

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Winter 2008 Newsletter

Inside:

Casino Report
Released to Public

Page 4



Friends Wins
Legal Victories

Page 8



Annual Meeting

Page 10



Insert:
Spring Hiking
Brochure

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Take Action Today! Casino Proposal Comes to the Public

Once again, we the people have the opportunity to let decision makers know loudly and clearly that we oppose the proposal for a massive off-reservation casino in Cascade Locks.

Casino promoters expect to release their draft environmental impact statement in mid-February, commencing a comment period that will include at

least five public hearings in Oregon and Washington. The public—meaning all of us—can influence the decision and put an end to this widely opposed proposal.

With your help, we've been blocking this casino at every turn for ten full years. Now it's time to put this bad idea to rest once and for all. Read the article on pages 4-5 and check www.gorgefriends.org to learn what you can do to help!

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

Oregon

Sen. Gordon Smith, (202) 224-3753
<http://gsmith.senate.gov/public/>
Sen. Ron Wyden, (202) 224-5244
<http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/>
Rep. David Wu, (202) 225-0855
Rep. Earl Blumenauer, (202) 225-4811
Rep. Darlene Hooley, (202) 225-5711
Rep. Greg Walden, (202) 225-6730
Rep. Peter DeFazio, (202) 225-6416

Washington

Sen. Patty Murray, (202) 224-2621
<http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm>
Sen. Maria Cantwell, (202) 224-3441
<http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/>
Rep. Brian Baird, (202) 225-3536
Rep. Doc Hastings, (202) 225-5816
Rep. Norm Dicks, (202) 225-5916
Email your **Congressional Representative** by logging on to www.house.gov/writerep/

On the cover: This view from Table Mountain looks east up the Gorge and across river to the proposed casino site (on right). Photo: © Chris Carvalho • Lensjoy.com

Director's Letter

Enjoyment. Responsibility. Those are two of the most tangible expressions of friendship. So it follows that if we are to be true *Friends* of the Columbia Gorge, we need to embrace both.

This time of year, enjoyment is easy. Our spring hiking season is ready to kick off, bringing enjoyment, optimism, and hope that are contagious. As staff and hike leaders worked on the enclosed schedule, the comment I heard most often was, "I want to go on every hike!"

But responsibility is also calling us. Over the last nine years, our staff, board, and volunteers have worked tirelessly and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to stop a mega-casino from coming to the Columbia Gorge. In the next few weeks and months, all those resources will be focused intensely as the casino proposal gets full public hearings. Now is our best opportunity to stop the casino once and for all.

Casino supporters cheered the news of the hearings. The Bush Administration recently denied 22 of

If there was ever a time to take personal responsibility for protecting the Columbia Gorge, that time is now.

the 30 off-reservation casino proposals that were pending but left the Gorge proposal in play. The administration then wrote supportive letters regarding a few proposals, but not for the Gorge casino. Then the Interior Department issued a memo outlining the obstacles facing the remaining proposals. Those obstacles include any proposed location that "is adjacent to a federally designated conservation area."

While Friends has not typically agreed with the Bush Administration on environmental issues, a final decision on the Gorge casino by this administration may be preferable to leaving it to the unknown agenda of the next administration.

Thousands of you have written letters or testified on the casino matter. It is now time to ask you to take action again. It

is also true that many who are reading this are faithful long-time members but have never written a letter or attended a meeting. If ever there was a time to take personal responsibility for protecting the Columbia Gorge, that time is now. It is up to all of us to convince the Department of Interior that the Columbia Gorge serves a much higher purpose than large-scale casinos.

