

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Summer 2016 Newsletter

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Fighting Coal and Oil
in the Gorge!

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Friends of the Columbia Gorge

FOUNDER NANCY RUSSELL, 1932-2008

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Link to us on Twitter and Facebook
from our website: www.gorgefriends.org

Open coal trains spew debris along the Columbia River. Photo: Daniel Dancer / artforthesky.com



Take Action!

Stop the Longview Millenium Coal Project!

On May 24, the Washington Department of Ecology held a hearing for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Millennium coal terminal in Longview, Washington. Hopefully you were able to be at the hearing with us, along with hundreds of other local citizens who adamantly oppose this project.

The impacts to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area from coal dust blowing off the existing three or so trains a day are unacceptable. Because of that we've filed suit against BNSF Railway for violating the Clean Water Act by allowing coal dust from their open cars to contaminate the land, air, and water of the Gorge. This

terminal would add a dozen or more trains every day, all uncovered and all of which would further contaminate the Gorge and endanger the health of people and wildlife.

Please submit your comment today!

For talking points and to submit your comments online, check our website at: www.gorgefriends.org/longviewcoalDEIS

To send your written comments by land mail, direct them to:

Millennium Bulk Terminals EIS
c/o ICF International
710 Second Ave, Suite 550
Seattle, WA 98104

Our email Action Alerts provide the most timely, effective way to take action for the Gorge. Subscribe at www.gorgefriends.org/subscribe, or call Ryan at 971-634-2034.

Citizen Action Makes the Difference! www.senate.gov or www.house.gov
Your voice is vital to Gorge protection. Let Congress hear from you.

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Email your **Congressional Representative** by logging on to www.house.gov/writerep

Cover: Sunrise at Dalton Point. Photo: Jeremiah Leipold

Director's Letter

Jargon and lingo compressed into acronyms are common shortcuts in language these days. For instance, BHAG is a term you might hear at nonprofit conferences or read in business articles. What's a BHAG? It's a "Big Hairy Audacious Goal!"

While BHAGs are spoken of with reverence and admiration, few organizations actually embrace audacity. But BHAGs are embedded in Friends' birth story. What's more audacious than a stay-at-home mom who is also the founder of a grassroots nonprofit, stepping out to declare that her little organization would push Congress to create a National Scenic Area?

Five years ago, Friends launched another BHAG, *Gorge Towns to Trails*, a vision for a loop trail around the Columbia Gorge that connects towns to wildlands, to create a European-style trekking model in the United States. *Gorge Towns to Trails* embraces conservation, recreation, and

economic development and instills a new Gorge paradigm: shifting visitors from taking day hikes to planning multi-day excursions.

The full 200-mile trail is an expansive, long-term vision, so our first priority is three corridors spanning 67 miles: Washougal to Stevenson and Cascade Locks, Hood River to The Dalles, and Lyle to the Lyle Cherry Orchard. Of those segments, 63.5 miles are publicly owned corridors, leaving only 3.5 miles to connect.

We're well aware that audacious goals don't happen in silos, and *Gorge Towns to Trails* only works if it goes beyond our organization. That's happening now. Laura Foster, a Friends member, is publishing *Columbia Gorge Getaways, 12 Weekend Adventures from Towns to Trails*. It's the first Gorge hiking book that's as much about towns in the Gorge as about the trails we love to hike. See it on our website at www.gorgefriends.org/gorgegetaways.

The larger Gorge community is also embracing *Gorge Towns to Trails*. Last

month, the Gorge Tourism Studio, a planning process hosted by Travel Oregon including 160 different participants and 26 different organizations and agencies, wrapped up. Its purpose was to promote sustainable recreation and tourism, and the group listed the completion of the Historic Columbia River Highway and bringing *Gorge Towns to Trails* to life as top priorities moving forward.

Five years into the project, *Gorge Towns to Trails* feels a little less hairy, a little less audacious, but only slightly less. It is still a very big goal. I can't tell you exactly when we'll get there, but we're definitely on our way.



Kevin Gorman, Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org



Photo: M. Horodyski / 500px.com/mhphotox

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.*

Mosier Plateau in spring.

Photo: Joe Leitschuh

Friends Stops Power Plant Proposed on Gorge Boundary

The Troutdale Energy Center Threatened Gorge Resources

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

Early this year, Friends of the Columbia Gorge succeeded in blocking development of the Troutdale Energy Center, a massive, 701-megawatt gas power plant proposed at the western gateway to the Columbia River Gorge. On January 26, after more than two years of legal battles and public opposition, the project developer (Troutdale Energy Center, LLC, or TEC, a subsidiary of Los Angeles-based Ares Management, L.P.) withdrew its plans for the controversial \$680 million facility, permanently ending the threats it posed to Gorge air quality and other resources.

