



KEEPERS OF THE MAGIC

In late summer 2021, my wife Lindsey and I left our home in central Maine to make a cross-country move to Oregon for her new job at Reed College. The grand finale of our westward journey led us from Hermiston to Portland on I-84, a stretch of highway that rivals any of the most spectacular routes in the world. The beauty one witnesses driving this road is transcendental; through the barren deserts in the east, the rocky crag in the middle, or the dense forests and waterfalls in the west, nature seems to further affirm its grandeur and divinity with each passing curve.

I'd experienced the Gorge once before 15 years ago—wading through waist-deep water in Oneonta Creek with my dad is one of my most vivid memories with him—but Lindsey had never visited. That's why it made perfect sense to me when, every 10 miles or so, she'd murmur, partly to me and partly to the ether, "I can't believe people actually get to live here." With that phrase still echoing in my mind, I was beyond thrilled to join the Friends of the Columbia Gorge team a little more than a year later as the communications and engagement director.

So why is that anecdote relevant for our 2022-23 Annual Report? Well, partly because it's always soul-filling to reflect on some of your most memorable life experiences—writing that last paragraph transported me back to that brief

but wonderful moment in time with the love of my life in the passenger seat and a brand new adventure ahead of us. But more than that, I included it because it shows us that the wonders of the Gorge are truly singular. Everything about this place makes you feel something-awe, inspiration, energy, peace, ambition evenand a thing like that can never be taken for granted. For people who don't live in or near the Gorge, visiting can be a once-in-a-lifetime experience, so it's important for us to appreciate how exceptionally lucky we are to experience this place as our home each day. I can speak for Friends staff and board when I say that we recognize both the beauty and fragility of the Gorge, and we are so grateful to get up each morning and work to make this complex place, bit by bit, more protected for our generation and all those to come.

Friends went through a lot of change in the last year. New preserves; new initiatives; new staff and board members; a new magazine that includes, for the first time ever, a Spanish version and audio recordings in both English and Spanish (this annual report will have the same options available online); and even a new website on the way. But as much as things evolve, they also stay constant. Friends has maintained our relentless focus on protecting the landscapes, habitats, and resources of the Gorge through litigation, advocacy, land acquisition, and public education.

As you turn the pages of this publication, you'll learn more about our accomplishments in the past year, but for now, I want to leave you with one parting thought-something that I've learned in my short time living in Oregon and working for Friends. The Gorge is not a guarantee. It's a dynamic, constantly evolving place full of breathtaking vistas, majestic wildlife, sensitive ecosystems, and vibrant human communities. But, like so many beautiful places on Earth, it's also extremely vulnerable. Climate change and its impacts on weather patterns, river temperatures, and wildlife migration; irresponsible development; habitat loss and extinction; and overtourism are constant threats to this treasure that we all love.

That's why we're here, and that's why you're here. Together, along with our partners and the sovereign tribes of the Gorge, we are the keepers of the magic. We are so proud of what we've accomplished in the last year with you on our side, and we hope you are too. Thank you for all that you do to keep the Gorge wondrous, wild, and open to all.



Tim Dobyns Communications & Engagement Director

FRIENDS STOPS ILLEGAL MINING IN THE GORGE

Friends' legal efforts to stop the illegal mining on the Zimmerly property in Clark County came to a head over the past year. In just 2023 alone, Friends won 12 separate legal victories against the mining violators!

These included victories at the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington, the Washington Supreme Court, the Washington Court of Appeals, the Clark County Superior Court, and the Clark County Land Use Hearing Examiner. Each of these courts and decision-makers has now formally agreed with Friends that the unpermitted mining activity that occurred on the Zimmerly property from 2017 to 2020 was illegal. And this past summer, after presiding over seventeen hours of hearings, the Clark County Hearing Examiner denied a land use application for resuming mining on the property because it was incomplete under the National Scenic Area rules. That decision has been appealed, so the litigation continues into 2024.

