

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Fall 2008 Newsletter

*Nancy Russell
Founder, Friends of the Columbia Gorge
1932 - 2008*

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Honoring Nancy
Russell

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Holiday Gift
Brochure

Insert

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Take Action Today!

The Bush Administration Can Stop the Gorge Casino

Photo: Chris Carvalho, Lensjoy.com

We have a short window of opportunity with the Bush administration to STOP a Gorge casino. Secretary of Interior Dirk Kempthorne is on record opposing off-reservation casinos. The Gorge communities of Hood River, Mosier, Washougal, Bingen, and Wasco County have raised concerns to Kempthorne about the increased traffic, crime, pollution and gambling addiction a Gorge casino would generate (see page 8). In addition, more than two-thirds of all Oregonians oppose a Gorge casino.

If you care deeply about the Columbia Gorge and its communities, please act today to urge Secretary Kempthorne to take immediate action to deny the Columbia Gorge casino proposal before he leaves office. Tell the Secretary that the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is no place for a massive casino.

Secretary of the Interior

Dirk Kempthorne

1849 C St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20240
Phone: 202-208-3100 Fax: 202-208-1821

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/

Cover photo: Nancy Russell in the Columbia Gorge. Photo: Courtesy of the Russell Family

Correction: The Cape Horn waterfall photo in our Summer 2008 issue was taken by photographer Carolyn Ganus.

Director's Letter

Four and a half years ago, I got a call from our founder Nancy Russell asking if I would come to her house, as she and her husband Bruce wanted to speak to me. It was an unusual request but I didn't think much about it, as I had a close relationship with Nancy and enjoyed spending time with both of them.

As we sat in the Russells' living room, Bruce was struggling to breathe, afflicted with a host of problems that would take his life six months later. Then Nancy dropped a bombshell on me: she had just been diagnosed with ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease. I knew this was a death sentence and I struggled with words to comfort, to understand, to process this awful news.

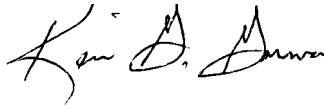
Nancy was composed and matter of fact and didn't show much emotion until I asked, "How are your children taking the news?" As we discussed her prognosis, she said, "I feel like someone has played a mean trick on me." That short comment was the last semblance of any self concern I ever heard from her.

Nancy continued to visit the Gorge while she could, but as her disease progressed, Gorge excursions were replaced by paintings of Gorge scenery in her room. As *The Oregonian* chronicled in September, she took one final Gorge tour less than three weeks before she died, to say goodbye to the landscapes she loved so well.

Some people masterfully exemplify how to live, and Nancy Russell certainly fell into that category. But she also left a wonderful life lesson in how to die. Nancy died the way she lived. She refused to back down. She surrounded herself with flowers and children's laughter. And she cared deeply that her three decades of tireless dedication to

protecting the Columbia Gorge would make a lasting difference. When two of our staff members visited with her a few weeks before her death, Nancy's very deliberate final words to them were, "Don't budge."

I was blessed—and I don't use that word lightly—to spend time with Nancy on the last two days of her life. She was clearly at peace and ready to die. I felt more distress for myself and those around her than I did for Nancy. Nancy Russell lived life large and accepted a challenge that altered her life, to benefit generations to come. That challenge, her life's work, is now in our hands, and you better believe she expects us to carry it forward.



Kevin Gorman
Executive Director

*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.*



Nancy Russell's last visit to the Columbia Gorge, in August. Photo: Aubrey Russell

Goodbye to the Guardian of the Gorge

Kevin Gorman, Executive Director, kevin@gorgefriends.org



Friends of the Columbia Gorge Founder Nancy Russell: Three Decades Devoted to Protecting the Columbia River Gorge

Thirty years ago, the conservation world had never heard of Nancy Neighbor Russell. A Portland housewife with no fundraising or lobbying experience and little non-profit experience, she was asked not only to start a fledging organization, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, but also to pursue the monumental task of securing federal protection of the Columbia Gorge in both Oregon and Washington. Most people assumed she was in over her head. But those people didn't know Nancy Russell.

Nancy Ann Neighbor was born in Portland, Oregon on January 11, 1932. The second of three children, Nancy was strong-willed and adventurous from an early age. She received a scholarship to attend Catlin Hillside School (now Catlin

Gabel), and continued her education at Scripps College in Claremont, California, also on a scholarship.

