map landslide-prone areas and avoid zoning these areas for residential development. The revised plan opens the most sensitive areas of the Columbia Gorge to "forest health logging" and fails to protect even one acre of forest within the Columbia Gorge from chainsaws.

During revisions, the Gorge Commission weakened protections provided by the Management Plan despite receiving more than 2,000 citizen comments urging stronger protections. The Commission's adoption of the

*(continued on page 7)*

Friends is challenging the revised Management Plan to ensure strong protections for the irreplaceable scenic landscapes of the Columbia Gorge, like this majestic view from Tom McCall Point.  
Photo: James O. Holloway

*Special Insert:  
Fall Hiking Brochure*

# Executive Director's Letter

Nearly six years ago, I stepped out onto Pioneer Point for the first time. On the Washington side near Cape Horn, directly across the river from Angels Rest, Pioneer Point offered spectacular views and significantly less traffic noise than its popular Oregon neighbor. A proposed trail leading there provided much more ecological diversity than many other Gorge trails. There was just one problem: Pioneer Point was a public-land peninsula surrounded by private land, blocking hopes of creating a Cape Horn Trail.

That might have been the end of the story except for Dave Cannard, a Vancouver businessman and one of three founders of Friends of the Columbia Gorge. In 1996, Dave purchased property on Cape Horn to hold until the U.S. Forest Service could purchase it from him for a trail. In June this year, the Forest Service finally purchased the 67-acre property.

The acquisition of Cape Horn was a long and difficult process. Dave and the Forest Service butted heads frequently, and it appeared that a reasonable deal would never be reached. But both parties hung in there because they saw the value of public purchase and the potential of a popular trail. Their persistence finally won the day.

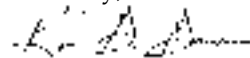
Cape Horn's potential continues to grow. In 1998, three key properties for the trail were in private hands. Today, those three properties are publicly owned.

Anyone who travels the Gorge in the summer knows that trailheads such as Angels Rest are packed. Demand is increasing for invigorating Gorge hikes with great views close to Portland. The Cape Horn Trail and Pioneer Point can provide that experience.

More than that, trails can benefit local communities. Skamania County is looking to draw in visitors for tourism dollars, and the town of Stevenson is transforming before our eyes. Just as many Angels Rest hikers travel on to Multnomah Falls for food and drink, the Cape Horn Trail would likely draw hikers into Skamania County's business establishments.

It took eight years to secure public ownership of this important link of the Cape Horn Trail. Let's hope it's not another eight years before the public is out enjoying this special recreational gem.

Sincerely,



Kevin Gorman  
Executive Director

P.S. On August 1, Friends moved our Portland office downstairs one floor, staying in the historic Yeon Building. Our new address is 522 SW Fifth Ave., Suite 720, Portland, OR 97204.



*Kevin Gorman and his family hiked on the proposed Cape Horn Trail in 2000.*

*photo: Ken Denis*

## 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



## Citizen Involvement Update

# Friends' Outreach & Volunteer Happenings

By Betsy Toll, Volunteer Coordinator, [betsy@gorgefriends.org](mailto:betsy@gorgefriends.org)

### Volunteer Celebration

Friends' volunteers celebrated a great spring hiking and stewardship season at our second annual Volunteer Potluck Barbecue at Bridal Veil on June 26.

Hike shepherds, office volunteers, policy activists, and stewardship volunteers rolled up their sleeves to work before the picnic. We collected camas seeds, spread bark chips along footpaths, and hauled away blackberry in the morning while board members set up the grill and prepared the feast.

Volunteers and board members enjoyed barbecued chicken, veggie burgers, summer fruits, salads, and ice cold drinks. Thank you, everyone, for your contribution to a wonderful season of hikes and stewardship work. ■

### Spring and Fall Hikes

Our spring hiking season brought both long-time gorge lovers and newcomers out to explore the Columbia Gorge. Cathy Robart, our AmeriCorps member and Outdoor Programs Coordinator, did a great job creating a 59-event program that served experienced hikers and novices alike.

The focus of our hiking program now includes natural history, cultural history, environmental awareness, wildlife and birds, and Lewis and Clark, in addition to Friends' signature wildflower hikes. Members-only events were very well-attended, and we will expand those offerings next spring.

The fall hike season runs September 24 through October 30. Check the hike insert in this newsletter for details, or check [www.gorgefriends.org](http://www.gorgefriends.org). Call Cathy at 503-241-3762 x106 for more information. ■

### Electronic Technology Volunteers

Friends' volunteers have stepped up to the challenge of creating a comprehensive archiving system for our electronic photographic collection.