The TEC facility was proposed to be sited at one of the worst possible locations in Oregon for a large power plant, just five hundred feet from the mouth of the Sandy River and the western boundary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Emissions from the plant would have exacerbated air pollution problems in the National Scenic Area, obscuring visibility at scenic viewpoints like Crown Point and causing nitrogen deposition that would harm sensitive ecosystems at the Sandy River Delta and other sites. Noise and scenic impacts would have interfered with recreation at popular sites like the adjacent 40-Mile Loop

trail, Sandy River, Sandy River Delta, and Columbia River. In addition, water intake for cooling the project could have harmed water levels in the underlying shallow aquifer and nearby Blue Lake. Finally, thermal plumes emitted by the power plant would have severely threatened aviation safety during takeoffs and landings at the adjacent Troutdale airport.

Public opposition

In response to these threats, Friends led a broad coalition of environmental organizations, government agencies, pilots' groups, and local citizens opposed to the project. In early 2014, Friends and other parties intervened in a contested case held by the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC), asking EFSC to deny a key siting permit for the project under state energy siting law, which expressly protects the National Scenic Area from adverse impacts.

Friends and the U.S. Forest Service jointly asked the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to reconsider its decision to issue an air pollution permit for the project. The DEQ permit allowed the facility to emit up to 227 tons per year of nitrogen oxides; 198 tons per year of particulate matter; and 11.5 tons per year of hazardous air pollutants such as formaldehyde, hexane, toluene, and



This image simulating the proposed Troutdale Energy Center, which was to be constructed on the boundary of the National Scenic Area, was submitted in support of the TEC proposal.

Graphic simulation: EFSC public record, prepared by CH2M



The project site for the now-abandoned Troutdale Energy Center lies just a few hundred feet from the western bank of the Sandy River, which is also the boundary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Photo: Rick Till; map labeling: Kathy Fors

benzene. DEQ rejected our joint requests to apply federal, interstate, and state laws that protect air quality in the National Scenic Area, instead agreeing with TEC that because the project was proposed to be sited outside the Scenic Area boundary, it was exempt from these laws. Friends appealed DEQ’s decision to the Multnomah County Circuit Court and then to the Oregon Court of Appeals.

January victory

After spending millions of dollars on attorneys, lobbyists, consultants, expert witnesses, and administrative agencies to pursue the ill-conceived project, TEC finally pulled the plug on January 26 by withdrawing its EFSC application and requesting termination of the DEQ decision. TEC announced this withdrawal while awaiting the scheduling of an EFSC

hearing at which TEC’s expert witnesses would have been cross-examined about the project’s likely impacts.

If the TEC plant had been built, it likely would have replaced PGE’s coal-fired power plant in Boardman, Oregon as the single largest stationary source of air pollution affecting the National Scenic Area. In a 2011 settlement agreement with Friends and other parties, PGE agreed to shut down its coal-fired plant in Boardman no later than December 31, 2020.

On March 1 this year, DEQ announced that its top director and an air quality manager for the Portland metro area were resigning, in the face of a public backlash over DEQ’s failure to require proper pollution control equipment at a glass-blowing factory in southeast Portland. Both of these agency officials had also played key roles in

deciding to exempt the proposed TEC facility from laws that protect air quality in the National Scenic Area.

Looking ahead

On March 31, Friends successfully convinced the Oregon Court of Appeals to vacate the decision of the Multnomah County Circuit Court in the TEC case. This result allows Friends a clean slate in the future, should we sue DEQ for any further violations of laws that protect air quality in the Scenic Area.

With the threat of a massive new power plant at the western gateway to the Columbia Gorge eliminated, Gorge residents and visitors will be able to breathe a little easier. This important victory proves that even the most powerful, moneyed interests are no match for dedicated citizens who insist on enforcing the law. ■

Comment Period Begins for Millennium Coal Terminal

Ryan Rittenhouse, Conservation Organizer, ryan@gorgefriends.org

The Millennium Coal Terminal proposed for Longview, Washington, entered the comment period for its Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) on April 29. The comment period will last only 45 days, ending June 13. Information on commenting is on page 2 of this newsletter.

Almost twenty years ago, proposals to build new coal terminals started popping up throughout the Northwest. At one point there were seven projects in total: three in Oregon, three in Washington, and one in British Columbia.

In the past five years, as the permits on these projects have come up for approval, Friends has worked in conjunction with the Power Past Coal Coalition (PPC) to oppose and prevent these terminals from becoming a reality. Today only two of those terminals

remain: one in Washington and one in British Columbia.

The defeat of those five terminals was possible only because of the dedication and hard work of Friends members and volunteers like you, along with members of more than 150 PPC groups and organizations who have also worked diligently to block these projects. Many regional tribes have also opposed these terminals, including the Lummi, Yakama, and many others. In some cases, the Tribes' efforts have been the major factor in the cancellation of these projects.

