

FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

Winter 2006 Newsletter



More Wilderness in the Gorge and Mount Hood

By Katy Daily and Michael Lang

Congressmen Earl Blumenauer and Greg Walden are close to introducing a bill in the House of Representatives that would designate 78,000 acres within the Mt. Hood National Forest and the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area as wilderness. While a map of the proposed wilderness additions has not been made public, congressional staff have intimated that approximately 17,000 acres of rim rock on the south face of the Gorge will be included in the bill.

Ruckel Creek is one of the pristine areas in the Gorge included in the current wilderness proposal.

Photo: ©Oliver Dalton

Permanent Protection

Wilderness designation is vital to protect the most sensitive wild areas in the Gorge from threats such as road building and logging. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act helps protect some Gorge wilderness values, but does not provide the same level of protection as a congressionally mandated wilderness designation. For example, under the Bush administration, the Forest Service loosened rules protecting forests in the Gorge and refused to take administrative action to protect the Gorge's most sensitive forests from the chainsaw. Wilderness designation would permanently protect the most sensitive forests and would be more immune to administrative influence.

What is Left Out

Reps. Blumenauer and Walden have posted a conceptual outline, *Mt. Hood Legislative Concepts*, on their websites (see <http://blumenauer.house.gov/mthood.shtml>). The offices of both Congressmen say these concepts lay the foundation for bipartisan wilderness legislation for Mt. Hood and the Columbia Gorge that is scheduled to be released this February.

Though light on specifics and loaded with provisions other than wilderness designation, their proposal is a good start. However, it is far short of the 261,000 acres around Mt. Hood, 35,000 of which are in the Gorge, that are suitable for wilderness designation. The proposal leaves many special, unspoiled areas without perma-

(continued on page 7)

protecting land

INSIDE:
Spring Hiking Brochure

Executive Director's Letter

“O Captain! my Captain! rise up and hear the bells”

– Written by Walt Whitman on the day of Abraham Lincoln's death April 15, 1865

In January 2006, Friends of the Columbia Gorge lost a great leader and I lost a fine mentor and friend. John Reynolds, who joined our board of directors in 1993 and was Chair from 1997-2001, passed away after a 10-month struggle with esophageal cancer.

John hired me as interim executive director of Friends in 1998 and helped me navigate the transition from the previous director, the building of board and staff relations, and the onset of the Bea house debacle. John was eager to step down from the chair role to truly enjoy retirement with his wife Phyllis, but he stayed in the position for another two full years to ensure a smooth transition for me and for the organization.

Many volunteers join non-profit boards and become immediately bored, dazed, disenchanted, or overwhelmed with the reality of scrutinizing board meeting materials, reviewing board and staff policies, and keeping the house in order for the IRS and other government agencies. John was always congenial, jumping into these tasks with the zealous

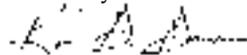
attention to detail usually found only in accountants. Yet John's concern was not only the bottom line. From his perspective as a retired physician, John worked diligently to develop organizational stability, advocating for strong health benefits for Friends' staff and their families.

On the board, John was the bellwether and his words carried great weight. The combination of his institutional memory (not only putting in time but actively engaging), his pragmatism, and his clear, unwavering commitment to our mission were invaluable. When John spoke, others listened. In the past year, John was somewhat less active but his words of wisdom continued to guide us and his subtle nods of approval assured me I was on the right track.

John and I shared a love of American history and word of his death reminded me of the stirring Walt Whitman poem quoted above. Ironically, John recently loaned me his copy of *April 1865: The Month That Saved America*, which was also the month Whitman's poem was written.

Like Whitman, my captain no longer answers the call. But I am a better director, manager, and person for having served under him.

Sincerely,



Kevin Gorman
Executive Director



Dr. John Reynolds
photo: Lee Ann Gauthier



John Reynolds (left) and Friends co-founder Dave Cannard (center), with Kevin Gorman at Friends' 2005 Annual Meeting.
photo: Michael Lang

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, Outreach Coordinator, betsy@gorgefriends.org

Celebrating our Volunteers

Last fall at Friends' 25th anniversary gala we honored the efforts of our founder, Nancy Russell, and saluted many others whose participation was crucial in Friends' early work to secure protection for the Columbia Gorge.

Without the support and commitment of countless volunteers, the National Scenic Area Act never would have been passed and the Gorge would be open to ever more development, speculation, and destructive land practices. Volunteers who love the Columbia Gorge made the difference, and made protection a reality.

Special Tribute

The range of talent, skills, and expertise, and the enthusiastic dedication of Gorge lovers who help Friends ensure Gorge protection are truly inspiring.

To celebrate that inspiration and our tradition of volunteer commitment, Friends' Annual Meeting on March 12 (details on page 6) will include a tribute to volunteers whose efforts continue to make a difference for the Gorge.

