

FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

Summer 2003 Newsletter



The settlement also requires the Beas to withdraw their claim for damages against Skamania County and the Gorge Commission. In return, Skamania County and the Gorge Commission will pay a total of \$300,000 to settle damages claims made by the Beas. Payment is delayed until all of the scenic impact mitigation measures are put into place.

Friends presses measures to reduce visibility

Friends of the Columbia Gorge, an intervenor in the pending litigation, participated in settlement discussions and insisted on permanent measures to reduce the visibility of the house. When the other parties were approaching a settlement that made only a token effort at reducing the visibility, Friends threatened litigation to compel compliance with the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act (Act). In the end, the Beas, Skamania County, and the Gorge Commission agreed to reduce the visible surface area of the house and to take substantial measures to further screen the house from key viewing areas.

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Bea Case Settled

All Agree: Rebuild, Blend In, Move In and Move On

By Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

After nearly five years of litigation and national news coverage ranging from *The New York Times*, and *Washington Post* to *People* magazine and *Reader's Digest*, the saga of the Bea house came to a quiet close in May as Skamania County, the Gorge Commission and the Beas agreed to a settlement in which the illegally built house will be

reconstructed and screened to reduce its visibility.

If the terms of the settlement are adhered to, the reconstructed house will be much less visible than the current 4,500-square-foot, 38-foot-tall structure. The settlement requires the new house to be reduced in height by 10 feet and screened with large trees and an earthen berm.

View from the deck of the current Bea House: Under the terms of the settlement the Beas will still have a view, but their house will no longer be the view from public viewing areas in the Gorge.

photo: Benjamin Brink/THE OREGONIAN

preserving scenic areas



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Executive Director's Letter

Over the years, I've told members that our organization has dealt with three Gorge-threatening houses: the one in Salem, the one in Olympia, and the one featured in our cover story. Issues surrounding the Bea house are finally settling down, and summer has brought us a wonderful surprise from the occupants of the house in Olympia: the Washington state legislature recently appropriated \$2.43 million to the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for land acquisition in the Washougal Oaks Natural Area.

Many Gorge lovers are not familiar with Washougal Oaks. You won't find dazzling waterfalls, or old-growth Douglas firs, or spectacular trails there. What you will find, however, is the largest relatively contiguous area of oak woodland remaining in western Washington, a mixture of Oregon white oak, oval-leaf viburnum, and poison oak. This rare gathering led the Washington Natural Heritage Program to rank the Washougal Oaks as their top priority for land acquisition. The woodland is also home to the white breasted nuthatch, a small songbird whose habitat and numbers are declining as development encroaches.



Land acquisition in the Washougal Oaks Natural Area will protect rare oak woodlands.

photo: Tiffany Kenslow

The Washougal Oaks area totals 976 acres, but 226 acres of private land have been identified as the highest priority for land acquisition.

The acquisition of these lands serves another important purpose as well: stopping sprawl. With the Vancouver-Camas-Washougal area burgeoning, rural residential development threatens to forever change this unique hardwood landscape that is often overshadowed by the more popular Oregon side of the river.

The good news of this protection, however, does not come entirely without a taint. Originally, more than 1500 acres were proposed for the Washougal Oaks Natural Resource Conservation Area. This included 680 acres in Skamania County stretching clear to Cape Horn — one of only seven sites statewide where the flowering tall bugbane flourishes, and home to the imperiled Larch Mountain salamander and the peregrine falcon.

Despite this ecological significance, Skamania County Commissioners successfully pressured the DNR to remove the Skamania County acreage from the preserve. The County argued that the "natural area preserve" designation and resulting land acquisition would further deplete its tax base. In reality, more than two-thirds of those 680 acres in Skamania County are already public land, owned by the U.S. Forest Service. Had the 680 acres been included in the Washougal Oaks plan, the impact on Skamania County's tax base would have been minimal.

Still, the Washougal Oaks project is a welcome development in Gorge protection. With its emphasis on protecting declining plant and animal species, it is an important reminder that the Columbia River Gorge is about more than just great scenery.

Sincerely,

Kevin Gorman
Executive Director

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

Hike the Autumn Gorge!

Friends' Late Season Hiking Series offers outings for avid Gorge hikers, seniors, families with kids, and everyone in between.