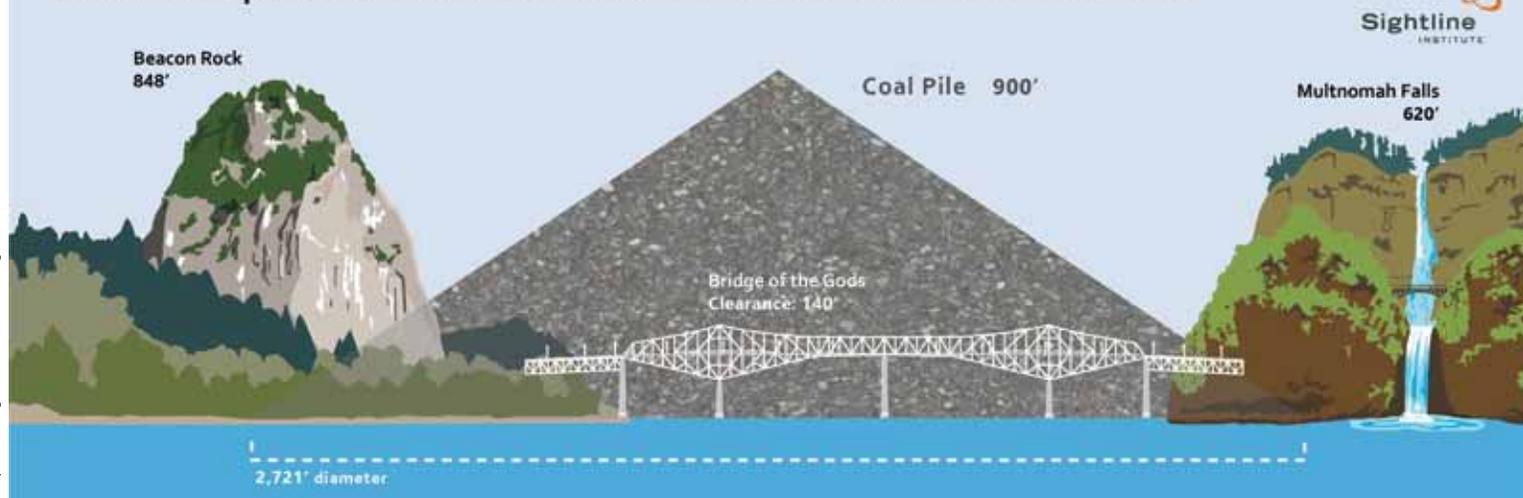
Millennium is one of the three remaining terminals. It would have the capacity to handle 44 million tons of coal a year, which would mean at least a dozen more coal trains moving through the Gorge every day. Friends and allies

are currently suing BNSF due to coal dust emissions from the three or so daily coal trains already moving through the Gorge. Millennium would greatly exacerbate that problem and would also greatly increase traffic congestion at railroad crossings throughout the Gorge. The end-use combustion of the coal passing through this terminal would accelerate the rate of climate change and aggravate related health and environmental problems.

The Washington Department of Ecology has scheduled public hearings for May 24 in Longview, May 26 in Spokane, and June 2 in Pasco.

Now is the time to submit comments opposing the Millennium Coal Terminal. See page 2 of this newsletter for further details, or log in to www.gorgefriends.org/longviewcoalDEIS to submit your comment now. ■

The 44 million tons of coal planned for shipment through the Columbia River Gorge annually would make a pile 50' taller than Beacon Rock and more than ½ mile in diameter.



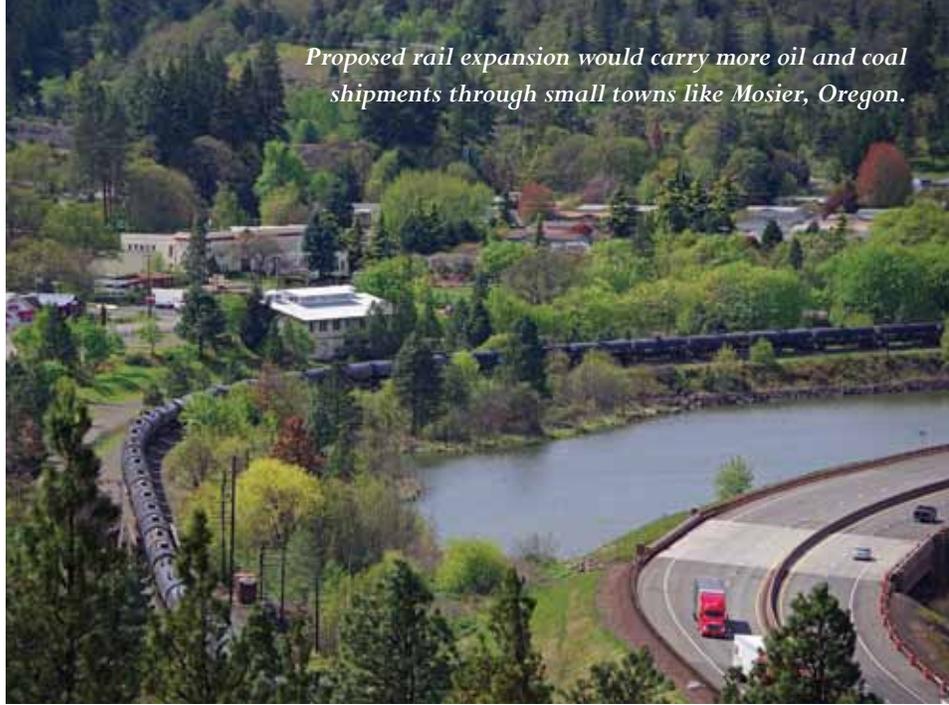
Graphic design: Eric de Place, Sightline Institute