Nancy married Bruce Russell in 1957 and focused her energy on being a wife and raising four children: Sally, Wendy, Alison, and Aubrey. Her third child, son Hardy, died of meningitis at age two. While raising her family, Nancy volunteered as a docent for the Oregon Historical Society and amassed a collection of tennis trophies, a tribute to her competitive spirit and natural athleticism.

Nancy's love of the outdoors, interest in botany, and fascination with Oregon history led her to explore the Columbia Gorge. She became a self-taught wildflower expert and developed the Wildflower Walkers program for the Portland Garden Club. Nancy's activities involving the Gorge prepared her



Nancy Russell's scenic "South Forty" property above Mosier is now public land. Photo: Kevin Gorman

“... her greatest legacy may lie in the inspiration her example provides to those who follow in her footsteps.”

well for her next adventure, one that would last the rest of her life.

Protecting the Place She Loved

In the late 1970s, John Yeon, a highly respected architect and son of the roadmaster of the Historic Columbia River Highway, was looking to recruit someone to lead the charge to gain federal protection for the Columbia River Gorge. Creation of the I-205 Glenn Jackson Bridge across the Columbia River meant that development could quickly sprawl into the Gorge on both sides of the river. John invited Nancy and Bruce to his property across from Multnomah Falls, hoping to woo Nancy into taking the lead to protect the Gorge.

Nancy was enthralled by John's proposal and agreed to lead the effort. For the next six years, she fundraised, lobbied, spoke to groups throughout Oregon and Washington, and fearlessly stood up to opponents and politicians attempting to water down or compromise legislation to protect the Gorge. She brushed off threats that included slashed tires and bumper stickers reading “Save the Gorge from Nancy Russell.” Her efforts bore fruit when Congress passed the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, which was signed into law by President Ronald Reagan in 1986. It was the only stand-alone environmental legislation passed during the Reagan administration.

Nancy's commitment to protecting the Gorge was tireless. For the next twenty years she talked to community groups, raised funds, rallied volunteers, lobbied political representatives, testified at public hearings, hiked the

landscapes, drove the back roads, and on numerous occasions purchased property herself to ensure it would not fall prey to development. Her dedication didn't flag even when she was diagnosed in 2004 with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS (also known as “Lou Gehrig's disease”), a terminal pronouncement with an inescapable conclusion. She continued to hike and speak and promote Gorge protection into her final year. This September, less than three weeks before she died, Nancy made her final trip out to the landscape she loved so well.

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area

No individual has had such a lasting impact on a Pacific Northwest landscape as Nancy Russell has had on the Columbia Gorge. Between that first meeting with John Yeon and 2008, Nancy's accomplishments included:

- Shepherding passage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act through Congress;
- Founding Friends of the Columbia Gorge, a robust organization that today boasts eleven staff, 5,000 members, and a \$1 million annual budget;
- Successfully advocating for purchase into public ownership of nearly 40,000 acres of Gorge lands from willing sellers;
- Personally purchasing more than thirty properties to ensure that they would be protected from development.

Nancy's work and scrupulous principles gradually led to a shift in Gorge residents' sentiment toward her. Nancy



The flower-strewn trails at Memaloose were like home to Nancy. Photo: Aubrey Russell

and Bruce's generous donation to Oregon State Parks to keep automobiles off the restored section of the Historic Columbia River Highway from Hood River to Mosier endeared her forever to the community of Mosier. And Skamania County, which in 1986 had flown its flag at half-mast when the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act passed, purchased land from Nancy Russell in 2006. In a cooperative agreement to establish the Cape Horn trailhead, she sold the property to the county for half its market value.

Today, the Gorge faces issues Nancy never could have contemplated three decades ago, such as proposals for large-scale casinos and destination resorts. Yet because of Nancy's commitment to protecting the Gorge, the number of individuals stepping up to the challenge to fight for those protections continues to grow.

Nancy Russell single-handedly achieved many gains for Gorge protection, but her greatest legacy may lie in the inspiration her example provides to those who follow in her footsteps.

Now
You
See It ...



Now You Don't!

Before and after views from the Cape Horn bluff.

View photo: Dan Huntington Inset: Kate McBride

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

This October, the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust formally transferred ownership of 4.19 acres of land above Cape Horn to the U.S. Forest Service, bringing the Land Trust's first major project close to completion.