MEETING PLACES:

Gateway: Gateway Park & Ride lot at NE 99th Ave. and Pacific St. in Portland; meet in southeast corner.

Lewis & Clark: Lewis & Clark State Park parking lot. I-84 to Exit 18.

Washougal: Pendleton Woolen Mills parking lot in Washougal.

For directions to second meeting places, check www.gorgefriends.org, or call Cathy at 541-386-5268, or email hikes@gorgefriends.org.

Sept. 20 – ARCHER & ARROW POINT, WA

STRENUOUS: 6 mi. w/1450-ft. elev. gain, est. 5-hr. hike
Spectacular views define this hike with Mazamas leader Roy Stout, from High Valley to summit ridges of Archer Mtn. Steep trails include moderate exposure and possible patches of poison oak.
1st meeting place: 8:00am at Gateway.

Sept. 21 – WHISTLE PUNK, WA All-access/Barrier-free

VERY EASY: 3 mi. w/0-elev. gain, est. 3-hr. hike.
LIMITED TO 30 PEOPLE
Walk this barrier-free interpretive trail in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest with Trails Club of Oregon hike leader Mel Taylor. Great for kids and families. NW Forest Pass/Golden Age Pass required; carpooling recommended.
1st meeting place: 9:00am at Gateway.

Sept. 27 – KLICKITAT TRAIL, WA *Space limited; pre-registration required.*

EASY/MOD: 8 mi. w/little elev. gain, est. 6-hr. hike.
Follow a rocky, level trail into the heart of oak and ponderosa pine woodlands along the scenic Klickitat River, with Klickitat Trail Conservancy members Barbara Robinson and Cheryl Steindorf. To register, call Cathy at 541-386-5268 or email hikes@gorgefriends.org after September 1 to register.

Sept. 28 – TOM MCCALL EXPLORATORY, OR

MOD: 5 mi. w/1200-1400-ft. elev. gain, est. 3-4-hr. hike.
Explore Tom McCall Point and the dramatic eastern Gorge geology with hike leader Bev Linde for spectacular



Stunning Gorge views from Tom McCall Preserve await hikers year round (see Sept. 28 hike).

Photo: Nancy Russell

Mt. Hood and Mt. Adams views.
1st meeting place: 8:00am at Gateway.

Oct. 4 – HAMILTON MTN., WA *Bring-a-Dog Hike*

STRENUOUS: 7.6 mi. w/2000-ft. elev. gain, est. 6-hr. hike
Friendly hiking pooches are welcome on this challenging, beautiful fall outing with Cascade Prime Timers' Flora Huber (leashes and plastic bags required.).
1st meeting place: 8:30am at Lewis & Clark.

Oct. 5 – SEVEN MILE HILL, OR Lewis & Clark Landscape

MOD/STREN: 7 mi. w/1300-ft. elev. gain, est. 6-7-hr. hike
Explore the west end of Seven Mile Hill with Gorge naturalist Barbara Robinson. See oak woodlands, rolling meadows, and expansive views of Mt. Hood, Mt. Adams, and the Columbia River.
1st meeting place: 8:30am at Gateway.

Oct. 11 – WAHKEENA FALLS, OR

MOD: 5.5 mi. w/1500-ft. elev. gain, est. 3-hr. hike
Follow a beautiful autumn loop trail with Bergie Ski Club hike leader Laura Dickinson, hiking from misty Wahkeena Falls to the top of Multnomah Falls.
1st meeting place: 9:30am at Gateway.

Sunday, Oct 12 – KLICKITAT KIDS' HIKE, WA and Ice Cream Social

VERY EASY: 2 mi. w/less than 100-ft. elev. gain, est. 2-3-hr.
Friends' Executive Director Kevin Gorman and Marie Sherlock, author of *Living Simply with Children*, will lead this stroll along the Klickitat Rail-to-Trail. Hiking tips for parents while kids learn Gorge plants and wildlife. Ice cream social after the hike!
1st meeting place: 9:00am at Gateway.