The coal industry's plan to increase mining and export of coal would produce major environmental and public health problems locally and globally.

Railroads Propose Major Rail Expansion in the Gorge

Increased Oil and Coal Shipments Would Require Added Tracks

Michael Lang, Conservation Director
michael@gorgefriends.org



BNSF Railway and Union Pacific are proposing a system of double tracks through the most sensitive lands in the Columbia River Gorge, to accommodate anticipated shipments of fossil fuels to new terminals proposed in the Northwest. The rail projects are designed to support an increased number of long oil and coal trains traveling at higher speeds through the Gorge.

BNSF Railway has applied to build four miles of new track in the western Gorge through the Steigerwald National Wildlife Refuge. The proposed tracks would cross wetlands, streams, sensitive species habitat, and sensitive cultural resource areas.

On the Oregon side, Union Pacific has applied to build 4.3 miles of new track along the Columbia River near Mosier. The Oregon project would pass through Memaloose State Park, with part of the proposed line running through a "Special Management Area," the most sensitive lands within the National Scenic Area. The project is inconsistent with National

Scenic Area Act requirements and would cause adverse impacts to wetlands, scenic resources, and open space.

As a part of the rail expansion project, Union Pacific wanted to acquire 2.5 acres of public land at Memaloose State Park. In order for Oregon State Parks to approve a land transfer, it must find that the transfer is an "overwhelming public benefit to the Oregon State Park system, its visitors, and the citizens of Oregon."

On April 27, after hearing from hundreds of members of the public opposing the project, the Oregon State Parks Commission voted unanimously to deny the land transfer, finding that it was not beneficial to the state park or its visitors. In particular, the State Parks Commission found that the increase in rail traffic resulting from the project could increase the risks of accidents with park visitors.

While this denial of the land transfer was a big victory for the Gorge and a setback for Union Pacific, the railroad is pushing

forward with the project. The project is currently undergoing National Scenic Area review before the Wasco County Planning Commission. A hearing is scheduled for June 7, 3:00 p.m., at the Discovery Center in The Dalles. ■

Vancouver Oil Terminal Hearings Set for Summer

A month-long hearing for the largest oil-by-rail terminal in the country is scheduled to begin this summer, and Friends and our co-intervenors, represented by Earthjustice, are gearing up with attorneys, experts, and thousands of opponents to convince the Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC) and Governor Inslee to deny this proposal.

In addition to environmentalists and citizens at large, the Umatilla Tribe, Yakama Indian Nation, Columbia Intertribal Fish Commission, City of Spokane, City of Washougal, Longshore and Warehouse Union, and Columbia Waterfront are intervening in opposition to the project.

The extended EFSEC hearing will run June 27–July 29. Hearings in Vancouver will be held at the Clark College Conference Center June 27–30 and July 25–29.

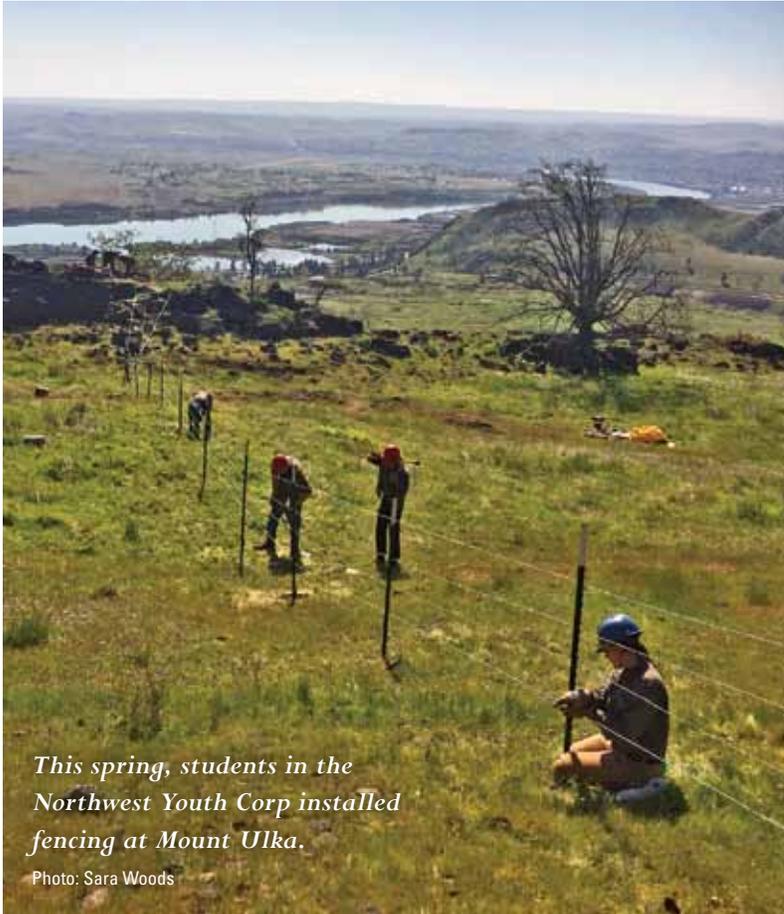
Mark your calendar now! Public testimony will only be accepted July 29, 1:00–5:00 p.m. ■