Volunteer board members, hike leaders, photographers, computer experts, researchers, office assistants, and more are crucial to our efforts. Some bring advanced technical skills, professional ability, and policy expertise while others assist with hikes, outings, on-the-ground stewardship work, and day-to-day administrative projects.

Enthusiasm for protecting the natural wonders of the Gorge motivates clerical volunteers, hike leaders, and our rapid-response email activist team alike. All share a

passionate love of the Columbia Gorge, and Friends salutes you all.

Join us on March 12 to honor everyone who has been part of Friends' Gorge protection efforts, and to celebrate our shared commitment to keeping the Columbia Gorge protected for coming generations. ■

It's Almost Wildflower Season

Our Spring Hiking program March 11 – June 18 will feature wildflowers, wilderness, bike tours, family activities, and more. Tuck our hiking brochure and Russ Jolley's "Wildflowers of the Columbia Gorge" in your pack and head for the trails. Russ will join more than two dozen other leaders on Friends' outings and rambles this season. ■



Hikers join Russ Jolley along paths and trails in the Gorge every spring.

photo: Diana Karabut



Join the Team!

Activism Help Conservation Organizer Katy Daily get comments to officials, give testimony at hearings, and run phonebanks and email campaigns to elected officials. Contact Katy to get involved. katy@gorgefriends.org or 503.241.3762 x110.

Administrative Support We'd love to have your help with computer, general office, and administrative projects. Contact Development Assistant Teckla Anderson to get started. teckla@gorgefriends.org or 503.241.3762 x100.

Legal Program If you have research skills or a legal background, contact Staff Attorney Nathan Baker in our office. nathan@gorgefriends.org or 503.241.3762 x101.

Outdoor Activities Help us out in the Gorge with hikes, outings, and stewardship projects. Contact Outdoor Programs Coordinator Cathy Robart for details. cathy@gorgefriends.org or 503.241.3762 x106. ■



Conservation and Legal Program Highlights

In the Courts and in the Field...

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

Casino Advocates Seek to Narrow Environmental Review

What began in 1998 as a 75,000-square-foot casino proposal has now mushroomed into a 611,000-square-foot casino resort proposed along the banks of the Columbia River. Despite the myriad of environmental threats posed by this massive casino development, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) is now proposing to limit the scope of environmental review of the proposal and narrow the options to be considered in the environmental impact study (EIS).

The BIA reopened the comment period for EIS scoping in December and received hundreds of public comments opposing the casino and calling for inclusion of a full range of alternatives, including analysis of an on-reservation casino along Highway 26 near Warm Springs.

The recent spate of bribery, fraud and conspiracy indictments

and plea bargains involving the use of tribal casino funds, and the anticipated criminal indictments of congressional leadership, have resulted in a huge chilling effect on the expansion of off-reservation casinos and increased interest in prohibiting “reservation shopping” through amendments to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, has vowed to hold hearings on S. 2078, a bill that would end off-reservation casino shopping, except in rare cases. Friends is supporting amendments to prohibit casinos in National Parks and National Scenic Areas.

Commission Expands Commercial Uses Within the Scenic Area

As the Gorge Commission is being sued by Gorge landowners and conservationists for failing to protect scenic views, water quality and fish and wildlife

habitat, it spent much of the past year expanding commercial uses that are allowed within the scenic area.

New commercial uses within the scenic area are generally restricted to urban areas or special zones already dedicated to current commercial uses. However, the Commission has made two amendments to the Gorge-wide management plan within the past two years that will greatly expand commercial uses. The most recent rule change would allow conversion of buildings eligible for listing on the national historic

The recent amendments go too far in allowing large commercial uses to be established in rural neighborhoods, farms, and forest land.

register to convert to restaurants, bars, hotels and commercial event facilities. This will affect at least 55 buildings throughout the scenic area.

Friends supported allowing minor commercial uses in historic buildings for the purpose of historic preservation. The recent amendments go too far in allowing large commercial uses to be established in rural neighborhoods, farms, and forest land.

Friends and Gorge landowners are considering appealing the decision to the Oregon Court of Appeals. Friends will work to make sure that commercial uses are balanced in a way that protects scenic, natural, cultural and recreation resources of the Gorge, and also the rights of neighboring property owners.■



The proposed casino site in Cascade Locks is seen here from Washington SR-14.
photo: Kevin Gorman

Conservation and Legal Program Highlights

Native American Cultural Resources Protected by Friends Legal Victory

By Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney
nathan@gorgefriends.org

Friends recently prevailed in a legal case involving protection of Native American cultural resources in the Columbia River Gorge. The court's ruling will help protect these irreplaceable resources for generations to come.

