

# FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

*Celebrating 25 years 1980-2005*

Spring 2005 Newsletter



preserving a legacy

## \$4 million Yeon Gift Takes Friends into New Era

By Kevin Gorman, Executive Director, [kevin@gorgefriends.org](mailto:kevin@gorgefriends.org)

Norman Yeon had immense footsteps to follow when it came to demonstrating his passion for protecting the Columbia Gorge.

In 1913 Norman's father, John B. Yeon, served as roadmaster of the Historic Columbia River Highway, volunteering his services for \$1 per year. In 1980 Norman's brother, the younger John Yeon, recruited Nancy Russell to found Friends of the Columbia Gorge to advocate for federal protection of the Gorge.

*A significant portion of the Yeon bequest will be used to purchase scenic landscapes in the Columbia Gorge.*

photo: © James O. Holloway

Norman Yeon took a quieter yet equally substantial route to show his commitment to the Gorge. On his death in 2004, he bequeathed nearly half his estate to Friends of the Columbia Gorge. Norman Yeon's gift of approximately \$4 million, to date Oregon's largest unrestricted conservation gift, was announced this March at Friends' 25th annual meeting at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles.

### Creating a Land Trust

The Yeon gift will be used in part to launch a new land trust program to purchase important scenic lands in the Columbia Gorge. In addition, it will enable Friends to build our endowment and fund special projects.

The possibility of starting a land trust program was diligently researched by board and staff over the past year. Work groups met between monthly board meetings to explore numerous protection strategies and scrutinize various possibilities.

The board was determined that land acquisition efforts must clearly complement our strong advocacy and litigation work. Online research led us to a relevant organizational model, the Virginia-based Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC). A highly

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# Executive Director's Letter

The irony would be laughable if it wasn't tragic.

On Tuesday, April 5, *The Oregonian* ran a powerful front-page story on the effects of acid rain in the Columbia Gorge. It pointed out that Gorge air quality is often comparable to the sooty, toxic air of industrial Pittsburgh. The article quoted bureaucrats who dodge responsibility and left readers wondering, "Who will step up to protect the Gorge from acid rain?"

Within hours, Governor Kulongoski made his own air-quality announcement: his support of a Columbia Gorge casino designed to draw an additional 3.5 million cars into the Gorge every year.

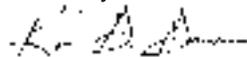
The Governor's ill-timed, disappointing decision is not the end of the story, however. The final decision-maker is Secretary of Interior Gale Norton, who has significant concerns about the increase in off-reservation casino proposals nationwide. Senator John McCain (R-AZ), chair of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, is also considering federal legislation to ban off-reservation tribal casinos.

The Columbia Gorge is no place to start an Oregon precedent of off-reservation casinos. A majority of Oregonians oppose it. Other federally recognized Oregon Tribes oppose it. The Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs have the largest land base of any Oregon Tribe, more than 660,000 acres; a well-sited on-reservation casino could bring tens of millions of dollars into the Warm Springs Reservation.

Economic development for Cascade Locks is an issue, of course. But the Port of Cascade Locks's efforts over the past few years to bring in the casino have prevented current companies from expanding and caused companies considering locating there to look elsewhere. The casino pursuit to date has essentially driven away more jobs than it has generated. Meanwhile, a hearty group of Cascade Locks residents who have opposed the casino since 1999 have re-emerged as a powerful example of local citizens who realize that a large-scale casino will alter their way of life forever.

Friends has hired a Washington, D.C. law firm to assist us in the federal Interior Department process. Locally, we're working with faith groups (conservative and liberal), small businesses and business groups, and other Native American tribal members. Together we are stepping up to explain to Secretary Norton what Governor Kulongoski fails to appreciate: the Columbia Gorge is no place for a massive casino.