Our efforts to open the rim of Cape Horn to the public began in earnest more than four years ago with the purchase of the Cleveland property on the Cape Horn bluff. Eventually we will have a modest overlook honoring Nancy and Bruce Russell installed there. Nancy last visited this magnificent spot in early September on her final visit to the Gorge. By then, only rubble and hardscape remained where the massive

house had been, and she was thrilled to see that her vision for Cape Horn was becoming a reality.

As required by the Forest Service, before title could be transferred, the 5,500 square-foot house and garage and 6,000 square-foot barn had to be removed. In July, we contracted with Green Home Construction to handle the deconstruction work. Some 80% of the building materials cleared from the site are now being sold for re-use through the Gorge Rebuild-It Center in Hood River. George Schmid & Sons Construction removed the asphalt and pavement, recycling as much as possible and actually burying the concrete before beginning the final grading and reseeding of the

land. The project was completed in early October, just before the rains started.

The Forest Service is currently working on plans to reroute the Cape Horn trail. Prior to removal of the buildings, Gorge views were totally obscured on the section of trail leading past the property. The new route will run along the newly opened rim of the bluff and take full advantage of the stunning vistas up and down the Gorge.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge will be organizing stewardship workdays at Cape Horn to revegetate the land with native plants and remove invasive species. To volunteer, contact Renee Tkach at renee@gorgefriends.org, or visit us online at www.gorgefriends.org.

Intel Volunteers in the Gorge

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

More than fifty Intel employees volunteered with Friends of the Columbia Gorge at Multnomah Falls and Wahclella Falls in late summer, alongside U.S. Forest Service staff. Intel volunteers constructed 800 feet of split rail fencing along the Multnomah Falls trail, and wielded brush cutters, rakes, and shovels to improve three miles of Trail #400 near Wahclella Falls.

The Intel volunteers had a great time, and many plan to bring friends and family out to see their accomplishments. To learn how you or your company can volunteer in the Gorge with Friends, contact Renee Tkach at renee@gorgefriends.org or 503-241-3762 x103.



Volunteers building fencing along the Multnomah Falls switchback.

Photo: Renee Tkach

Columbia River Gorge Guest House

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, peter@gorgefriends.org

The Columbia River Gorge Guest House welcomes visitors from around the world who want simple, reasonable accommodations while they enjoy hiking, rafting, biking, and climbing in the nearby Columbia Gorge.

Located near Cape Horn in Skamania County, the Guest House is owned by Friends members Elise and Steve Thompson. A 40-year resident of the area, Steve is always happy

to share regional knowledge with guests, such as where to purchase salmon from local fishermen, the best berry-picking sites, and favorite nearby wineries. The Guesthouse provides private rooms as well as tent sites and a self-service continental breakfast each morning. It's a great place for reunions, retreats, and company meetings.

For more information, please visit www.columbiarivergorgeguesthouse.com.



Lewis Woodpecker. Photo: Dennis Paulson

Lyle Christmas Bird Count

The annual Lyle Christmas Bird Count is scheduled for Sunday, December 14. Join us for a great opportunity to learn about the more than 100 species of birds in the Gorge. All skill levels are welcome.

The Lyle Christmas Bird Count is co-sponsored by Friends of the Columbia Gorge, the Columbia Land Trust, Klickitat Winery, and the National Audubon Society. To participate, contact Bob Hansen before December 7 at 509-637-2736 or bobhansen@gorge.net.

Guest House owners Elise and Steve Thompson.



Gorge Communities Speak Out to BIA

Kelley Beamer, Conservation Organizer, kelley@gorgefriends.org

In late August, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) sent a letter to eight Columbia Gorge communities requesting input on potential impacts from an off-reservation casino in Cascade Locks. The BIA asked whether a casino would cause detrimental effects, including social impacts, affordable housing supply, emergency response services, law enforcement, economic development, and the environment.

Here is how Gorge community leaders responded:

“The Columbia River Gorge is a spectacular scenic area that offers world-class environmental, historic, aesthetic, and recreational values... Casino development is antithetical to these values and ... will seriously degrade the Gorge’s unique resources.”

—Todd Mohr, Planning Commissioner of Cascade Locks, OR

“I want our children to be able to fish for salmon and trout, to see the forests, deer, and elk... This is the NW lifestyle we cherish and deserve. I, along with our city council, do not feel like the casino will benefit our vision of Washougal and the Columbia River Gorge.”