Volunteers Lori Letterhos and Nell Johnson are developing a comprehensive protocol and a powerful database to catalogue and search the thousands of photos we maintain that document land uses, development, public activities, meetings, hikes, and the natural beauty of the Gorge.

The new archive will be a cutting-edge tool for saving, finding, and using the stunning Gorge photographs that members and supporters have donated for use in our publications, our legal program, land acquisition work, and on our website. ■



Above: Volunteers Pat Van Der Zanden (l) and Tyrus Monson (r) enjoy the bounty at the Friends' Volunteer Potluck Barbecue.

Left: Volunteer Marshall Scheider, age 12, carefully collects camas seeds at Bridal Veil.

Photos: Ken Denis



### Get on the List

Sign on to Friends' Activities and Updates email list. We send posts each month about hikes and member activities, along with action alerts and information on urgent Gorge protection issues.

Send an email with "Please Subscribe" as your subject to [betsy@gorgefriends.org](mailto:betsy@gorgefriends.org) and get on the list today!



## Conservation and Legal Program Highlights

# In the Courts and in the Field...

By Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, [nathan@gorgefriends.org](mailto:nathan@gorgefriends.org)  
and Katy Daily, Conservation Organizer, [katy@gorgefriends.org](mailto:katy@gorgefriends.org)

### Friends Resolves “Ancient” Subdivision Appeals

This summer, Friends cooperated with Skamania County to resolve two longstanding legal appeals. As a result, the Gorge’s sensitive scenic and natural resources will be better protected from overdevelopment.

In December 2000, Skamania County adopted an ordinance that amended the County’s definition of “lot.” The ordinance violated the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act because it allowed lots in pre-1937 subdivisions that were never recognized under modern zoning standards to each be separately developed with a dwelling. These pre-1937 subdivisions are commonly called “ancient” subdivisions.

By the County’s own estimate, as many as 1,731 ancient lots were potentially eligible for development under the ordinance.

Incredibly, the County determined that its ordinance would have no significant impact on the environment, even though many of the ancient lots were in highly visible locations and in areas containing sensitive wildlife

habitat. Many ancient lots near the eastern Skamania County border contain oak woodland habitat that helps maintain one of only three known remaining populations of western gray squirrels in Washington State. The squirrels are dependent upon large, old mixed oak and conifer forests and are



*Friends’ legal actions helped protect habitat for sensitive species like this western gray squirrel.*

Photo: ©Laurie Excell

extremely susceptible to human disturbance. In spring 2001, Friends appealed the County’s environmental determination.

Meanwhile, the Columbia River Gorge Commission determined that the ordinance was inconsistent with the National Scenic Area Management Plan. The County appealed this determination and a Superior Court Judge agreed with the County, reversing the Gorge Commission’s determination. Friends appealed to the Washington State Court of Appeals.

As Friends prepared our legal arguments for challenging the ordinance and environmental determination, the County realized that its new definition of “lot” would likely cause more problems than it solved. Its vague criteria

would lead to headaches for the County Planning Department in determining which ancient lots could be resurrected under the ordinance.

Shortly after Friends filed our legal brief in the court of appeals case, the County decided to close the Pandora’s box it had opened. On June 14, 2004, the Skamania County Commissioners repealed the “lot” definition. In response, Friends withdrew both appeals.

If Friends had not challenged the County’s actions, many of the ancient lots would likely be developed today. Development of the lots would have significantly marred the scenic landscapes and wildlife habitat of the Columbia River Gorge. ■

### Measure 37

This November, Oregon voters will decide the fate of Measure 37, a dangerous ballot measure with far-reaching environmental repercussions. If passed, Measure 37 would gut Oregon’s land-use planning system.

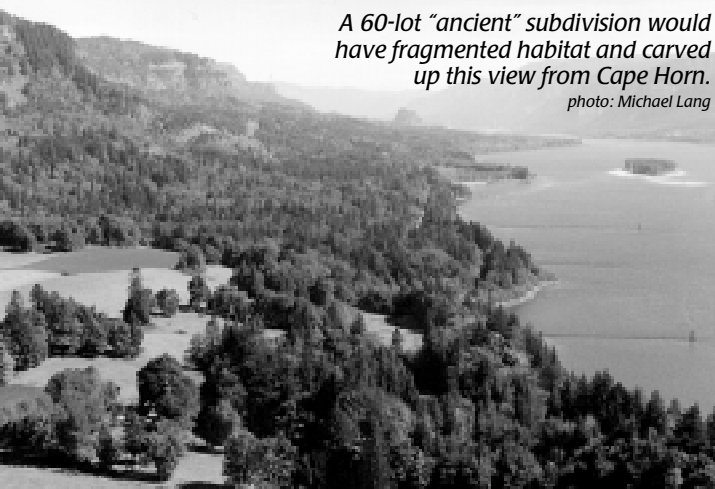
Advanced by Oregonians in Action, the measure would change Oregon law to require local governments to compensate landowners for any loss in land value caused by past or future changes in zoning. If governments don’t have funds available—and no funding source is identified—they simply can waive enforcement of laws.