Friends was assisted by a team of lawyers in the litigation, and the Clark County land use hearing benefitted from the substantial involvement of many concerned individuals, organizations, and READ public agencies. It takes a village

to stop an illegal mine!





Friends protected this farmland in eastern Clark County from conversion to residential development. © Friends Archives

PROTECTING GORGE FARMLAND

In 2022 and 2023, Friends had multiple legal victories that are already directly protecting farmland in eastern Clark County. But more importantly, these victories also establish important precedents to protect farmland throughout the entire Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

In 2020, portions of a longstanding family farm (pictured here) were purchased by real estate development companies whose owners quickly announced they wished to carve up the farm and convert it to residential use by building three massive "non-farm dwellings." Yet under the law, the new owners were entitled to only one non-farm dwelling (to replace an existing mobile home).

After extensive litigation, Friends succeeded in convincing Clark County to deny a proposed nonfarm dwelling on the farm, and also convinced the new landowners to substantially reduce the size of the proposed replacement dwelling.

We then successfully defended our legal victory at Clark County on appeal before the Columbia River Gorge Commission, whose appellate decision now provides important guidance for protecting farmland in all six National Scenic Area counties. The Gorge Commission's decision has now been appealed to the Clark READ County Superior Court, where the

litigation continues.

MORE

OREGON OFFICIALLY TERMINATES PERMIT FOR FRACKED GAS POWER PLANT

In September 2022, as a direct result of Friends' legal work, Oregon's energy facility siting agency officially terminated the permit (called a "site certificate") for the fracked gas plant known as the "Perennial Wind Chaser Station," putting the final nail in the coffin for what would have been one of the state's largest greenhouse gas polluters.

Friends' success stemmed from a lawsuit we filed, along with Columbia Riverkeeper, against the Oregon Department of Energy for unlawfully allowing project construction to proceed even after the site certificate was supposed to expire by law. If constructed as proposed, the plant would have generated more than one million tons of carbon dioxide pollution annually, not including emissions from the fracking operations that would have supplied it with methane gas.

The official termination of this project marks a significant victory for all who want to see the Gorge's air quality and special resources protected in perpetuity.