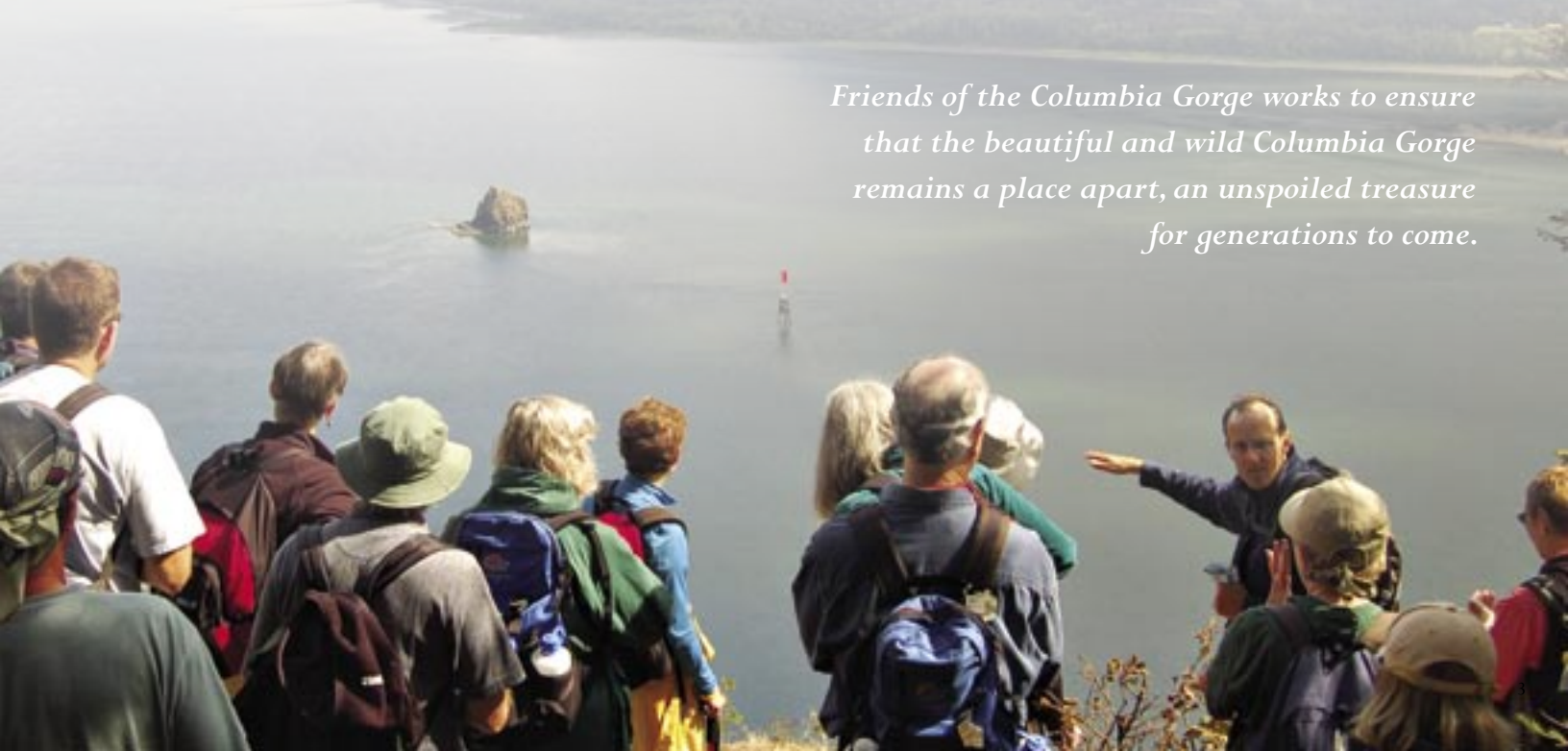
I hope your spring is filled with wonderful hikes and responsible action for the Gorge!



Kevin Gorman
Executive Director

Kevin Gorman (facing camera) leading a Cape Horn hike.

Photo: Aubrey Russell



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.

BIA to Release Casino Study for Review

Tighter guidelines bolster case for on-reservation alternative

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

The U.S. Department of Interior is planning to release the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) prepared by Gorge casino planners for public review late this winter. The release comes following the adoption of new federal guidelines for off-reservation casino proposals that make it more difficult for tribes to establish casinos that are distant from their reservation boundaries or near environmentally sensitive areas. These new guidelines raise even greater doubts that the off-reservation casino proposal in the Columbia River Gorge will ever be approved.