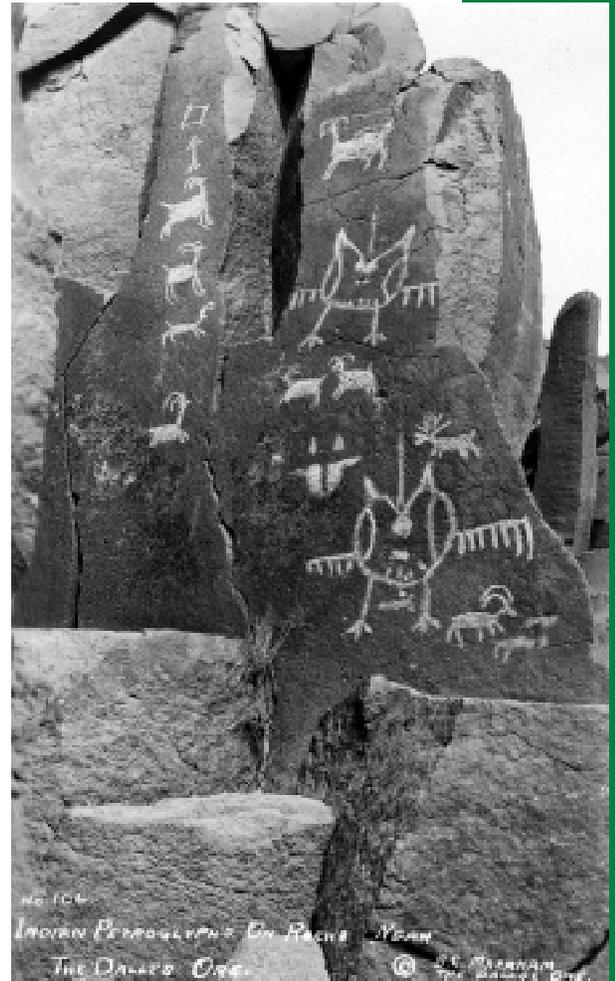
In 1992, a Wasco County landowner requested permission from the Columbia River Gorge Commission to conduct mining operations. Because the parcel contains Native American cultural resources, the Gorge Commission requested additional information from the landowner, including a cultural resources inventory of the property. The landowner responded with a one-word letter ("No") and began bulldozing the property.

The Gorge Commission obtained a preliminary injunction against further ground-disturbing activities on the property, upon which the landowner wrote to the court that he "will not pay any attention to any directive, statement, judgment or order regarding me mining on my property." The court then issued a permanent injunction and stated that the landowner was "not motivated primarily to lawfully husband his land but rather to 'impress' the press and his constituency with brazen acts of bravado and

vandalism. Knowing that these artifacts from past cultures are forever lost once damaged or destroyed, [his] acts of deliberate destruction of Native American artifacts . . . amount[] to cultural terrorism pure and simple."

The landowner then sued the State of Oregon, claiming that the permanent injunction had been, in effect, a "taking" of the property and that the state should therefore compensate him. Friends and the Gorge Commission intervened in the case. After years of litigation, the Oregon Court of Appeals rejected the takings claim in December 2005, holding that because the landowner had turned his back on the lawful development process by refusing to complete a land use application, the case was not even ripe for adjudication.

The landowner has vowed to request review by the Oregon Supreme Court. Friends will continue to participate in the case in order to support proper enforcement of the Scenic Area Act and the protection of cultural and other resources in the Columbia River Gorge. ■



The National Scenic Area Act protects cultural resources including Native American rock imagery such as this example near The Dalles. Rock imagery has borne witness to indigenous presence in the Columbia Gorge for countless generations.

photo: Courtesy Columbia Gorge Discovery Center, Wasco County Historical Museum

"Knowing that these artifacts from past cultures are forever lost once damaged or destroyed, . . . acts of deliberate destruction of Native American artifacts . . . amount to cultural terrorism pure and simple."

– Wasco County Circuit Court decision



Funding Gorge Protection

Development Director's Report

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

Donors Make the Difference: Doug Stoudt

Friends recently received a bequest from the estate of Doug Stoudt. Doug loved hiking and the Columbia River Gorge has special meaning for the whole Stoudt family.



Doug's brother and sister-in-law, David Stoudt and Gloria Henning, are long-time members of Friends. As executors of his estate, Doug's instruction to them was to make their own choices of several groups to receive gifts from the estate. We are deeply grateful to David and Gloria for including a gift of approximately \$135,000 to Friends of the Columbia Gorge. This gift to support Gorge protection work is a very fitting tribute to Doug Stoudt's memory. ■

Gifts for the Future

Estate planning discussions are underway with several donors who own property in the Gorge. In one case, the family is interested in leaving their home and property, located in the National Scenic Area, to Friends in their will. In another instance, long-time members are considering an outright gift of property to the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust.