May 9 Victory against Coal!

The Lummi Nation and its allies clinched a major victory against coal on May 9, with the Army Corps of Engineers' decision to deny permitting for the proposed Gateway Pacific deep-water coal export terminal near Bellingham, Washington. The decision honors the United States' treaty obligations to the Lummi Nation, and will also prevent an additional 18 coal trains per day from polluting the Columbia Gorge and endangering Gorge communities. Read more at www.gorgefriends.org! ■

Mount Ulka: Back from the Burn

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



This spring, students in the Northwest Youth Corp installed fencing at Mount Ulka.

Photo: Sara Woods

On a windy, late summer afternoon in 2014, fire broke out in the Gorge, just west of the community of Rowena. Over the next two days the fire spread fast and hot, scorching the grass and charring the oak trees on the steep hillsides of the eastern Gorge. Steep terrain and high winds made the blaze difficult for fire fighters to stop or even slow down.

When it was over, a total of 3,680 acres had burned. The fire had reached Mount Ulka, a land trust property Friends had only recently acquired and a key parcel in the *Gorge Towns to Trails* vision. We have been closely monitoring the fire recovery here.

Now almost two years later, we're witnessing the natural aftermath of the burn. The fire has allowed the landscape to breathe by ridding it of dense understory. With the presence of nonnative grasses reduced by the blaze, native species are returning to the land. Only a few trees actually died in the fire, and burn scars on those that survived will be lasting evidence of the fire's impact on the landscape.

There's an old saying, "Good fences make good neighbors," and this spring, college students in the Northwest Youth Corps spent several weeks hard at work installing fence on Mount Ulka, their efforts generously funded by a Friends donor. This fence will keep cattle confined to the adjacent landowner's property, and brings us one step further in the trail corridor for *Gorge Towns to Trails* that will eventually reach The Dalles. ■

With the presence of nonnative grasses reduced by the blaze, native species are returning to the land.



Scorched land and scrub oaks on Mount Ulka in fall 2014, after the fire.

Photo: © Chris Carvalho / Lensjoy.com

Maegan Jossy, Outreach Manager
maegan@gorgefriends.org

Welcome to the Board



Photo: M. Horodyski / 500px.com/mjhpdx

Friends' 16-member Board of Directors brings together a diversity of interests and skills that intersect the mission and vision of the organization.

Welcome to our four newest Board members, who will each serve a three-

year term. Above, from left: Temple Lentz, Jim Chase (also our Land Trust Secretary/Treasurer), Carrie Nobles, and John Harrison.

Friends board bios and photos are online at www.gorgefriends.org/board. ■

A New Face at Friends

This spring, Friends' longtime Conservation Legal Advocate Rick Till left to pursue other interests. We wish Rick well in his new endeavors.

Staff changes are always an opportunity to look to the future and rethink staffing needs. In April, Steve McCoy joined Friends as a new staff attorney. Steve is working to protect the Columbia River Gorge by ensuring that decisions made by federal, state, and local permitting agencies follow applicable laws. Before joining Friends, Steve spent seven years as a staff attorney with 1000 Friends of Oregon, and when he is not helping to protect special places, he likes to hike, backpack, run, cook, and spend time with his family. ■