Release of the draft environmental impact statement is likely in mid-February, to be followed by a 90-day comment period and five public hearings. Three hearings are expected to be scheduled

in Gorge communities, as well as one hearing in Warm Springs and another in the Portland area. The comment period is an opportunity for the public to finally put an end to the specter of a huge casino resort within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and to advocate for an on-reservation alternative. An on-reservation alternative along Highway 26 would provide much more revenue than the existing casino at Kah-Nee-Ta, would provide more jobs for tribal members, would protect the Columbia Gorge from the unlimited growth, traffic congestion and sprawl associated with a Gorge casino resort, and would be more fair for other tribes in Oregon.

In a January 3, 2008 memo, Assistant Interior Secretary Carl J. Artman stated that increased scrutiny will be given to

proposed off-reservation casinos based on environmental compatibility and whether commuting distance for tribal members between their reservation and the proposed casino location is reasonable.

Environmental compatibility

Under the new guidelines, the Department of Interior (DOI) will require a comprehensive analysis of the proposed casino's compatibility with existing uses on adjacent or contiguous land, and will analyze "whether such uses would be negatively impacted by the traffic, noise, and development associated with or generated by the proposed gaming facility. Incompatibility might be due to adjacent or contiguous land that is zoned or used for National Parks, National Monuments, federally designated conservation areas,

Columbia River shoreline adjacent to the proposed casino site.

Photo: Peter Cornelison

The comment period is an opportunity for the public to finally put an end to the specter of a huge casino resort within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area...



National Fish and Wildlife Refuges, day care centers, schools, churches, or residential developments.”

Because of efforts by Friends and our many allies who oppose a casino resort in the Columbia Gorge, Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne and his staff have recognized their responsibility to protect the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area from the adverse effects of a huge casino resort and related associated development. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is a “federally designated conservation area” and the noise, traffic congestion, sprawl, and pollution that would accompany a massive 600,000-square-foot casino resort with an estimated three million visitors a year would have obvious negative impacts on the natural beauty of the Scenic Area.

Tribal proximity

Further complicating the Gorge proposal are new federal rules related to implementing the Indian Reorganization Act, which require the DOI to “give greater scrutiny to the tribe’s justification of anticipated benefits as the distance from the tribe’s reservation and the land to be acquired increases.”

Assistant Secretary Artman warns in a memo that “if the gaming facility is not within a commutable distance from the reservation, tribal residents of the reservation will either:

- a) not be able to take advantage of the job opportunities if they desire to remain on the reservation; or
- b) be forced to move away from the reservation to take advantage of the opportunity. In either case, negative impacts on reservation life would be considerable.”



View of the proposed casino site from Washington SR-14. Photo: Angie Moore

Opposition to development of a mega-casino in the Columbia Gorge is strong. The following organizations and public leaders oppose putting a casino in Cascade Locks.

- | | |
|---|--|
| Parents Education Association | State Representative Honeyford, WA 15 |
| Oregon Restaurant Association | State Senator Newhouse, WA 15 |
| Oregon Center for Environmental Health | State Senator Bill Morrisette OR 6 |
| Oregon Family Council | State Senator Vicki Walker, OR 7 |
| Environment Oregon | Representative Scott Bruun OR 37 |
| WashPIRG | Representative Kim Thatcher OR 25 |
| Oregon Toxics Alliance | Representative John Lim OR 50 |
| McKenzie Guardians | Representative Linda Flores OR 51 |
| Trout Unlimited | Representative Garrard OR 56 |
| Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde | Representative Kevin Cameron OR 19 |
| Friends of Mount Hood | Representative Dennis Richardson OR 4 |
| Friends of the Columbia Gorge | State Senator Bruce Star, OR 15 |
| No Gorge Casino! Cascade Locks | Former Representative Karen Minnis OR 49 |
| No Gorge Casino! Hood River | Former Representative Wayne Scott OR 39 |
| Hood River Valley Resident’s Committee | Former Representative Alan Brown OR 10 |
| Oregon Congressman David Wu | Former Representative Debi Farr OR 14 |
| State Representative Brian Boquest, OR 23 | Former Representative Jeff Kropf OR 17 |