READ MORE



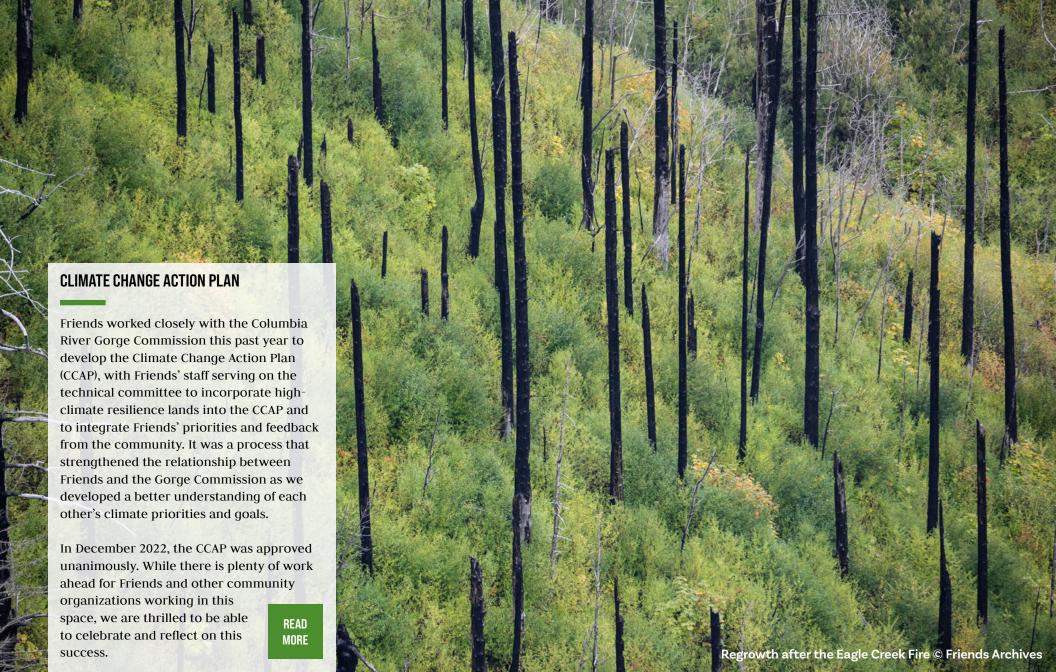


LAND USE WATCHDOG

Friends consistently reviews and comments on all proposed land use and development activities in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, applying our legal staff's knowledge and expertise to ensure compliance with the applicable law. Often, our comments result in positive changes to projects to protect the vital resources of the Gorge.

For example, Friends' comments on multiple applications in Hood River County resulted in the applicants relocating proposed dwellings to decrease their visibility. In one of these cases, the relocated dwelling site also avoided an unnecessary stream crossing, plus the applicant abandoned plans to build a 1,500-square-foot residential accessory building in a sensitive area. Based on comments from Friends and others, Wasco County denied an application for a home business that would have required extensive infrastructure, including several new buildings, in a visually sensitive area.

The applicant eventually set up the business outside of the National Scenic Area. Through our comments in another matter, Friends convinced Wasco County to reject a legal parcel determination that would have allowed a dwelling on a non-legal lot in a sensitive area. Friends' comments to the Washington Department of Natural Resources resulted in the removal of a timber harvest unit to avoid the crossing of a stream that provides critical Coho salmon habitat.





LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Thousands of bills are introduced in the Oregon and Washington Legislatures each year, many of which have direct impacts on the Gorge. Staff and partners follow these bills and take action through letter writing, public testimony, and campaigns to get citizen conservationists to urge their representatives to protect the Gorge.

One example is Oregon's Senate Bill 85 (SB85). SB85, in its original form, proposed a moratorium on new or expanded extremely large Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (Mega-CAFOs) while the impacts these operations have on human health and safety were assessed. This contentious bill was amended, debated, and rewritten through several iterations, but the final version did not meet the original goal; while it closed a loophole that allowed Mega-CAFOs to draw water without limits, none of the other impacts to human health and safety that Friends was fighting for were addressed. This includes air quality, an issue that continues to threaten residents of the Gorge. Despite this setback, Friends will continue to work to improve air quality standards in the Gorge.

Another legislative priority this year was funding for the Gorge Commission. Significant staff time was spent trying to convince Oregon to match the funds Washington had budgeted for the Gorge Commission in the 2023-2025 biennium. Both states' budget allocations for the Gorge Commission must match, otherwise the Commission is allocated the lower of the two states' budgets. Oregon's budget did not include funding for a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program and additional capacity for legal work and climate change adaptation. In an extremely difficult year full of walkouts, budget cuts, and somehow a record reserve, funding for these programs, like many needed programs throughout the state, was not funded.

SHUTTING DOWN A DATA CENTER PROPOSAL IN CASCADE LOCKS

In spring 2023, Friends staff were alerted by local residents about a proposal from a company called Roundhouse to build a data center in Cascade Locks on Port property. The community expressed concerns about noise, pollution, water use, electrical use, and other unknowns the project might bring. Many concerned community members posed questions to the leadership at the Port for which there came no clear answers, even months after the initial proposal.

Friends became involved with the Cascade Locks community by supporting their concerns, attending Port meetings, and reaching out to the media. In March, Friends spurred an investigative report by Columbia Insight that provided an in-depth look into the project, the Port, and its proponents. By summer 2023, the project generated enough controversy that it led to the recall and replacement of READ two Port Commissioners and the