—Mayor Stacey Sellers, Washougal, WA

“Our communities are interdependent, and a massive development like the proposed casino—significantly larger than the town of Cascade Locks itself—would change the nature of those characteristics that Mosier’s residents have stated they want to preserve and protect.”

—Mayor Marc Berry, Mosier, OR

“Our tourism and quality of life depend on clean air, so potentially adverse effects on air quality are of great concern to our City. To the extent that additional automobile traffic due to the casino in Cascade Locks increases air pollution, it will adversely affect our City.”

—Mayor Linda Streich, Mayor of Hood River, OR

“Even though the proposed gaming establishment would be located in Cascade Locks, Oregon it would have direct and indirect impacts on communities in Washington.. and specifically the City of Bingen. ... Many people have chosen to move to the Columbia Gorge area for a particular quality of life. The establishment of a gaming facility in Cascade Locks should not be allowed to change that quality of life.”

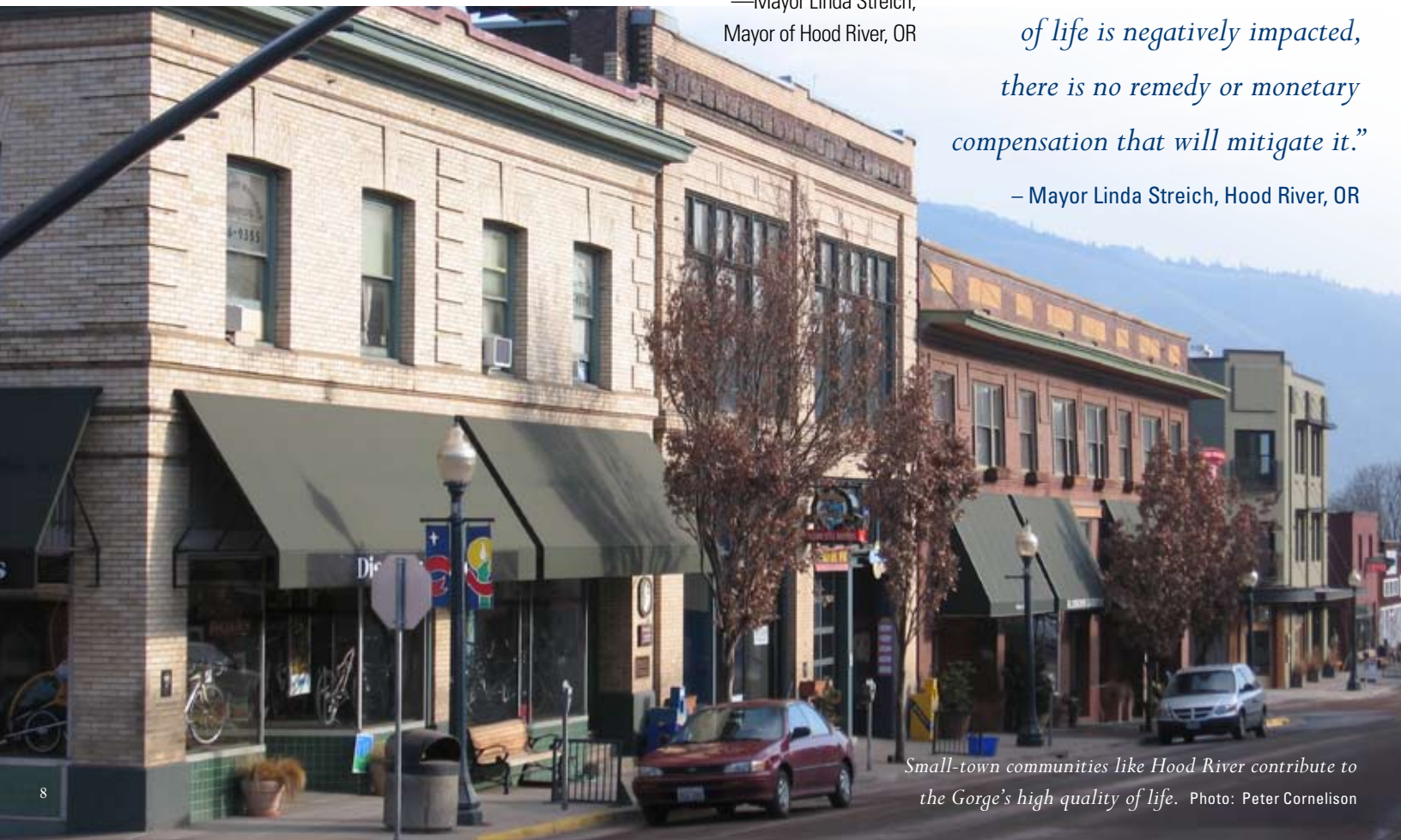
—Mayor Brian Prigel, Mayor of Bingen, WA