Oct. 18 – CAPE HORN, WA Lewis & Clark Landscape

STRENUOUS: 7 mi. w/1500-ft. elev. gain, est. 5-6-hr. hike
Experience sweeping views and rocky promontories with Columbia Land Trust's Dan Huntington and Friends staff member Tiffany Kenslow. Some steep, rugged sections.
1st meeting place: 9:00am at Gateway.

Oct. 25 – LARCH MOUNTAIN CRATER, OR

MOD/STREN: 6 mi. w/1300-ft. elev. gain, est. 3.5-hr. hike
Hike with Friends hike leader Darlene Nelson to fantastic views on this Larch Mountain loop trail through old growth forest and marsh meadows. **ONLY meeting place:** 8:30am at Lewis & Clark. ■

Volunteer with Friends Today

If you'd like to help with Gorge protection, outreach, or natural area restoration, we would love to put you on the active list of Friends' volunteers.

Volunteers help with our outdoor programs (hikes, stewardship, and litter pick-up), assist with community outreach, contact other Gorge lovers about urgent issues, attend meetings and hearings, write Letters to the Editor, and contact decision makers.

If you can help in any of these capacities, contact Betsy at 503-241-3762 x103 or betsy@gorgefriends.org. Be sure to ask to be put on our Gorge Activities and Updates email list, if you are not already subscribed. ■



Conservation and Legal Program Highlights

In the Courts and in the Field...

By Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

Experts Warn of Sprawl as the Commission Considers Weakening Protections

The Gorge Commission will be ending its review of the National Scenic Area Management Plan before fall begins. To anyone who values the natural beauty of the Columbia River Gorge this is welcome news. Many of the issues addressed during plan review involved allowing more development and weakening regulations.

As the Commission chips away at existing regulations, it has failed to monitor the health of ecosystems and scenic landscapes, or the effectiveness of the existing regulations in protecting and enhancing the scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources of the Columbia Gorge. Monitoring studies and reports are required by law and should form the factual basis for the review of the Management Plan.

Due to the absence of adequate monitoring, Friends asked the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) for assistance. The ASLA formed a committee of



The ASLA committee found that views from important "key viewing areas," such as Beacon Rock, are being altered by vegetation removal and development that has occurred since passage of the Scenic Area Act.

Photo: Jurgen Hess

experts to study two areas in the Scenic Area to assess the potential cumulative effects of development on scenic landscapes. In a recent newspaper editorial printed in the Vancouver Columbian, Paul Morris, President of the ASLA, summarized the Committee's findings:

"This committee, which included leading experts in the field of scenic resources, determined that parts of the Gorge under increasing development pressure, such as Underwood Mountain, are now taking on sprawl characteristics. This is as a result of cumulative development impacts, even though standards governing individual projects have generally been upheld. We believe this problem will spread to other areas as well unless this issue is soon addressed.

The following measures would address cumulative impacts. First, improved implementation of existing provisions for avoiding cumulative impacts. Several projects have been modified or

stopped altogether due to this current provision. Second, the Commission must conduct periodic cumulative assessments, starting with areas that are under the greatest development pressure. Third, once an area nears acceptable limits, additional mitigation measures must be implemented."

Unfortunately, Commission staff eschewed this advice and instead proposed eliminating a regulation requiring the consideration of cumulative effects. Pressure from the ASLA and Friends along with reduced Commission funding resulted in the postponement of this Management Plan revision.

Friends believes that the Commission may be on shaky ground as it attempts to revise the Management Plan in a manner that lessens Gorge protection while not performing mandatory monitoring and evaluation duties, particularly when there is evidence that existing regulations are not adequately protecting the Gorge.

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The ASLA National Scenic Area Committee From left: Richard Shaffer, Julia Lundy, Charles Rosenfeld, Bennett Burns, Dean Apostol and Jurgen Hess. Not pictured: Robert Ribe

photo: Michael Lang

Forest Service Purchases Critical Lands but 2004 Land Acquisition in Jeopardy

By Tiffany Kenslow, Field Organizer, tiffany@gorgefriends.org

The U.S. Forest Service has purchased hundreds of acres in the National Scenic Area this year, despite 11th-hour budget cuts that slashed funds for Gorge land acquisition in half. To date, the Forest Service has acquired 22 parcels totaling some 500 acres in 2003, following the purchase of more than 900 acres in 2002. Some of these parcels are key elements of the Lewis & Clark Landscapes Project, including:

- 132 acres in the Major Creek Landscape. Lewis & Clark camped along Major Creek on April 14, 1806 and described this landscape in their journals;

- 99 acres in the Memaloose-to-The Dalles Landscape. This property will be protected for its spectacular views, prime wildflower habitat, and recreation potential.