The proposed casino site in Cascade Locks is 113 miles by road from the town of Warm Springs, the population center of the Warm Springs Reservation. A 226-mile “commute” around Mount Hood to reach the Cascade Locks site, on roads that can be treacherous and sometimes impassable during winter months, cannot be considered a reasonable commuting

distance. This obstacle makes the approval of the Gorge casino resort even less likely.

Our opportunity is finally here to bring an end to this ill-conceived Gorge casino proposal once and for all. A copy of the Department of Interior memo is available at www.gorgefriends.org. Join our email action list on the website to find out how you can help.

Land Trust Acquisition and Donation Protect Mosier Plateau



Mosier Plateau seen from Courtney Road.

Photo: Kate McBride

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

A windswept plateau sloping down from the ridgeline just east of Mosier, Oregon is now permanently protected. Two land donations and a recent purchase by the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust ensure that these properties will not be blighted by trophy houses and wind turbine development.

Two spectacular properties totaling 44 acres were donated to the Land Trust in late December by Friends founder Nancy Russell. Nancy purchased the properties in 2005 knowing that such prime properties could be quickly snatched up by developers eager to

replace the small, unobtrusive houses on the properties with extravagant McMansions.

At the same time that details for Nancy's donation were being finalized, Land Trust staff also began working with an adjacent landowner to even further protect the bluff line from development.

The Mosier urban area extends up onto the eastern bluff (see map), which means urban-area development there is permissible; in fact, owners of the bluff property had considered building wind turbines on top of the bluff. Friends Land Trust purchased this critical 2.65-acre property, and eventually it

will be subdivided to protect the upper half while allowing sale of the lower portion for residential development.

These acquisitions ensure protection of the ridgeline east of Mosier, which is highly visible from I-84, the City of Mosier, and the Historic Columbia River Highway, as well as Washington SR-14 and Coyote Wall across the river.

Land Trust staff will lead a spring hike on the property (see brochure for details), an easy walk with a 400-foot elevation gain. Join us to enjoy the views and learn more about the recreation potential of the property.

Congress Funds \$1 Million for Gorge Land Acquisition

Congress has appropriated \$1 million in federal land acquisition funding to the Columbia Gorge, thanks to tireless efforts by Friends and others. The Forest Service's National Scenic Area office has pinpointed the Cleveland property at Cape Horn as a top priority. This four-acre property, purchased by the Land Trust in 2006, is a key component of our *Campaign for Cape Horn*. Surrounded by public land, it will provide a cliff-top public viewpoint honoring Nancy Russell's efforts to protect Cape Horn.

The north-south ridgeline runs nearly the length of this Mosier property. Map: Friends GIS/Kate McBride



Cape Horn Conservancy

During the past year the Cape Horn Conservancy, an all-volunteer Skamania County group, has begun working with the U.S. Forest Service, Skamania County, and the Washington Trails Association to facilitate the future of the Cape Horn Trail.

More than 25 Conservancy members meet regularly to lay out the community's vision for a trail offering recreation and positive development for Skamania County. Friends' Outdoor Programs Coordinator Renee Tkach co-founded the group prior to joining Friends' staff and continues to provide input as a Cape Horn resident. As the Forest Service approaches the 2008 planning process for Cape Horn, the volunteer Conservancy will help ensure it is a safe and community-driven project.



Members of the Cape Horn Conservancy on a site visit. Photo: Kevin Gorman

Hiking Season Almost Here

Renee Tkach, Outdoor Programs Coordinator, renee@gorgefriends.org

Spring is just around the corner. The world-famous Columbia Gorge wildflowers will be bursting into bloom, so check out our hiking brochure in this newsletter and mark your calendar. See you on the trails!