Parcels in continuous ownership (reaching back to parents and grandparents) qualify for this special treatment, but neighboring property with newer owners would not. The result would be the scattershot repeal of zoning protections without public notice or input.

*(continued on page 5)*

*A 60-lot “ancient” subdivision would have fragmented habitat and carved up this view from Cape Horn.*

photo: Michael Lang







These old-growth cedar forests would be permanently protected under the wilderness proposal. photo: Oliver Dalton

## Wilderness Bill Introduced

By Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) has introduced the long-awaited Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness Act of 2004. This bill would designate some 35,000 acres of the Columbia River Gorge and 140,000 acres surrounding Mount Hood as new wilderness.

At hearings in Portland and Hood River this spring, more than 85% of those testifying supported this proposal. On June 7, Congressmen Greg Walden (R-Hood River) and Earl Blumenauer (D-Portland) co-hosted their second Mt. Hood Summit, focused on the wilderness proposal. Public support was overwhelming. Congressman Walden remarked, "What I take away from this summit is that passion has gotten stronger... The need to do something is real." ■

### WILDERNESS BILL TAKE ACTION:

Contact Rep. Earl Blumenauer and Rep. Greg Walden and urge them to introduce a Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness bill in the House:

Congressman Earl Blumenauer  
729 N.E. Oregon St., #115  
Portland, OR 97232  
(503) 231-2300  
Fax: (503) 230-5413

Congressman Greg Walden  
843 E. Main St., #400  
Medford, OR 97504  
(541) 776-4646  
Fax: (541) 779-0204

## THE LEWIS & CLARK LANDSCAPES PROJECT

By Katy Daily, Conservation Organizer, katy@gorgefriends.org

The three-year clock ran out this spring for U.S. Forest Service acquisition of Gorge properties offered by willing sellers. However, several landowners recently signed one-year extensions, so public acquisition of these high-priority landscapes is still possible.

Although the Forest Service needs approximately \$14 million for the remaining purchases, the President's FY05 budget earmarked just \$1 million for Gorge land acquisition.

In an effort to secure a \$5 million allocation for purchase of two high-priority properties, Friends sent a delegation to lobby Senate Interior Appropriations Committee members on Capitol Hill. The delegation included a landowner who told senators of his family's efforts to preserve forestland by minimizing logging.

The Senate budget will be released in September; a final budget may not be decided until after the November election. For more information, visit [www.lewisandclarklandscapes.org](http://www.lewisandclarklandscapes.org). ■

### Measure 37...

(continued from page 4)

The initiative covers farm and forestry practices, watershed protection on private lands, and land-use planning.

Friends is committed to stopping this initiative, which would strip away a powerful tool against the overdevelopment of Oregon. ■

### TAKE ACTION:

We need lots of help to defeat Measure 37. Contact Katy Daily, katy@gorgefriends.org, 503-241-3762 x110, or the Take a Closer Look Committee, [campaign@takeacloserlookoregon.org](mailto:campaign@takeacloserlookoregon.org), 503-222-2734.



## Funding Gorge Protection

# Development Director's Report

By Jane Harris, Development Director, jane@gorgefriends.org

## Summer Picnic Highlights



*Top left: Families and friends enjoyed the view and learned about scenic protections.*

*photo: Jane Harris*

*Top right: Bluegrass musicians play in a shady spot.*

*photo: Ken Denis*

*Middle: Members enjoyed a fabulous potluck spread of hot and cold dishes, fruits, salads, and desserts.*

*photo: Betsy Toll*

*Bottom: Jane Harris and Friends' founder Nancy Russell.*

*photo: Ken Denis*

### 24th Annual Summer Picnic Draws Record Crowd

The spectacular home and vineyards of Friends' members Barbara and Robert McCormick in Lyle Washington was the site of our annual picnic on July 18th. From the McCormicks' garden high on a bluff looking west down the Gorge and south to Mt. Hood, our guests were delighted in a day of delicious homemade foods, Full Sail Ale, a bluegrass band, games for the children, a hike on the Klickitat Trail and a chance to reconnect with old friends.