Even as the Forest Service continues purchasing key properties in 2003, the outlook for Gorge land acquisition next year is bleak. The Presidents' proposed 2004 budget includes only \$1 million for this program, despite the Forest Service's assertion that \$15 million is needed next year to protect these landscapes.

In Washington, D.C., the House Interior Subcommittee voted in June to slash the Land and Water Conservation Fund's land acquisition budget to its lowest level since 1974. This is the budget that funds Gorge land acquisition.

The fate of Gorge land acquisition in 2004 now shifts to the Senate. With funding

THE LEWIS & CLARK LANDSCAPES PROJECT

PLEASE TAKE ACTION!

Contact Oregon Senator Gordon Smith and Washington Senator Patty Murray now. Urge them to support \$15 million for Gorge land acquisition to protect the Columbia River Gorge.

Sample letters, contact details and further information are at www.lewisandclarklandscapes.org. Or contact Tiffany Kenslow, Project Manager, in our Hood River office at 541-386-5268 or email to tiffany@gorgefriends.org



drastically reduced for the entire country's land acquisition program, even \$1 million for land acquisition in the Columbia Gorge may be difficult to secure. ■

Left: The U.S. Forest Service recently purchased this scenic 99-acre parcel along the Historic Columbia River Highway near Mosier. The open meadows of wildflowers will now be permanently protected for the public to enjoy.
photo: Deirdre Murray

Conservation and Legal Program Highlights Friends Protects Resources...

(continued from page 4)

Friends' Lawsuit Halts Illegal Logging

Late-breaking news! A Washington Superior Court judge has ruled that the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) erred when it approved a forest clearcut in violation of the National Scenic Area Act (Act). The DNR had approved a 30-acre clearcut, with 22 acres in a Special Management Area (SMA), as

a conversion to agricultural use. Clearcutting in the SMAs is limited to a maximum of 15 acres on non-federal land. DNR's permit would have set a precedent allowing hundreds of acres of forest land in the SMAs to be clearcut under the guise of converting to agricultural uses.

Friends successfully argued that the Act requires any logging in the SMAs to take place without adversely

affecting scenic, natural, cultural, and recreational resources, regardless of the purpose. Most impressive is that Friends carried this battle on our own, without the help of the agencies that are supposed to enforce the Act. The Forest Service and the Gorge Commission believed that the forest protection guidelines do not apply when a landowner proposes to clear forest land for an agricultural use. ■



Funding Gorge Protection

Development Director's Report

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

Summer Picnic: A Real Classic

Friends Annual Summer Picnic has evolved over the years into a classic event, with live folk music, lawn games, a sumptuous potluck, local beer, and great outdoor locations. In July, at our 22nd Annual Picnic, nearly 100 Friends members, supporters and friends enjoyed a delightful Sunday afternoon at the beautiful Vancouver home of long-time supporters Len and Helena Dick. Shaded from the heat, guests had time to laugh, chat and relax, while enjoying the beautiful gardens and lawns sweeping down to the river's edge. ■



Badminton, river views, live music, and a summer potluck made this year's picnic another great success.

photo: Kevin Gorman

Gorge Sternwheeler Tour Highlights Lewis & Clark

For the second year in a row, Friends teamed up with the Sierra Club to host a wonderful day on the Columbia River. With 200 members aboard the Sternwheeler, the two groups

hosted a scenic tour of the Gorge from the river between Cascade Locks and Hood River.

Rex Ziak, author of *In Full View*, a history of Lewis & Clark's final struggle to reach the Pacific Ocean, entertained guests with stories from the journals as we

passed by the locations mentioned in the explorers' diaries. Perfect weather encouraged strolls on the outer decks for guests to enjoy a river perspective of the Gorge, while staff provided background information on the history of the National Scenic Area and efforts to protect these heritage landscapes. ■

Viewing the Gorge from the river offered new perspectives to Friends members aboard the Sternwheeler.