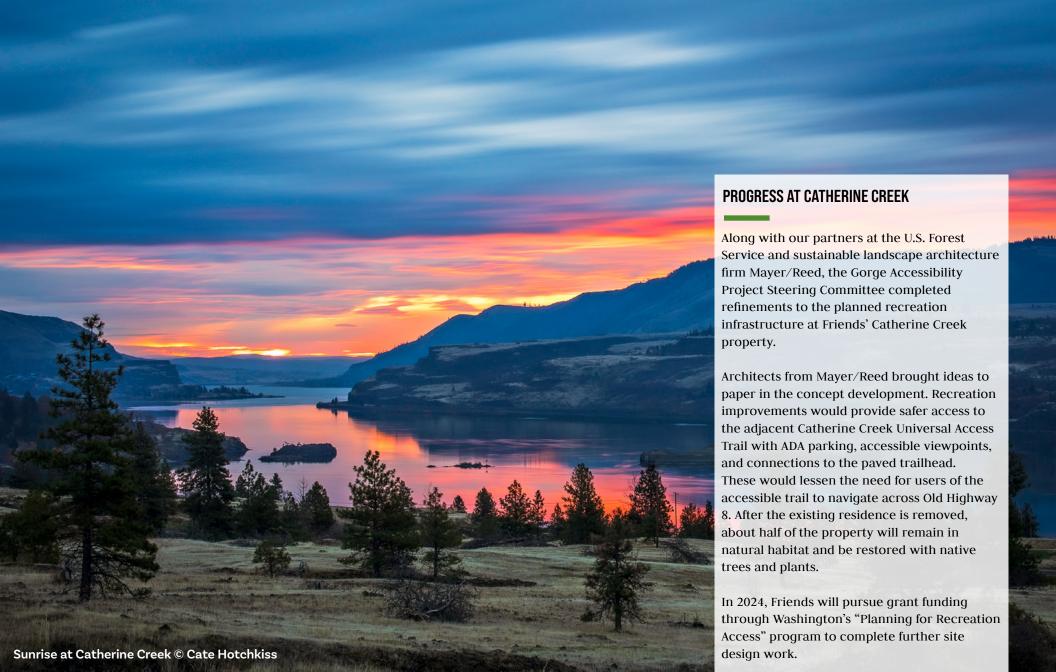
ultimate collapse of the project.

MORE









FRIENDS PARTICIPATES IN OREGON LAND JUSTICE PROJECT

The Oregon Land Justice Project is a program of the Coalition of Oregon Land Trusts (COLT) that seeks to expand Indigenous access, ownership, and stewardship of the land in Oregon. Since 2020, Friends has been participating in the learning phase of the project with land trusts all over Oregon and under COLT leadership.

The learning phase wrapped up in August 2022 with a very positive trip to the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians. In November 2022, Friends staff attended a gathering of all participating land trusts at the University of Oregon Many Nations Long House to discuss the action phase of the project. The outcome was the formation of a council comprised of 14 land trusts that decided to commit to the project in the future.

Committed land trusts and Friends have been taking steps to integrate Indigenous rights into the fabric of our organizations' operations by updating our bylaws and contributing to a fund to assist with tribal access projects. The council will continue to work together to continue learning as organizations, increase Indigenous access on land trust

Indigenous access on land trust lands in Oregon, and strengthen relationships between land trusts and tribes.







FIELD TRIPS WITH WIND RIVER MIDDLE SCHOOL

During a lucky sun break in the midst of an otherwise stormy March 2023, 140 6th- and 7th-grade students, teachers, and chaperones from Wind River Middle School in Carson, WA, engaged in a day of education and stewardship on public lands adjacent to Friends' Turtle Haven Preserve.

Teachers sought outdoor learning opportunities that connect students with local public lands through nature, science, and stewardship. In partnership with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, Friends was fortunate to be awarded a National Forest Foundation grant that funds conservation education on public lands to help our vision come to life. Over two field trips, USFS Rangers and Friends Land Trust staff facilitated outdoor science activities focused on biodiversity and native and invasive species, including the Western pond turtle and American bullfrog.

Students then took action to improve biodiversity and habitat around Collins Pond, planting around 500 native wildflowers that will benefit pollinators and pond turtles, and support elk forage.