Calling all Hike Leaders & Shepherds!

Spring Hike Volunteer Training
Wednesday, February 27, 6:00-8:00 pm

Join us at REI's new Clackamas Town Center location to review hiking program protocol and get updates on Friends activities. REI will provide goodies for volunteers. Contact Renee renee@gorgefriends.org or 503-241-3762 x103 for details.

Quality of Life is Key for Business

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, peter@gorgefriends.org

Ray Klebba owns the White Salmon Boat Works, a business founded on "quality of life" concerns. A master craftsman with more than 20 years experience designing and building award-winning small wooden boats, Ray and his wife Shelley guide aspiring boat owners in making their dream boats become reality.

Ray and Shelley share a dream of maintaining the quality of life in the Gorge. They actively support the Klickitat Trail Conservancy and strongly oppose expansion of Broughton Landing into a destination resort. According to Ray, "The increased traffic will not help our business and expensive resort housing will not be accessible to everyone."

Ray and Shelley have both testified and written letters to the Gorge Commission, and last summer they hosted an anti-Broughton resort information booth at the huge Windance swap meet.

Their business may be based on dreams but Ray and Shelley are rooted in the reality that quality of life is worth fighting for. Visit Ray and Shelley at www.raysdreamboats.com and check out the "History of Canoes."



Ray Klebba at his White Salmon Boat Works.

Photo: Peter Cornelison

Friends Wins Legal Victories Against Forest Service

Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney,
nathan@gorgefriends.org

As a result of two recent Friends courtroom victories, the U.S. Forest Service will be required to more thoroughly review the potential environmental impacts of land use and development projects in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

In the first legal case, Friends challenged a Forest Service decision to give a permanent easement to a logging company to cross federal Scenic Area land with heavy logging equipment. Prior to that decision, the road underlying the easement had not been used in many years and was slated for abandonment and restoration to a natural state.

Friends argued that the Forest Service was obligated to inform the public about the environmental impacts that could result from the permanent reopening, widening, and use of the road. A Magistrate Judge for the Federal District Court of Oregon agreed. Her

recommendations are currently pending before another judge.

In the other case, Friends and In Defense of Animals challenged a plan by the Forest Service and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to release Rocky Mountain goats in the National Scenic Area, without any evidence that the

goats are native to the Scenic Area and with little to no analysis of whether the goats might harm rare and endemic plant habitat. The judge in this case determined that the Forest Service is obligated to review the potential environmental impacts of the project before it may proceed.

Gorge Commission Staff Gives Destination Resort a Green Light

Kelley Beamer, Conservation Organizer, Kelley@gorgefriends.org

The executive director of the Columbia River Gorge Commission recently released a recommendation that would allow the first large-scale destination resort within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The proposed site, owned by Broughton Lumber Company, sits adjacent to a state park and a world-class windsurfing area used by thousands of windsurfers annually.

The director's report gives a stamp of approval to the largest development ever proposed on National Scenic Area lands. The report recommends allowing an unrestricted number of private vacation homes outside of a designated urban area and increasing the size of each unit 20% beyond the original proposal. It is now clear that what was first sold to the public as a "destination resort" has morphed into a private, high-end housing community.

Broughton Mill site, as seen from Oregon.

Photo: Peter Cornelison

The director's report gives a stamp of approval to the largest development ever proposed on National Scenic Area lands.

Currently, the property is zoned "commercial recreation," which allows for a rustic resort with cabins, camping, and limited commercial development. A recent study by economic consulting firm ECONorthwest determined that redevelopment under current zoning limitations is economically feasible and more consistent with recreation needs of the Gorge. Redeveloping the former mill using current rules would provide affordable, family-friendly overnight accommodations.

The Gorge Commission has received more than 1,000 public comments, with the vast majority opposed to a large-scale resort. A growing number of organizations oppose the plan amendment, including the Oregon and Washington chapters of the Sierra Club, Columbia Riverkeeper, Futurewise, 1,000 Friends of Oregon, and the Washington Environmental Council.