Friends members know that the best way to ensure Gorge protection in perpetuity is to support the only organization solely dedicated to vigorous enforcement of the National Scenic Area Act. During the past several years, estate gifts totaling more than \$4.5 million have enabled us to start the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust and grow our endowment to more than \$1.3 million.

To discuss estate planning questions, please call Jane Harris at 503-241-3762 x102. ■

Friends Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Sunday, March 12, 2006

11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Skamania Lodge

Stevenson, Washington

\$20 for Current Members

\$30 for Non-Members

Please RSVP by March 1 to

503-241-3762 x100

We cordially invite you to join us at beautiful Skamania Lodge for our Annual Meeting luncheon which includes a presentation by Terry Toedtemeier, curator of photography at the Portland Art Museum, "100 Years of Photography in the Gorge," and a photographic exhibit of some of the finest early photos of the Gorge. We'll also have a special tribute to all our volunteers. The annual meeting this year is open to members and non-members. So we hope you will bring a friend and join us. ■

Special Contributions

IN HONOR OF NANCY RUSSELL

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AMY YOUNG

ADDITIONAL SPECIAL GIFTS LISTED ON BACK COVER

More Wilderness...

(continued from page 1)

ment protection, including rare old-growth forests on Larch Mountain and along the Oneonta, Herman, and Ruckel Creek trails, as well as the spectacular vistas from Tom McCall point.

Friends, Oregon Natural Resources Council, and other conservation groups are working closely with both congressional offices and we are hopeful that the introduced House bill will include Wilderness designation for the western Columbia Gorge, including Larch Mountain. If not, we will work with the Senate for improved legislation.

"Wilderness designation is vital to protect the most sensitive wild areas in the Gorge..."

Broad Based Support

Over the past three years there have been numerous public meetings hosted by the Congressmen or Senator Wyden in Hood River, at Timberline Lodge, and in Portland. Each meeting was dominated by citizens, business leaders, and public officials who support increased Wilderness for Mt. Hood and the Gorge.

At the two "Mt. Hood Summits" held last December 3rd, virtually no opposition was voiced to the concepts presented by Congressmen Blumenauer and Walden. Most groups who had previously expressed concerns about Senator Wyden's Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness Act of 2004 are supporting the Blumenauer/Walden concepts. The debate has now shifted from *whether* to increase wilderness to *how much* wilderness should be added and *where* should it be.

Political Reality

Senator Wyden introduced his Lewis and Clark Mount Hood Wilderness Act of 2004, which

called for protection of 160,000 acres of wilderness within the Mt. Hood National Forest, including more than 35,000 acres in the Gorge. Although this proposal received broad support, it never made it out of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee and did not get the support of Senator Smith, a key player on that committee.

Getting wilderness bills passed in this Congress has proven extremely difficult. Most legislation cannot get out of the House Resources Committee, chaired by Representative Richard Pombo who is openly hostile to protecting wilderness lands. However, because this bill will be co-sponsored by Rep. Walden, it has an excellent chance of passing the House this year.

The Senate now holds the key. To be successful, Senators Wyden and Smith must work together to introduce their own bipartisan version of a Mt. Hood and Gorge wilderness bill.

Let's work hard to make sure 2006 is the year that we ensure a lasting legacy for future generations to love and enjoy. ■

Take Action Now

Urge Senator Gordon Smith to co-sponsor wilderness legislation this year with Senator Ron Wyden. Please let Senator Smith know there is overwhelming support for him to help preserve the remaining wild lands around Mt. Hood and in the Gorge.

You can send your comments from www.gorgefriends.org/involve/TakeAction/alerts. Or mail your personal letter to:

Senator Gordon Smith
121 SW Salmon St., #1250
Portland, OR 97204

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

www.gorgefriends.org

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522 SW Fifth Avenue, #720
Portland, Oregon 97204
503-241-3762

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416 Oak Street
Hood River, OR 97031
541-386-5268

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* Gorge residents

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Legal Counsel: Gary Kahn
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Know Your Gorge Where Eagles Soar

The late winter and early spring months are a great time to catch sight of the largest concentration of bald eagles in the mid-Cascade range.

To feast your eyes on bald eagles feasting on salmon, head to the Klickitat River in the eastern Gorge. The recently opened Balfour Klickitat Day Use Area typically hosts a strong community of eagles and offers a remarkable opportunity to see these magnificent birds. In previous years as many as 28 eagles have been viewed at one time in the grove of trees at the north end of the Day Use Area.

While you are out along the Klickitat River area, make sure you also spend time on the Klickitat Trail, a 31-mile rail trail recently opened due to the hard work of local residents and Friends of the Columbia Gorge. For maps of the Klickitat Trail, visit www.klickitat-trail.org/map.htm

Eagles can also be seen around Mosier, the Bonneville Dam, and near Stevenson.

Bald eagles grace the skies in the eastern Gorge near Lyle.
photo: Ken Denis