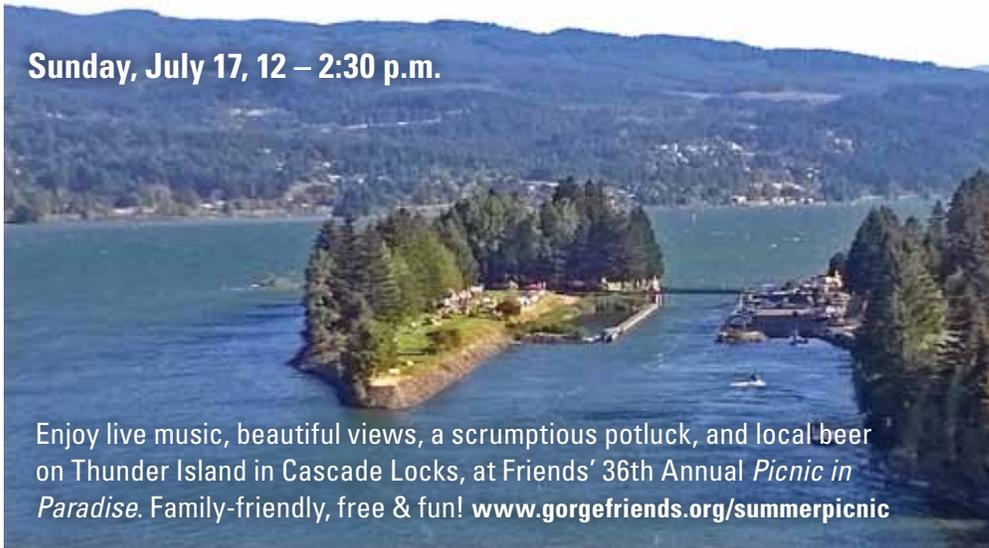
Friends' new staff attorney, Steve McCoy.

Photo: Michael Horodyski



Picnic in Paradise!

Sunday, July 17, 12 – 2:30 p.m.



Enjoy live music, beautiful views, a scrumptious potluck, and local beer on Thunder Island in Cascade Locks, at Friends' 36th Annual *Picnic in Paradise*. Family-friendly, free & fun! www.gorgefriends.org/summerpicnic

Thunder Island, seen from Bridge of the Gods. Photo: Courtesy of Port of Cascade Locks

A New Look for Friends

Our new and improved website is live! Easily navigate from your phone, tablet, or desktop computer to view stunning photos, updated content, and an enhanced hike finder built on Google Maps. Check it out at www.gorgefriends.org.

"Historic Highway Bingo" Coming this Fall...

This year's hike challenge will celebrate the centennial of the Historic Columbia River Highway. Participate in an old-fashioned game of road-trip bingo September 24 – October 31. Preregister now to receive program announcements at www.gorgefriends.org/gorgebingo.



Photo: Weister Co., courtesy of Oregon State Parks

A Legendary Landscape

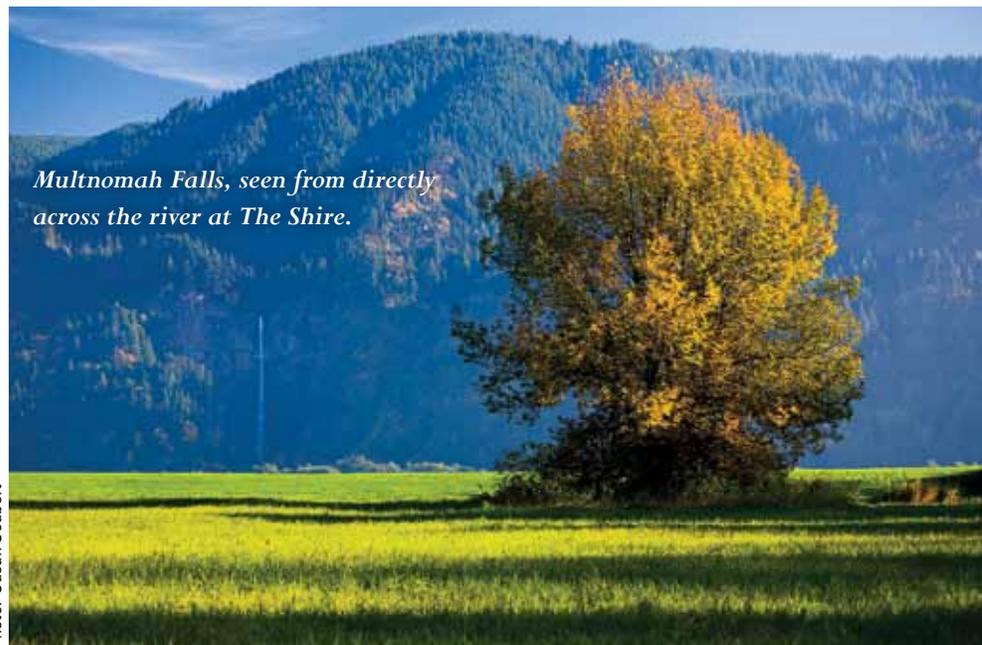
Kate Harbour, Membership Coordinator, kateh@gorgefriends.org

Across the river from Multnomah Falls, a quiet, lesser-known view of the iconic waterfall awaits fortunate visitors. From this vantage point at The Shire, Nancy Russell looked across the river in August 1979 and began the journey that would lead to the birth of Friends of the Columbia Gorge and eventually to the National Scenic Area Act.

