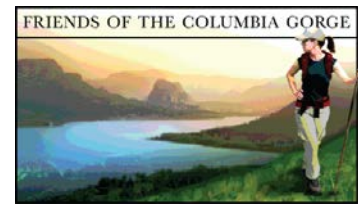


Conservation Advocacy Fact Sheet

Friends of the Columbia Gorge



The new administration and its anti-environmental policies present potential threats to everything that we have achieved in the past 30 years of Gorge protection. In 2017 and beyond, Friends of the Columbia Gorge will strive to protect all of our past achievements and work on the local, state and federal levels to protect and expand protections for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Stopping Coal Terminals!

In January 2017, Washington State Public Lands Commissioner, Peter Goldmark, denied a sublease for the Millennium coal terminal proposed for Longview, WA. The denial of the sublease means the terminal cannot be built. To be absolutely certain that this terminal will never pollute the Columbia River with coal, Friends will be working with our allies in the Power Past



Coal train route from Powder River Basin mines to proposed terminals sites. Map source: NRDC

Coal campaign to make sure the remaining permits for this project are denied. Millennium was the last remaining coal terminal proposal in either Oregon or Washington, so now a total of six coal terminals have been defeated or withdrawn (one proposal remains in Vancouver, BC)! This is a huge victory for the Pacific Northwest and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

If all of these terminals had been approved, there would have been a ten-fold increase in the number of coal trains traveling through the Gorge, each one spewing coal dust and debris throughout the National Scenic Area and its waterways. Coal trains with open-topped coal cars still travel through the Gorge on a daily basis, and each train loses an estimated 100 million particles of coal per second! In 2017 and beyond, Friends will work to make sure BNSF Railway cleans up its coal pollution and cover its coal cars.

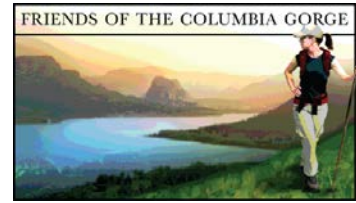
Crude Oil-by-Rail Through the Gorge

- **Unsafe Rail Cars:** Explosive Bakken crude oil is being transported at high speeds through the Gorge in unsafe rail cars that puncture at speeds as low as 14 mph, leading to oil fires and explosions. New safety standards for rail cars only slightly improve impact resistance.
- **Derailments and Explosions:** Nationally, in the past three years several oil train derailments, explosions and fires have resulted in 47 deaths, the evacuation of thousands of people, millions of gallons of oil spilled into waterways and billions of dollars of property damage and environmental destruction. Our fears were realized last year when an oil train derailed in the small Gorge town of Mosier, catching fire and spilling 42,000 gallons of oil. Mosier residents were spared only because it was a rare windless day, thus preventing an unstoppable fire that would have incinerated the town. The Federal Railroad Administration determined that the derailment was caused by Union Pacific Railroad's negligence. We continue our work to reduce the threats of oil-by-rail in the hope of preventing any future such disasters.
- **New Oil Terminals Threaten the Gorge:** Though we have had many victories over the past year, several oil terminal proposals are still active in Washington State, including what would be the largest oil-by-rail terminal in the U.S. – the **Tesoro Vancouver Energy** terminal. This terminal would need several permits to operate, including approval by the governor. The comment period and public hearing on an air pollution discharge permit is expected this spring and a final decision from the governor's office on the terminal is anticipated this spring.
- **Union Pacific Rail Expansion:** To facilitate an increase in oil-by-rail and company profits, Union Pacific proposed four miles of new track through the town of Mosier. In November, their permit application was denied by the Wasco County Board of Commissioners due to violations of the National Scenic Area land use ordinance and tribal treaty rights. The decision has been appealed by Union Pacific to the Columbia River Gorge Commission. The railroad also filed a lawsuit in federal court attempting to exempt itself from regulation under the National Scenic Area Act. Friends and our allies have filed a motion to intervene in this case, and a hearing in the case is expected on February 21.

Sign a petition against coal & oil trains/terminals at: GorgeFriends.org/Petition

Conservation Advocacy Fact Sheet

Friends of the Columbia Gorge



Oil Terminal & Oil Train Legislation

Friends and our allies in the Stand Up to Oil Coalition (SUTO) are supporting bills in Oregon and Washington related to oil trains and oil terminals. Oil by rail is inherently unsafe. Until it's stopped, we must hold railroads accountable by improving oil spill response; funding for emergency preparedness; and assurances that railroads can pay for worst-case scenario derailments, oil spills, fires, and explosions.

Oregon: Friends supports **Senate Bill 7** (sponsored by Sen. Courtney), and **House Bill 2131** (sponsored by Rep. Smith Warner), which would require oil spill contingency plans, levy fees on the railroads to fund an oil spill contingency fund, and require proof of insurance for worst-case oil spills. SB 7 has been referred to the Senate Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee. HB 2131 has been referred to the House Committee on Energy and Environment. Hearings are not yet set.



Mosier derailment and fire, June 2016. Photo: Michael McKeag

Washington: **HB 1210** and **SB 5425** would improve funding and financial responsibility for oil spills, improve marine safety from the threat of oil spills from increased tanker traffic, and improve pipeline safety. Oregon residents should contact their legislators and tell them to *support* SB 7 and HB 2131, and *oppose* HB 2480. Washington residents should ask their legislators to *support* HB 1210 and SB 5425 in Washington.

Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan Review

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act required the development of a Management Plan that ensures the protection and enhancement of scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources. The Management Plan must also protect agricultural lands, forest lands, and open spaces. The original Management Plan was adopted in 1991 and has been reviewed only once in 25 years, although the law requires it to be reviewed at least once every ten years. Most of the resource protection provisions of the plan are based on inventories, science, and policy that are more than 25 years old.

Many of the issues raised by the public during the last review of the plan have not been addressed, yet development on sensitive lands within the National Scenic Area continues to march forward under guidelines developed more than 25 years ago. In 2004, some regulations were weakened to allow more logging on sensitive lands in the Gorge, even on National Forest lands in Special Management Areas. New mining operations are still allowed in the Scenic Area. The outstanding geologic features of the Gorge receive no special protection and are exposed to open-pit mining. Native plant communities, including Native American first foods, receive no protection despite tribal treaty rights. Land divisions take place without analysis of cumulative effects to scenic, natural, cultural, or recreation resources. And guidelines should be adopted to address the transport of fossil fuels through the Scenic Area, particularly coal and oil trains.

A fact sheet including a list of our priority issues for plan review can be found on our website: GorgeFriends.org/PlanReview

Take Action: GorgeFriends.org/Comment

How Can I Help Protect the Gorge?

Sign up for Action Alerts: GorgeFriends.org/Subscribe. This is the best way to stay up-to-date about key conservation issues!

Contact one of Friends' Conservation Organizers:

- Portland Metro Area & Clark Co: Ryan Rittenhouse at ryan@gorgefriends.org or 971-634-2034
- Columbia Gorge Area: Peter Cornelison at peter@gorgefriends.org or 541-490-8473