Sincerely,



Kevin Gorman  
Executive Director



*This view from the Pacific Crest Trail above Cascade Locks shows approximately one-third of the proposed casino facility site, and most of the parking area.*

*Photo: Friends' Photo Archives*



*Photo: Peter Cornelison*

## 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

# Outreach & Activities

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

### Springtime Hikes and Stewardship

Friends' outdoor volunteers come out of hibernation before winter ends, anxious to get active in the Gorge. Cathy Robart, our outdoor programs coordinator, channels this spring fever into the Gorge activities that are central to Friends' success.

Hike leaders, shepherds, and stewardship volunteers have been busy since January planning and scheduling activities. Our hiking program March through June keeps scores of volunteers out on the trails leading hikes, identifying wildflowers, sharing Lewis and Clark lore and Gorge protection history, and

shepherding Gorge enthusiasts on more than 50 hikes.

At the same time, volunteers on our long-term stewardship project at Bridal Veil State Park continue their efforts, transforming areas once choked in invasive blackberry and ivy into scenic viewpoints and picnic spots. Still other volunteers tackle wild clematis and garlic mustard elsewhere in the western Gorge, while allies to the east are working at the Lyle Cherry Orchard and the Discovery Center in The Dalles.

To get active volunteering outdoors in the Gorge, contact Cathy at [cathy@gorgefriends.org](mailto:cathy@gorgefriends.org) or 503-241-3762 x106. ■

### Outdoor Volunteers' Celebration

June 25 is our third annual Outdoor Volunteer Potluck Barbecue at Bridal Veil. Hike shepherds and leaders join stewardship volunteers to celebrate their successes through the spring, sharing the wonders of the Gorge and protecting its beauty.

Outdoor volunteers past and present are invited to join us on June 25 at Bridal Veil for a short workday between 9:00 and 11:30 a.m., followed by a potluck picnic and barbecue.

For more information or to help, contact Betsy at 503-241-3762 x103 or [betsy@gorgefriends.org](mailto:betsy@gorgefriends.org). ■



*Riverfront Trail is a nine-mile hiking and biking trail that runs through the urban area in The Dalles. Google's plans to locate in The Dalles affirms the city's commitment to developing quality of life amenities.*

*Photo: Scott Green*

### Google in the Gorge

By Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, [peter@gorgefriends.org](mailto:peter@gorgefriends.org)

The first purpose of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic

Area Act is to preserve the rugged scenic beauty of the Columbia Gorge. The second, less-familiar purpose is to protect and support economic development that enables Gorge communities to prosper within existing urban growth boundaries.

Location in the Scenic Area brings many

benefits to businesses and entrepreneurs, including the ability to attract talented employees who value a healthy lifestyle, participation in a sustainable business infrastructure, and multiple recreation opportunities.

Lee Curtis, executive director of the Mid-Columbia Economic Development District and a member of the Gorge Technology Alliance, a federation of 34 local companies dedicated to promoting the technology sector in the Gorge, recently stated, "Many up and coming companies are located here because entrepreneurs want to take advantage of the lifestyle."

Gorge communities that invest in enhancing their lifestyle assets are well-positioned to benefit from that commitment. In February, the Internet corporation Google announced plans to build a plant in The Dalles that will eventually create 50 to 100 new jobs.

Innovative business leaders, community commitment, and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act are a strong combination to help Gorge communities thrive in the years to come. ■



## 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 Michael Lang, Conservation Director, [michael@gorgefriends.org](mailto:michael@gorgefriends.org)

### Conservation Groups Win Major Changes to Klickitat Energy Overlay Zone

In March 2005, Friends of the Columbia Gorge, Columbia Riverkeeper, and the Klickitat County Stewardship Council reached a settlement agreement with Klickitat County that resulted in significant improvements to the county's new energy overlay zone (EOZ).

With the EOZ, the County's Economic Development Department proposed to rezone almost two-thirds of the County to allow energy facilities "outright," with minimal public involvement and no conditional use permitting process. Friends and the other appellants challenged the County's environmental review of the proposal.

After receiving the appeal, the Klickitat County Commissioners agreed to delete all natural gas-

fired and biomass-fueled generators from the EOZ. This change ensures that new sources of air pollution cannot be approved without adequate environmental review and citizen input.