“Our first concern with this proposal is ... higher levels of problem and pathological gambling, the need for more crisis contacts, and an increase in the numbers of persons seeking gambling treatment.”

—Wasco County Commission, OR

“To the extent that our quality of life is negatively impacted, there is no remedy or monetary compensation that will mitigate it.”

— Mayor Linda Streich, Hood River, OR



Small-town communities like Hood River contribute to the Gorge’s high quality of life. Photo: Peter Cornelison



A proposed destination resort development would dominate this riverfront landscape.

Photo: Lydie Boyer

Gorge Commission's Destination Resort Rules Appealed

By Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

In September, a coalition of thirty-one parties led by Friends of the Columbia Gorge, including Gorge landowners, businesses, conservation organizations, and the congressman who introduced the National Scenic Area Act in the U.S. House of Representatives, appealed new rules that would allow the first destination resort development ever constructed within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area outside of the urban areas.

Earlier this year, the Columbia River Gorge Commission amended the Gorge-wide management plan to allow urban-scale destination resorts within the National Scenic Area. By approving the amendment, the Commission has violated the law, abandoned its duty to protect the Columbia Gorge, and set a terrible

precedent for future generations.

The first resort to be pursued under the amendment will likely be a private housing development with at least 245 residential units on the banks of the Columbia River, just west of White Salmon, Washington. This would be the largest development allowed since the creation of the National Scenic Area in 1986. The development would be at a former mill site owned by Broughton Lumber Company, adjacent to an internationally renowned windsurfing site and a state park.

Prior to the amendment, the Scenic Area rules allowed the former mill to be redeveloped as a rustic resort with 35 cabins and up to 175 camping sites. The rule change sets the stage for Broughton

Lumber Company or a future landowner to instead pursue development of private vacation homes, restaurants, retail businesses, and a conference center.

Former Congressman Jim Weaver (D-Eugene) joined in appealing the destination resort amendment. Congressman Weaver was the sponsor of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, H.R. 5705, which became law in 1986. In a declaration filed with the court, Congressman Weaver stated, "If implemented, the destination resort amendment will result in significant development and commercial uses in excess of what I intended to be permitted under the Scenic Area Act, and will result in adverse resource impacts in violation of the Scenic Area Act."

Friends' Nancy Russell Endowment

Jane Harris, Development Director, jane@gorgefriends.org

In honor of our founder Nancy Russell, Friends' board of directors made the decision to name our endowment fund after her. Nancy never felt a need for this type of recognition, but the board and staff felt it was important to have Nancy's name on this endowment for Gorge protection. It remains in perpetuity, just as we know Nancy's legacy in the Gorge will live on. The fund currently includes \$1.3 million in donor gifts, and interest from the fund is used to support our day-to-day operations.

Earlier this year, we established the

Vic Clausen Youth Fund within the larger endowment. Gifts to this fund support our work in southwest Washington schools, educating middle-school students about the Gorge and supporting field opportunities that provide hands-on educational experience in the Gorge.

Making a gift to the Russell Endowment is simple and can include an outright gift of stock or cash. An endowment gift can also be included in an estate plan.

For more information or to make a gift, please call our development department at 503-241-3762 x102.



Nancy Russell in 2006.