Time to Renew? Consider This!

When it's time to renew your membership, give us your e-mail address along with your check so that we can send you an electronic reminder next time. It saves time, paper and money!

To make your gift easy and paper-free, call us or log on to our website at www.gorgefriends.org and go to the membership page to learn about our "Best Friends" electronic funds transfer program. This way, you can set up your giving schedule and never have to be bothered with renewal notices again. ■



Bea Case Settled

(continued from page 1)

Friends backs landowners who follow the rules

Friends chose not to sign on to the settlement agreement because it still fails to fully comply with the Act and requires Oregon and Washington taxpayers to pay part of the costs of making this illegally built house comply. More than 600 Gorge landowners have built houses under the Act, and most readily follow the rules. Friends felt that signing the settlement would be turning our backs on those landowners who willingly complied with rules to protect this national scenic treasure. However, Friends chose not to legally challenge the settlement because if properly implemented and enforced it will significantly improve on the status quo.

Bea history — a trail of errors

In 1998, Skamania County approved the Bea's plans for a one-story house with a daylight basement and a loft. The house was required to be located where its visibility from Key Viewing Areas would be minimized. Existing topography and vegetation were key elements required to screen the development. Instead, a three-story structure was built on the most prominent site on the property, the property was extensively graded and vegetation was removed.

Skamania County officials were aware of permit violations but allowed construction to continue until the Gorge Commission stepped in and required a stop-work order. The Commission ruled that Skamania County and the Beas had violated the Scenic Area Act, and ordered the issuance of a revised land-use decision requiring the house to be relocated to a less visible site on the property. Skamania County and the Beas appealed the decision up to the Washington State Supreme Court. In 2001, that court ruled that the Gorge Commis-

sion had used the wrong enforcement procedures in the Bea case, and recommended alternative procedures for the Commission to enforce the Act.

What are the lessons?

As long as new development is allowed in the National Scenic Area, the following actions must be taken to ensure better compliance with the Act. First, adequate funding must be provided to the Gorge Commission and the county planning departments that issue permits in the Scenic Area. Second, technical assistance to county planning agencies must be provided by the Gorge Commission and Forest Service on a regular basis. Third, the Commission must oversee county land-use decisions and appeal those that violate Gorge protection rules. Finally, the Gorge Commission must use its substantial powers to enforce the Act as soon as violations come to its attention.

The Bea house became a four-year struggle for Friends, working to uphold the National Scenic Area Act and protect the Gorge, and for the Beas and the agencies involved in this dispute. Friends' efforts have been largely successful, and we will continue working diligently to ensure that the protections in the National Scenic Area Act are applied evenly and upheld fairly to protect the Columbia Gorge for everyone. ■

Digital Projector Needed for Powerpoint and CD Presentations

Friends' new outreach presentations, which improve on our old-style slide show, require new projection equipment. If you can help us acquire this equipment, or would like to make a directed donation toward the purchase of this projector, please call Jane at 503-241-3762, x102. ■

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

www.gorgefriends.org

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* Gorge residents

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Know Your Gorge Petroglyphs Find a Home

During the construction of the Columbia River dams in the 1950s, many ancient petroglyphs near Celilo Falls were doomed to be flooded under the dams' rising waters. Some of the finer examples were retrieved before the waters rose, but for five decades they remained open to vandalism and exposed to the elements in a parking lot at The Dalles Dam and at a park near Roosevelt, WA.

This summer that situation will finally be corrected. In an agreement between local Tribes, the Army Corps of Engineers and Washington State Parks, the Corps will move 43 rock art objects from the Dalles Dam to the 338-acre Horsethief Lake State Park near Dallesport, WA. Efforts are also underway to move the Roosevelt petroglyphs to Horsethief Lake.

Horsethief Lake State Park is a natural home to many petroglyphs including "She Who Watches (Tsagalala)." These petroglyphs, can only be seen on guided tours offered by Washington State Parks on Fridays and Saturdays from April through October.

For information on the new arrivals, contact Horsethief Lake State Park at (509) 767-1159.

Indian petroglyphs such as this example near Wishram bear witness to the prehistoric cultures and peoples of the Gorge.

photo: ©James Hollaway