Under the settlement agreement, the EOZ is restricted to wind and solar power projects. The settlement also made the following improvements:

- All lands in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area located outside the urban areas are expressly excluded.
- The County created better zoning maps to eliminate uncertainties about EOZ boundaries.
- The County adopted public notification procedures for EOZ projects.
- Wind project developers must form a technical advisory committee for each project and conduct pre-

and post-construction monitoring to assess wildlife impacts.

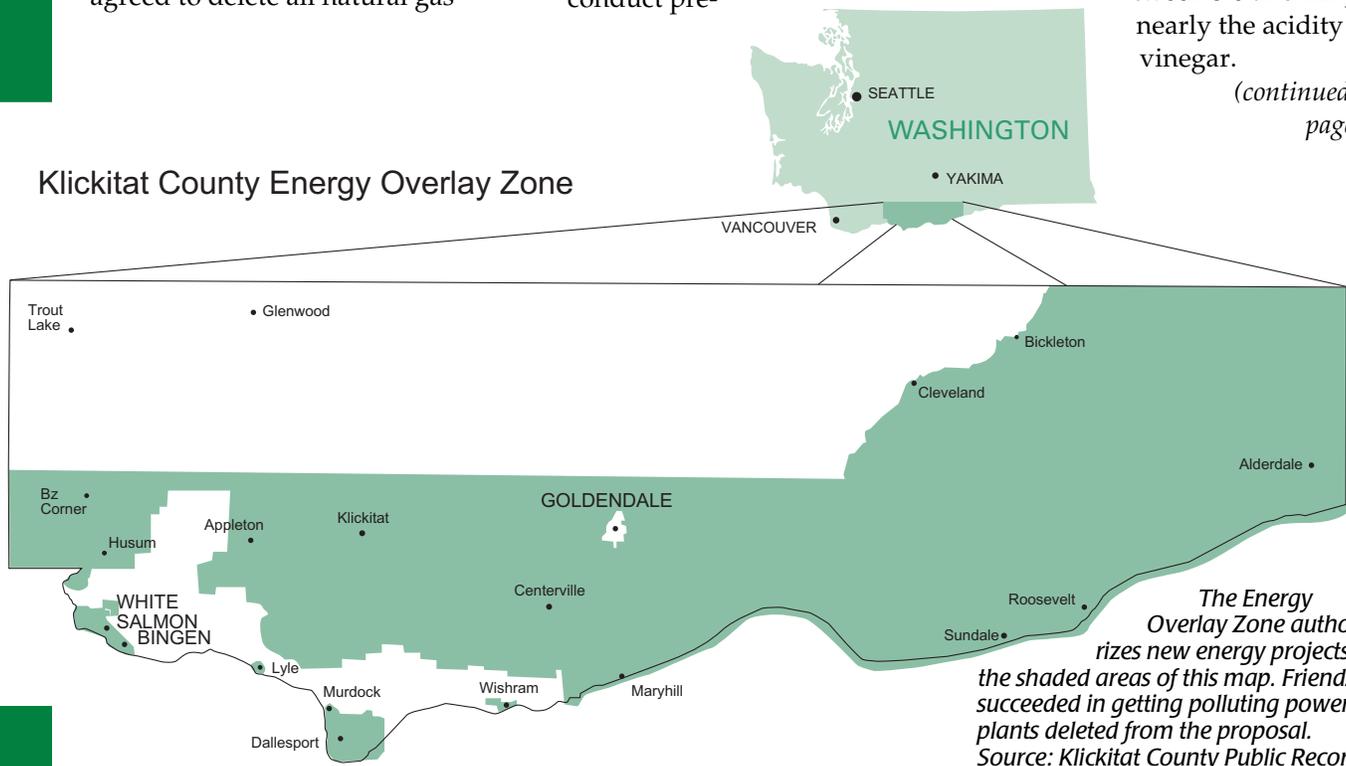
- The Snowden community's request to be excluded from the overlay zone was granted.
- The County must hold additional public hearings to evaluate the EOZ and take public comment. ■

### Acid Rain Detected in the Gorge

The Forest Service released a startling report in February documenting extremely high levels of acid rain and fog in the Columbia River Gorge that rivals air pollution levels in the most polluted areas of the eastern United States. The study, called a fog water deposition study, detected extremely high acidity in fog water in the eastern Gorge during the winter. Acidity of fog water was measured to be between 3.6 and 4.2 pH, nearly the acidity of vinegar.