Photo: Friends of the Columbia Gorge Archives

In Memory of Nancy Russell *Gifts through October 30, 2008*

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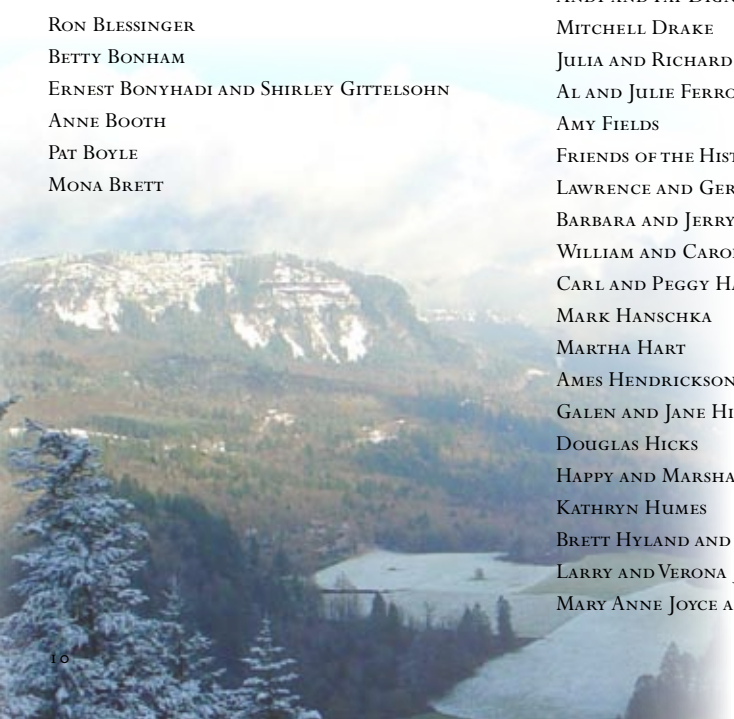
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PATRICIA READING





Bald Eagle. Photo: Dennis Paulson

Featured Hike: Bald Eagle Hike

Distance: Easy one mile, little to no elevation gain. Members only.

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

Bring your binoculars and join us for a special members-only outing on Saturday, January 10, to view bald eagles in the Gorge. Winter is the prime season to watch bald eagles, and this special event will be a great opportunity to learn about these iconic raptors. Forest Service biologist Cathy Flick will lead an easy stroll near the Klickitat River and introduce us to eagle pairs who winter in the Columbia Gorge.

To register and/or to become a member, visit www.gorgefriends.org/hikes. For more information, call Renee Tkach at 503-241-3762 x103.

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Special Gifts July 22 - October 21, 2008

IN HONOR OF DR. JAMES M. JONES
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IN MEMORY OF GEORGE OGDEN, JR.
NANCY SCHRAMM

IN MEMORY OF NANCY STOLTE ROSENFELD
MILDRED AND EDWARD ANDERSEN
JOHN ROSENFELD

Photo: Dennis Paulson

The Columbia Gorge Discovery Center

The Columbia Gorge Discovery Center is the official interpretive center of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, inspiring appreciation and stewardship through exhibits and public programs. For a limited time the Discovery Center is offering membership discounts to all Friends members.



Photo: Courtesy Columbia River Gorge Discovery Center

The Discovery Center's recent additions include a live raptor program and a wonderful Ice Age exhibit, complete with a life-size Columbian mammoth model. Handicap-accessible trails through native landscaping, access to the nine-mile Riverfront Trail, a store, café, library, and excellent event facilities are all part of the Center. For more information, visit www.gorgediscovery.org.

Know Your Gorge *Air Quality Problems? Ask a Lichen.*



Left: Letharia Vulpina

Photo: Kevin Gorman

Right: Icmadophila ericetorum

Photo: Linda Geiser

Below: Polycarpa Xanthoria

Photo: Linda Geiser

Scientists, study groups, and political officials are working to determine how polluted the Columbia Gorge airshed is, but the brain trust best situated to answer that question actually has no brains at all. And who would that be? Lichens. Lichens are symbiotic combinations of fungus and algae and serve as some of the Gorge's best pollution indicators.

Some common lichens react negatively to increased nitrogen levels and acid rain, while others fare well despite pollution. U.S. Forest Service scientist Linda Geiser has studied Gorge lichens for fifteen years,

and has found that the condition of certain lichen species helps accurately pinpoint the most polluted areas in the Gorge, and even indicate the types of pollution affecting them.

The east and west ends of the Gorge are the most heavily polluted. The Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area in the west contributes high levels of toxic motor vehicle emissions to Gorge air. East of the Gorge in Boardman, PGE's coal-fired power plant and the Three Mile Canyon Farms, home to 60,000 cows, are major sources of pollution that funnel into the Gorge.



Lichens help researchers better understand Gorge air quality problems and the effects of pollution on Gorge ecosystems. How those problems are addressed is up to us.



Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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