

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

2018-2021 Strategic Plan

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

Goal #1: Protect and Enhance the Columbia Gorge

Keeping the Columbia Gorge wild and beautiful is the core of what we do. We ensure the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act and other laws protecting the Columbia Gorge's scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources are upheld and enforced.

OBJECTIVES

Ensure Land Uses and Development Do Not Harm the Columbia Gorge

- Stop energy production, transport and terminal proposals that would harm the Gorge
- Prevent urban sprawl by limiting urban expansion
- Discourage inappropriate land uses and residential, commercial and industrial development by reviewing development applications and legally appealing decisions when necessary

Maintain and Improve Laws that Protect the Columbia Gorge

- Improve the National Scenic Area Management Plan, including climate adaptation and carbon-emission reduction goals
- Support legislative efforts that protect Gorge resources
- Advocate for government agency funding to support Gorge protection
- Assess the feasibility of an advocacy campaign to promote greater Gorge protection
- Oppose legislation that weakens Gorge protection

Three themes weave through the goals and objectives of this strategic plan.

The Eagle Creek fire

moved us into an enhanced leadership role and our fire recovery work resides in our advocacy and new public land stewardship work.

Climate change is a clear threat to the future health of the Columbia Gorge and its communities. We will take action to address the effects of climate change and advocate for policies that build climate resilience.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge will undergo a **diversity, equity and inclusion** process to ensure our activities and culture are relevant and valued by generations to come.

Golden sunlight over Crown Point.

Photo: Theresa Peterson

Ensure Conservation of Land through Private and Public Acquisitions, Enhancement Efforts and Stewardship Practices

- Review landholdings to determine appropriate long-term ownerships and priority stewardship for Friends' held lands
- Transfer three to four *Preserve the Wonder* properties to appropriate agencies
- Control invasive weeds on land trust lands with emphasis on two publicly used properties
- Ensure natural recovery of the Eagle Creek burn area
- Limit the spread of invasive weeds and plant native vegetation in the Eagle Creek burn area and other Gorge public lands

Establish a Loop Trail Around the Columbia Gorge through the *Gorge Towns to Trails Initiative*

- Build three to four trail segments to expand the trail system
- With community support, ensure a trail connection is secured in the "Mosier Mile"
- Hold a series of *Gorge Towns to Trails* summits and build a coalition of local government and elected officials

Elowah Falls mirror. Photo: Matt Meisenheimer



Eagle family breakfast. Photo: Linda Steider



Protect Lands and Relieve Congestion through Sustainable Recreation and Transportation

- Support at least three federal and one state planning processes to disperse recreation from high-impact areas and encourage increased transit options
- Ensure *ReadySetGorge!* and Trailhead Ambassador programs educate hikers to be responsible caretakers of the Gorge
- Advocate for entry permits into sensitive places such as Oneonta Gorge
- Ensure boot brushes are installed and maintained at popular trailheads in the Gorge

Goal #2: Build Public Support for Lasting Gorge Protection

A large, cross section of public support is critical if we are to preserve the Columbia Gorge for future generations. Friends will continue to strengthen and diversify its member, volunteer and activist bases to garner greater support for long-term protection.

OBJECTIVES

Retain and Deepen Membership, Activist and Volunteer Bases to Ensure they are Robust and Diverse

- Ensure membership remains above 7,000 members
- Annually generate 200 new activists, 50 mid-level activists and seven high-level activists
- Increase volunteer participation to a 3:1 ratio (three actions for every volunteer)
- Generate 1,000 volunteer hours annually to steward Gorge lands

Singing for joy. Photo: Don Feltham



Happy, muddy hiker at Rowena Plateau. Photo: Paloma Ayala

Educate and Engage the Public to Support Gorge Protection

- Educate 1,200 school children through our youth education programs
- Ensure 20% or more of the people attending our guided hikes are new to the organization
- Undertake a communications/branding process and launch in conjunction with organization's 40th anniversary (September 2020)

Deepen and Broaden Friends' Network of Allies

- Work with high-level, public education partners to reach new audiences
- Collaborate with coalitions and private and public leaders on initiatives to further Gorge conservation and recreation goals
- Amplify the impact of three diverse community partners to enhance the greater good of the Gorge

Goal #3: Increase the Financial Stability and Organizational Effectiveness of Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Building a strong organization of talented and dedicated staff and volunteers is paramount to carrying out the goals of this plan. Friends will raise its funding and overall operational capacity to work toward being the most effective and efficient conservation organization in the Pacific Northwest.

OBJECTIVES

Build the Financial Strength of Friends of the Columbia Gorge

- Increase operational fundraising revenue by 8% annually throughout the plan
- Generate \$1.2 million for future land acquisitions and \$800,000 for the land trust stewardship endowment
- Increase planned giving commitments by 50%
- Create ten-year financial sustainability plan

Strengthen and Diversify Staff, Board and Trustees

- Develop leadership succession for board and staff
- Hire, develop and retain a strong staff team
- Create philanthropy and emerging leader ad hoc committees
- Undertake a diversity, equity and inclusion initiative with board and staff

Wahclella Falls. Photo: Sean Estergaard



Clouds over Steigerwald. Photo: Ty Sprankle

Strengthen the Operational Tools and Processes of the Organization

- Amend policies to increase transparency and bring our workplaces up to date
- Create decision-making process for new programmatic initiatives
- Increase information technology (IT) and geographic information system (GIS) capabilities
- Secure Land Trust Alliance accreditation for the land trust

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