*(continued on page 5)*

### Klickitat County Energy Overlay Zone



*The Energy Overlay Zone authorizes new energy projects in the shaded areas of this map. Friends succeeded in getting polluting power plants deleted from the proposal. Source: Klickitat County Public Record*

## Conservation and Legal Program Highlights

### Acid Rain in Gorge...

(continued from page 4)

The report concludes that the Eastern Gorge is considerably more polluted than previously predicted: ecosystem harm is occurring, detrimental effects to archeological resources are likely, nitrogen saturation is probable, and soil nutrient leeching is likely. Acid rain levels in the Gorge can kill plants, fish and amphibians. While these acid rain levels do not directly cause human health problems, the same pollutants that cause acid rain also cause respiratory problems in humans.

Air pollution throughout the Columbia River Gorge is thought to be the result of mobile sources, such as cars and trucks, and large industrial sources both inside and outside the Gorge. Friends and our allies are working to convince state and federal agencies to take action to clean up air pollution affecting the Gorge. ■

### Kulongoski Ready to Gamble Away the Gorge

Governor Ted Kulongoski's announcement of support for Oregon's first off-reservation casino located in the Columbia River Gorge signals a significant departure from the state policy requiring tribal casinos to be located within established reservations. However, the Governor lacks the authority to approve the casino and the proposal faces an uphill climb to receive federal approval. In addition, Oregon's constitutional prohibition of casinos may affect the future of the Gorge casino proposal, and other constitutional provisions limit the Governor's authority to approve tribal gaming agreements.

Off-reservation casino proposals on lands purchased by a tribe

after 1988 are generally prohibited by the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA), unless certain conditions can be met. Secretary of Interior Gale Norton has the authority to approve or deny off-reservation casino proposals. The land that is purchased by a tribe must be transferred into "trust" under the Indian Reorganization Act. Such land must be within the ancestral range of the tribe and generally cannot harm the interests of other tribes. If the proposed use of the land is for a casino, then IGRA applies. Since these casinos proposals are subject to the approval of the Secretary of Interior, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) also applies. The process may take from one year to several years to complete, depending on the level of support or opposition.

Due to the significant environmental concerns posed by the 500,000-square-foot gambling resort and 50 acres of sprawling parking lots, a full environmental impact statement must be prepared. It is very likely that the addition of millions of cars on Interstate 84 traveling to and from the casino would worsen the severe acid rain problem that already exists in the Gorge. Bald eagles that nest in the area will likely be impacted by any development of this scale. Increased traffic and congestion, adverse impacts to fish and wildlife, and water pollution resulting from the casino resort will be difficult hurdles to overcome.

The precedent-setting nature of this off-reservation casino proposal may be too much for federal decision makers to swallow. ■



Winter fog that settles in the Columbia Gorge is highly acid, harming plants, fish and amphibians.

Photo: © James O. Holloway

### Help Stop the Gorge Casino

**The Gorge casino can be stopped!** Please urge Secretary of Interior Gale Norton to oppose building a casino in the heart of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Go to [www.gorgefriends.org](http://www.gorgefriends.org) or use the sample letter below. Personalize this letter in your own words.