Casinos. Resorts. Air Quality.

The best way to stay on top of all the issues Friends is working on is to join our email action list. Our action alerts will keep you abreast of issues and also notify you about our upcoming hikes and events. Just go to www.gorgefriends.org and sign up at "Join our Email list."



Friends Conservation Director Michael Lang speaking at a news conference announcing legal action against PGE. Photo: Kelley Beamer

Friends Takes Legal Action to Clean Up Gorge Air

Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

On January 15, Friends and four other conservation groups announced plans to sue Portland General Electric for violations of the Clean Air Act. For nearly 30 years, PGE's coal-fired power plant in Boardman has unlawfully dirtied the air in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, and also more than 10 protected National Parks and Wilderness Areas.

The Boardman plant emits far more air pollution than any other stationary source in Oregon. Numerous scientific studies have concluded that emissions from the plant create acid rain and fog in the Columbia River Gorge and reduce visibility, clouding the spectacular vistas that make the Gorge famous. Coal pollution also harms human health,

causing asthma, bronchitis, mercury poisoning, and other ailments.

When the Boardman plant was first constructed, regulators mistakenly exempted PGE from having to install the pollution control equipment required by law, and have since failed to bring the plant into compliance, despite several opportunities to do so. In addition, on numerous documented occasions the plant's smokestacks have emitted more pollution than allowed even under the terms of PGE's permit.

It is time for the Boardman facility, which relies on 19th-century technology, to be brought up to 21st century standards. Friends will continue to seek installation of the best available pollution control technology at the plant as soon as possible.

Come Celebrate the Gorge with Friends

Jane Harris, Development Director, jane@gorgefriends.org

Annual Meeting in the Gorge

Friends' 28th Annual Meeting is set for Sunday, April 6 from 12:00 to 3:00 p.m. at Skamania Lodge. Non-members are also welcome at this wonderful event, which will include Dr. Ellen Morris Bishop, executive director of the Oregon Paleo Lands Institute. A geologist, writer, and photographer, Ellen's research helped define Oregon's dramatic ancient terrain. Her award-winning book, "In Search of Ancient Oregon," chronicles Oregon's geologic history. Watch for your invitation to arrive in early March.



Annual Meeting speaker Dr. Ellen Bishop (and friends). Photo: Oregon Paleo Lands Institute

Campaign for Cape Horn Nears Goal

Our \$4 million campaign to purchase two spectacular view properties on Cape Horn on the Washington side of the Gorge stands at more than \$3.4 million. In December we received additional gifts from Wes and Diane Hickey of Washougal and from Portland businessman, Al Jubitz. Smaller gifts also came in from long-time members and we are extremely pleased with campaign results to date.

Now the push is on to finish the campaign by June. In spring we will go to our full membership to involve them in the campaign as we wrap up the biggest fundraising effort in our organization's history.

Above background: Oregon view from trail up to Cape Horn. Photo: Cathy Robart

It's a Party in Hood River

Friends is throwing a party for Gorge members and invited guests at the Columbia Center for the Arts in Hood River on Saturday, March 15 from 7:00 to 10:30 p.m. "This is a great way to touch base with Gorge members and to introduce new folks to the organization," commented Peter Cornelison, Friends' field representative in Hood River.

We'll enjoy great beer and wine from the Double Mountain Brewery and Springhouse Cellar Winery, food and door prizes from Hood River businesses, and music by the Justin Jude band. Justin was named Oregon's best Singer/Songwriter 2007 at the Bite of Oregon, and is also on staff at Friends. So if you live in the Gorge, look for our invitations to come and enjoy an evening in Hood River with Friends.



Justin Jude will perform at the Hood River party.

Photo: Cristin Norine

Tax Incentives Can Boost Endowment

The federal government has extended the tax incentive that allows older donors to deduct money contributed to charities through their individual retirement accounts. Friends is working with our donors aged 70½ and older to direct tax-deductible gifts from their IRAs to our Endowment Fund, where the gift will remain in perpetuity while Friends uses the interest on the fund to help support our work.