The property was owned by John Yeon, a Portland architect and conservationist. In 1965, Yeon had saved 75 acres from development, and over time, he transformed the land that he called The Shire into a one-of-a-kind landscape, with carefully sculpted views of Multnomah Falls.

In the 1970s, development pressures from Portland increased the urgency of Yeon's lifelong pursuit of Gorge protection. Seeking a leader who could rally Republicans and Democrats alike to support federal Gorge legislation, Yeon invited Nancy and Bruce Russell to dinner. With the magnificent landscape of The Shire as his backdrop, Yeon asked Nancy to lead the charge for Gorge protection.

Today the property is owned by University of Oregon's John Yeon Center for Architecture and the Landscape. Under their ownership this legendary riverfront property is protected from future development.



Multnomah Falls, seen from directly across the river at The Shire.

Photo: Susan Seubert

“The John Yeon Center is devoted to preserving Yeon's legacy by inspiring future acts of visionary design and conservation,” says the center's executive director, Randy Gragg. “We love to welcome students, professionals, artists, activists, and anyone else who is interested in seeing a unique merging of art and landscape and the birthplace of Friends.”

We're grateful to the John Yeon Center for treasuring this place that's so significant to Friends' history and the preservation of the Columbia Gorge.

The Shire is not open to the public, but the Yeon Center offers tours, as well as volunteer work days. For more information on the Center or to schedule a tour of The Shire, visit www.yeoncenter.uoregon.edu. ■

Legacy Celebration

On August 7, Friends will host the second annual recognition event for members of the Norman Yeon Legacy Circle aboard the Columbia River Gorge Sternwheeler. Attendees will enjoy a delicious brunch as we travel the river amid breathtaking views of the Columbia Gorge.

If you have designated Friends in your will, or if you are planning to do so, we hope you'll join us! To learn more, contact our Development Officer, Pam Davee, at pam@gorgefriends.org or 971-634-2036. ■



Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler. Photo: Ken Denis

Featured Hike:

Car-free Hikes in the Gorge

Kate Lindberg, Outreach Assistant, katel@gorgefriends.org

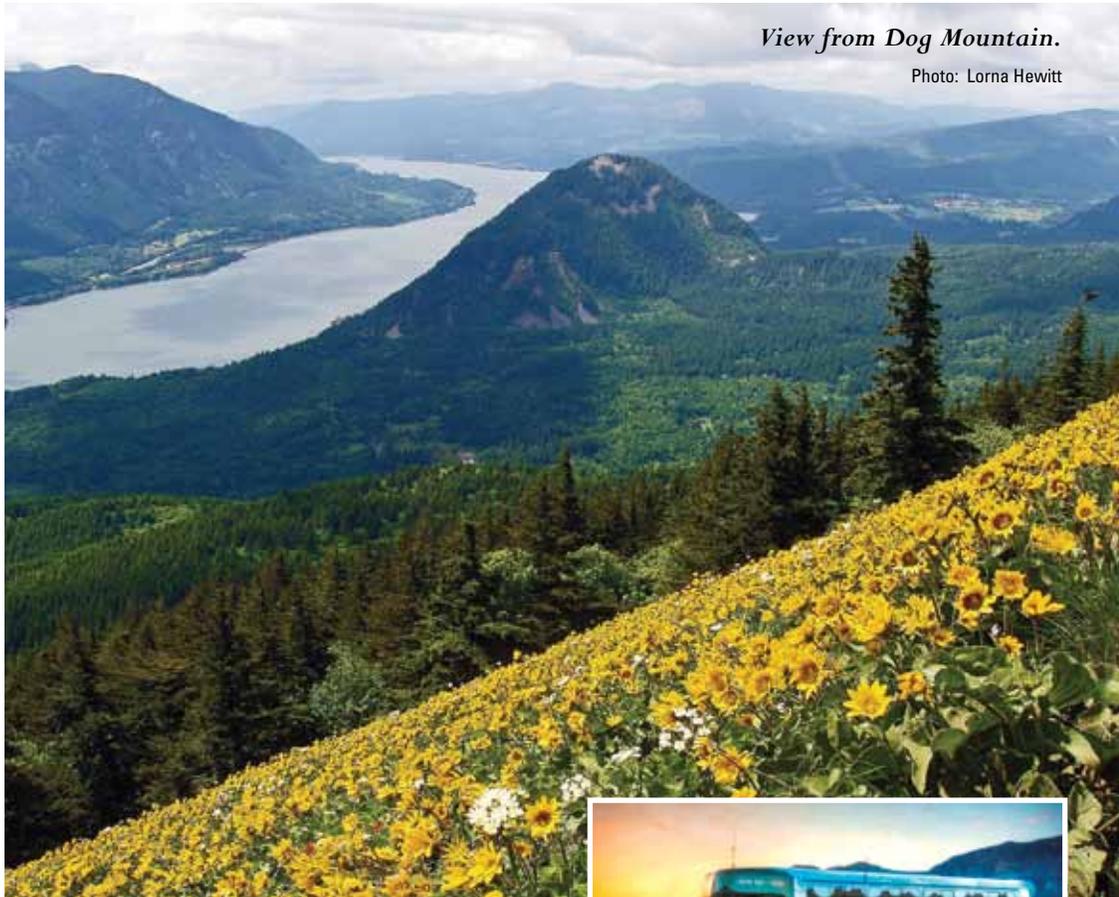
Hikers now have two car-free options for getting to Dog Mountain and Multnomah Falls.