This year's event was our largest picnic ever, with some 150 members and supporters attending. Families played badminton and baseball and hiked across the beautiful McCormick land to enjoy the views and explore the new vineyards. Many new members came this year, enthusiastic to learn more about the Gorge and become actively engaged in its protection.

The picnic was followed by a short hike on the newly created Klickitat Trail with Jim Minick of the Klickitat Trail Conservancy. Jim spoke to our members about the critical role Friends played with creation of the trail and in helping citizens create the new non-profit Klickitat Trail Conservancy, organized to protect and promote the trail. ■

Thanks for the great turnout!

# Friends Challenges Revised...

(continued from page 1)

weakened plan comes on the eve of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial commemoration. The Columbia Gorge has been rated as the nation's #1 natural attraction along the Lewis and Clark Trail due to its largely unspoiled landscapes. Thousands of Lewis and Clark enthusiasts are expected to visit the Gorge in 2005-06.

## New rules mean more highly visible development

If the revisions take effect, the public can expect more clearcuts and more development to mar scenic Gorge landscapes. The Commission's revised plan deletes previous guidelines requiring new development to be located to have the least impact on scenic landscapes; it also fails to address the cumulative visual effects of more than 700 new houses and thousands of new structures that have already been built in the Columbia Gorge since the passage of the National Scenic Area Act in 1986. The Commission's actions were contrary to the recommendations of experts on a special National Scenic Area Committee of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

## Inadequate protections for water and salmon

Buffers currently in place to protect fish-bearing streams in the General Management Area (GMA) of the National Scenic Area are weaker than in several locations outside the National Scenic Area. The current buffers for streams in the GMA are 100 feet for fish-bearing streams and 50 feet for intermittent streams. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) recommended 250-foot buffers for fish-bearing streams and 150-foot buffers for intermittent streams, but the Gorge Commission ignored WDFW's recommendations.

With native fish runs in peril, the Gorge Commission should

strengthen protection for salmon and their habitat. Instead, the revised plan will allow agriculture, residential development, and septic systems to be built within the floodplains of salmon-bearing streams in the Gorge.

The revised plan also fails to update wildlife and rare plant inventories, which are now 15 years behind current scientific knowledge.

## More commercial and industrial uses allowed

The revised plan weakens protection for scenic landscapes, forests and salmon streams while it allows more commercial and industrial uses, such as outdoor commercial events and fish processing plants. This is contrary to the second purpose of the National Scenic Area Act, which encourages commercial uses and development to be located in existing urban areas. The prospects of commercial events, including amplified music and alcoholic beverages, have many Gorge residents concerned for their property values, rural quality of life, and their peace and quiet.

"Not only does this impact our quality of life and reduce our property values, it opens the door for more commercial development in the Gorge," said Eric Lichtenthaler, of Corbett. "The Gorge Commission failed to evaluate the noise, traffic and impacts on adjacent property owners of allowing commercial events," said Lichtenthaler.

Mr. Lichtenthaler is one of the copetitioners in the appeal.

The revised Management Plan is now being reviewed by the U.S. Forest Service. If the Forest Service determines that the revised plan is consistent with the Act despite these glaring problems, our only recourse will be to file a similar challenge in federal court. ■

## Friends of the Columbia Gorge

[www.gorgefriends.org](http://www.gorgefriends.org)

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\* *Gorge residents*

### Additional Support

*Legal Counsel:* Gary Kahn  
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## Know Your Gorge

# Late Summer Beauty

By John Reynolds, Friends Board member

**A**t low elevations in the Gorge, late summer can seem like a season short on blooming wildflowers. But below Bonneville Dam in late summer, the Columbia River's level drops to expose portions of the riverbank covered up earlier in the year. A variety of wildflowers bloom on these banks in the short period before the autumn rains begin and the river rises again.

To view the flowers, good shoreline access points are at Beacon Rock State Park and St. Cloud, both on the Washington side, and at Dalton Point on the Oregon side.

Members of the Composite family that wildflower lovers can find in late-summer include: Columbia coreopsis (*Coreopsis tinctoria* var. *atkinsoniana*), sneezeweed (*Helenium autumnale*), beggar ticks (*Bidens frondosa* and *B. cernua*) and Columbia River wormwood (*Artemisia lindleyana*). Various knotweeds (*Polygonum* spp.) and a small variety of euphorbia (*Euphorbia supina*) can be found at the Beacon Rock shore, blooming amid many other small annuals. Wapato (*Sagittaria latifolia*), pictured here, is present in moist areas just east of the St. Cloud shore.

Have fun botanizing! ■

*This Wapato is just one of the wildflowers that await late summer Gorge explorers.*