Our Endowment is at about \$1.5 million, and we hope to increase that fund significantly over the next several years. Donors interested in making a gift to the fund should call Jane Harris at 503-241-3762 x102.

Spring beauties.

Photo: Don Jacobson



Spring view from a Catherine Creek hillside. Photo: Greg Lief
More wildflower photos and trip reports at www.OregonWildflowers.org.

Special Gifts

October 24, 2007 – January 23, 2008

IN HONOR OF SCOTT AND JESSICA PAYNE
DOUGLAS HICKS

IN HONOR OF NANCY RUSSELL
BILL PRICE

IN HONOR OF CHRIS BOSSOM
BRIAN AND PEGGY WEST

IN HONOR OF JEAN FROST
CAROL S. NEWMAN

IN HONOR OF LARRY WHITSON
AND PATRICK ALEXANDER
DIANA WOLFORD

IN HONOR OF BETTY BONHAM
CAROL AND JOHN LESCH

IN HONOR OF GREG LIEF
NORTH CHEATHAM

IN MEMORY OF PONGO AND DOMINO
BERNARD RATE

IN MEMORY OF JOHN T KING
PATRICIA JOHNSTON

IN MEMORY OF GRACE BENZ
LAUREN DART

IN MEMORY OF NANCY POND MCCREA
RACHEL BOLIYARD
RUTH CONRAD

IN MEMORY OF KENNETH SCHRAMM
NANCY SCHRAMM

IN MEMORY OF EDITH AND ALBERT GOLIK
DENNIS M. GOLIK

IN MEMORY OF W.D. BASQUE
VERONICA BASQUE

Photo: Oliver Dalton

Featured Hike: Catherine Creek

Options: Paved 1-mile loop trail above river (flat), and several trails up to 8 miles, 1700-ft. elevation gain.

There's no better place to get an early start on spring hiking than at beautiful Catherine Creek. The 4,000-acre former ranch hosts some 90 wildflower species that bloom throughout the year. A fairly flat, accessible paved trail above the river offers great wildflowers and beautiful views to hikers of all ages and abilities.

North from the parking area, trails lead to a small waterfall, a natural arch,

and dramatic views of the Gorge and Mount Hood. Friends is offering three hikes at Catherine Creek this spring (see brochure), including a weekday excursion.

Directions: Take I-84 to Exit 64 Hood River. Cross the Hood River Bridge to WA SR-14, turn right and continue east to Old Highway 8 near MP71. Turn left on Old Highway 8 and continue just over 1 mile to the Catherine Creek parking area.



Know Your Gorge *Gorge Geology 101*

Nowhere in the Pacific Northwest does a landscape reveal its geologic history more visibly than in the Columbia Gorge. The synclines and anticlines of the eastern Gorge, a petrified old-growth snag on the Eagle Creek trail, and perfect columnar basalt walls of Latourell Falls all tell stories of the titanic shifts, volcanic outbursts, massive lava flows, and epic floods that have shaped the Gorge.

All the geology is there in plain sight, but sometimes it takes a wonderful teacher to bring it into perspective. Fortunately, Dr. Ellen Morris Bishop of the Oregon Paleo Institute is just such a teacher, and she will be the keynote speaker at Friends' Annual Meeting on Sunday April 6 at Skamania Lodge (see page 10).

Whether you love geology or are just curious about the Gorge, Ellen's photographs and storytelling will give you a new appreciation for this incomparable landscape.

Correction: In our Fall 2007 issue, "Know Your Gorge" referred to long-billed curlews wintering in the Gorge. Friends member Tom McAllister, a former Oregon Journal outdoor writer, contacted us with a correction: curlews typically don't arrive until mid-March for spring in the Gorge. Thanks Tom!



The Syncline (Coyote Wall) as seen from Mosier. Photo: Mark McConnell



Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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