Starting May 27, the Columbia Gorge Express transports riders from Gateway Transit Center in Portland to Multnomah Falls and back for \$5 round trip, Friday through Sunday and holidays. Or you can park for free on weekends at Rooster Rock and ride a free shuttle to and from Multnomah Falls to avoid parking congestion.

In Washington, a weekend shuttle runs between Skamania County Fairgrounds and the Dog Mountain trailhead through June 12. The shuttle makes 10 daily runs for \$2 round trip, and you can take public transit from Vancouver and Portland to connect with the Dog Mountain shuttle.

Also in Skamania County, the West End Transit or WET Bus will resume full service on June 18, for its third year. The WET Bus will run on weekends through September 4, to nine trailheads and Gorge communities.

Linked to our *Gorge Towns to Trails* program, these transit options connect Gorge communities with nearby hiking opportunities, encouraging sustainable recreation, car-free.



View from Dog Mountain.

Photo: Lorna Hewitt



For a complete schedule, hike itineraries, and more, visit www.gorgefriends.org/hikebybus and www.columbiagorgeexpress.com.

Special Gifts

January 23 – April 28, 2016

IN HONOR OF DEBBIE ASAKAWA
Y. LYNNE AND CRAIG JOHNSTON
MARK BAJOREK AND SUSAN PALMITER

IN HONOR OF NATHAN BAKER
MEL AND MARGIE RIEFF

IN HONOR OF THE TRAIL MIX HIKING CLUB
DENISE AND MICHAEL CLEGG

IN MEMORY OF VERA BROWNSTEIN
HELEN RUNSTEIN

IN MEMORY OF BETTY BURRY
SALLY HINATSU
DAVID AND DIANNE LIPKIN

IN MEMORY OF JERRY GIESY
MARY BETH HEALY
WILLIAM AND EMMY LAWRENCE
GAYLORD AND JANE WEEKS

IN MEMORY OF HENIE GOTTFRIED
JEFFERY GOTTFRIED

IN MEMORY OF MANUEL ILLADES
NORA ILLADES

IN MEMORY OF IRIS JAFFEE
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STEVE AND DEBORAH WAKSMAN

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IN MEMORY OF NANCY REAGAN
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Know Your Gorge *What a day! June 7, 1916*

June 7, 1916, was a red-letter day in Oregon, when the Columbia River Highway was officially dedicated at Multnomah Falls. The dedication was the

featured event for Portland's Rose Festival, and hundreds drove the new highway to Multnomah Falls to celebrate. Still more boarded a special excursion train at Union Station that day, enjoying a festive round-trip outing to Multnomah Falls for just 75 cents for the occasion.

The Royal Rosarians feted the occasion with great pomp and pageantry. Trumpets blared and fairy girls scattered rose petals. A Rose princess was crowned "Miss Columbia," as an American flag was raised below the falls. A soloist sang the "Star Spangled Banner," and on cue, carrier pigeons took to the skies to carry the news all around the Pacific Northwest.

The Rose Festival court included Oregon Governor James Withycombe, highway designer Samuel C. Lancaster, construction manager John B. Yeon, and other notables. As they drove away toward Crown Point, the Queen

Crowds thronged Multnomah Falls on June 7, 1916 – long before the lodge was built – to celebrate the newly opened Columbia River Highway.

and King "baptized" the new highway with Multnomah Falls water, poured from a silver pitcher onto the road.

Later that afternoon, President Woodrow Wilson pressed a telegraph key in the White House, sending a signal across the country to trigger a small guillotine at Crown Point, which in turn cut a rope to unfurl an American flag. The Oregon National Guard responded with a 48-gun salute – one for each state in the union at the time. Henry L. Pittock, publisher of *The Oregonian* and chair of the Vista House Association, kicked off construction of the Vista House, dedicated to the memory of Oregon pioneers, and Governor Withycombe showered praise on Samuel Lancaster, "to whose guiding genius" we owe the Columbia River Highway.

What a day that must have been! With June 7, 2016, close at hand, this centennial is a perfect time to appreciate the beauty of the Columbia Gorge and rediscover this amazing, historic highway. ■

This year marks the opening centennial of the Historic Columbia River Highway. We will feature additional Historic Highway stories during the year. Visit www.historichighway.org for centennial information.



Photo: Weister Co., courtesy of Oregon State Parks