The Honorable Gale Norton  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240  
Subject: Please stop Columbia Gorge casino proposal

Dear Secretary Norton,  
I am writing to urge you to oppose the proposed off-reservation casino at Cascade Locks, in the heart the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

You have expressed concerns about the proliferation of off-reservation casino proposals. Allowing this casino in the Columbia Gorge would create pressures to allow more off-reservation casinos in the Gorge and throughout Oregon and Washington. You can control this proliferation by stopping this terrible proposal. Please protect the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and oppose the casino proposal in Cascade Locks.

Sincerely,  
Name and address



## Funding Gorge Protection

# Development Director's Report

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

### Magical Site for Summer Picnic

On Sunday, July 24, Friends' annual Summer Picnic will be held at The Shire, the former estate of John Yeon on the Washington side of the river. John bequeathed this beautiful land across from Multnomah Falls to the University of Oregon's landscape architecture program. Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy the Gorge from an area not usually open to the public. Details will be in the mail soon. ■

### One Man's Legacy

The Yeon family features prominently in the history of the Gorge. John Yeon Sr. was the roadmaster for the Historic Columbia River

Highway and his son John brought our founder, Nancy Russell, out to his estate across from Multnomah Falls in 1980 to encourage her to lead an effort to permanently protect the Gorge.

In 1999, Nancy and Development Director Jane Harris visited John's brother, Norman, at his summer home on the Oregon coast.

Norman Yeon and his faithful dog Teddy.

Photo: Courtesy of Pauline Yeon

We spent the day with Norman, walking the lovely well-worn paths on his coast estate. He was happy to stroll and reminisce with visitors. We discussed Friends' efforts to build a stable

endowment to support Gorge protection, and Norman agreed to include Friends in his estate plans. Two weeks later, without further discussion, Norman changed his will to direct half of his nearly \$10 million estate to Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

We are confident Norman Yeon would be pleased that part of his bequest will be used to initiate a land acquisition program. Conservation purchases to protect and provide public access to Gorge landscapes are a fitting legacy for the Yeon family.

Norman was also supportive of Friends' endowment, and later this year our board will determine what portion of his gift will be dedicated to that fund. ■



Spring Beauties  
Photo: Don Jacobson

### Creating Your Legacy

Your gift to Friends can create a lasting legacy of Gorge protection. For more information on our planned giving program, please contact Jane Harris at 503-241-3762 x102 or jane@gorgefriends.org. ■

## Thank You for your special contributions

### IN MEMORY OF CHESTER BEALS

SUSAN AND JIMMIE JONES  
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### IN MEMORY OF MERLE HANSET AND IN HONOR OF LOREN BUCHANAN

JOHN GEIL AND LAURA BUCHANAN GEIL

### IN MEMORY OF RAY CREWS

COLLYN BALDWIN

### IN MEMORY OF BRUCE RUSSELL

JIM AND MARILYN BERG

ADDITIONAL MEMORIAL GIFTS LISTED ON BACK COVER

# Yeon Gift...

(continued from page 1)

successful conservation organization, Piedmont Environmental Council combines advocacy, litigation, and land acquisition to protect the scenic, natural, and cultural values of Virginia's rolling farmlands across a nine-county area. Last autumn, PEC's president came out to tour the Gorge and meet with Friends' board and staff.

These months of research and planning confirmed our initial instincts that strengthening our existing efforts by creating a land trust program would be the best use of Norman Yeon's gift. Land acquisition for public benefit has been the most significant success story of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. More than 35,000 acres have been acquired by the U.S. Forest Service, leading to the creation of many new parks and trails. In addition, other government agencies and land trusts such as the Trust for Public Land and Columbia Land Trust have bought land in the Gorge for conservation purposes. Still, the need for protective acquisition is far greater than the resources currently available.

Each year, millions of people visit the Gorge to enjoy majestic landscapes and scenery, yet each year, more than 300 applications for development and logging are

approved inside the National Scenic Area. The Columbia Gorge is a finite space, and it is clear that in the relatively near future, all land in the Gorge will either be "protected" or "developed." As the only non-profit organization dedicated solely to protecting the Gorge, Friends must play a role in determining that outcome.

*The Columbia Gorge is a finite space, and it is clear that in the relatively near future, all land in the Gorge will either be "protected" or "developed."*

Over the last 10 years, Friends has watched our founder Nancy Russell serve as a one-person land trust. Nancy has purchased 33 properties in the Gorge in the past decade, totaling more than 800 acres. In many cases, she has bought properties with trailers, outbuildings, and houses on them and then removed those structures to restore the natural landscape. She has sometimes moved quickly to avert the building of many oversized "McMansions" on scenic Gorge properties. To date, approximately one-third of Nancy's properties have been transferred to public ownership; the proceeds from these sales have been reinvested to buy more land for conservation purposes. Nancy has continued to hold the remaining properties, including the popular Cherry Orchard Trail.

Nancy's efforts have been highly significant. She has focused on lands others have shied away from because of existing development on the property, or because no public agency was prepared to acquire the land, or because purchase of the

property might be considered controversial by some elected officials. In short, Nancy has stepped in proactively where others would not, and more Gorge land is protected

for coming generations because of her actions.

But one person cannot continue filling this niche forever, and land acquisition to protect important scenic and natural values is a niche that must be filled. Because of Norman Yeon's generous gift, this year Friends of the Columbia Gorge will begin to do just that. ■

## Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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

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Betsy Toll *Outreach Coordinator*  
Matthew VanderZanden *Legal Intern*  
\* Gorge residents

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*Legal Counsel:* Gary Kahn  
*Newsletter Design:* Kathleen Krushas



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ADDITIONAL MEMORIAL GIFTS ON PAGE 6

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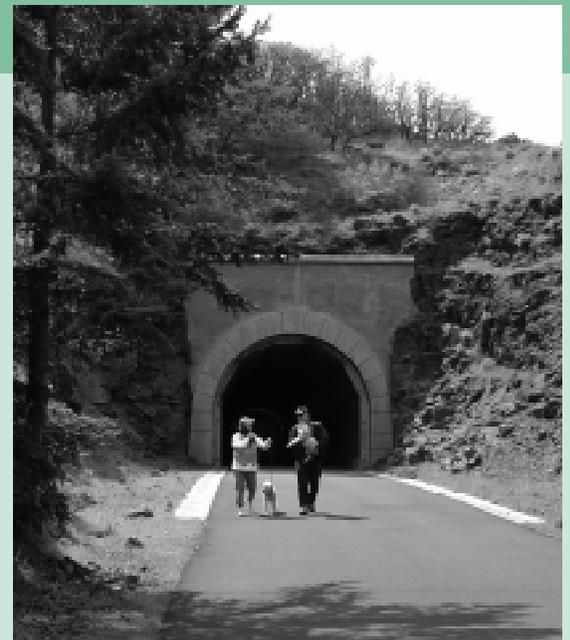
## Then & Now: How 25 years has changed the Columbia Gorge



*The west end of Twin Tunnels prior to excavation.*

*Photo: Friends' Photo Archives*

**Then:** In 1980, a five-mile section of the Historic Columbia River Highway between Hood River and Mosier was abandoned and reverted back to private landowners. The once-beautiful "Twin Tunnels" were filled with construction rubble from Interstate 84, and gravel pits operated where visitors once enjoyed scenic views. Friends soon began advocating for restoration of this section of the highway as a family-friendly trail, and with the support of then-Senator Mark Hatfield, funds were secured to purchase the lands and dig out the tunnels. A \$500,000 gift from Bruce and Nancy Russell averted the need for state funding and assured that the road would be preserved as a public trail for non-motorized use only.



*The east end of the Twin Tunnels today.*

*Photo: Kevin Gorman*

**Now:** In 1999, the U.S. Forest Service and Oregon State Parks opened the Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail. Today, thousands of hikers and bikers enjoy the trail each year, as one of the eastern Gorge's recreation gems. The trail also brings a stream of recreational visitors to the town of Mosier, which led to the opening of Mosier's first new restaurant in decades, the Wildflower Café. ■