Connecting to the big picture, the student plantings are building on the revegetation efforts at adjacent Turtle Haven Preserve where Friends Stewardship Manager Sara Woods guided volunteers in planting over 3,000 native bunchgrasses in fall 2022.

Wind River Middle School students make the coalition and impact of partners at this site even stronger. READ More

OUTDOOR PROGRAMS CONNECT NATURE LOVERS TO THE WONDERS OF THE GORGE

This year's outdoor programs offered an array of captivating guided outings, 13 in total, for both the public and Friends' dedicated members, fostering a deeper understanding of the Columbia Gorge and its unique landscapes. Participants embarked on educational adventures that allowed them to connect with nature.

Through volunteer-led guided outings, participants gained valuable insights into local ecosystems, wildlife, and the diverse landscapes and trails of the Gorge. They wandered along scenic trails and admired breathtaking vistas while learning about the importance of protecting, preserving, and stewarding the Columbia Gorge.

These outings served as an educational and community platform, empowering individuals with knowledge about protecting the Columbia Gorge and engaging in responsible recreation.

Participants left with a heightened appreciation for the beauty and intricacies of the Gorge, along with a renewed commitment to preserving it for future generations.





YOUTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS INTRODUCE LOCAL STUDENTS TO THE GORGE

In April 2023, Friends hired McKenzie Hammond to coordinate our youth programs, including The Great Gorge Wahoo, a twice-annual field outing with St. Andrew Nativity School, and Explore the Gorge, an annual multi-day outing with Canyon Creek and Jemtegaard Middle Schools. Explore the Gorge is generously supported by the Camas-Washougal Community Chest, and The Great Gorge Wahoo is generously supported by the Winthrop family and Carrie Nobles.

In fall 2022, St. Andrew Nativity School 7th graders visited the eastern Gorge for insider tours of two Friends land trust preserves: Catherine Creek and Dancing Rock. And in spring 2023, 8th-grade students visited the western Gorge, stopping at Vista House to hear from Friends Board Member Kevin Price, a former region manager for Oregon State Parks, about the importance of public lands. They then learned about waterfall geology, mammalogy, water quality, and plants of the Gorge at Bridal Veil Falls. Finishing out the day, they traveled to the Bonneville Dam where they played salmon obstacle course games with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife biologist Elise Olk, and inside got to see the fish ladder and the powerhouse.

In June 2023 for Explore the Gorge, students from Jemtegaard and Canyon Creek Middle Schools came to the Gorge for several action-packed days learning about herpetology, pikas, smartphone photography, water quality, botany, and of course geology! Students ran and played in the fields at Doetsch Day Use area, dissected owl pellets, and finished the program meeting some of Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and Museum's ambassador raptors.

FINANCIAL REPORT

JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023



With the support and generosity of our donors, volunteers, activists, and partners, Friends remains on solid financial ground. The organization has continued to evolve into a new post-pandemic era by shifting to a hybrid or remote working model for staff, being relational rather than transactional with partners, and working with a mindset of diversity, equity, and inclusion, while never losing sight of the ever-changing needs in protecting, preserving, and stewarding the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

Consolidated results in fiscal year 2022-2023 show operating income at \$3.25 million and operating expenses at \$3.19 million. Operating income includes the annual draw from endowments and reserve funds set aside to cover current-year projects, ending the year with a \$58,000 surplus.

County property taxes help support Gorge communities and schools. Friends wants to do our part in being good citizens, so we paid \$59,392 in property taxes when we legally could be exempt from payment.

Our \$7.77 million endowments include the Matthew Winthrop Fund and Vic Clausen Fund for outdoor youth education, and the Marjorie Abramovitz Fund for land trust activities. Endowments for general operations include the Conservation Director Endowment, the Mary D. and Thomas W. Holman Fund, the Barbara Pooley Wilson Fund, and the board-designated Nancy Russell Institutional Fund. Endowment funds are managed by Ferguson Wellman Capital Management and monitored by Friends' board's finance committee. Friends takes an annual 4 percent draw to help fund our work.

A Continuing Commitment to Accountability and Transparency

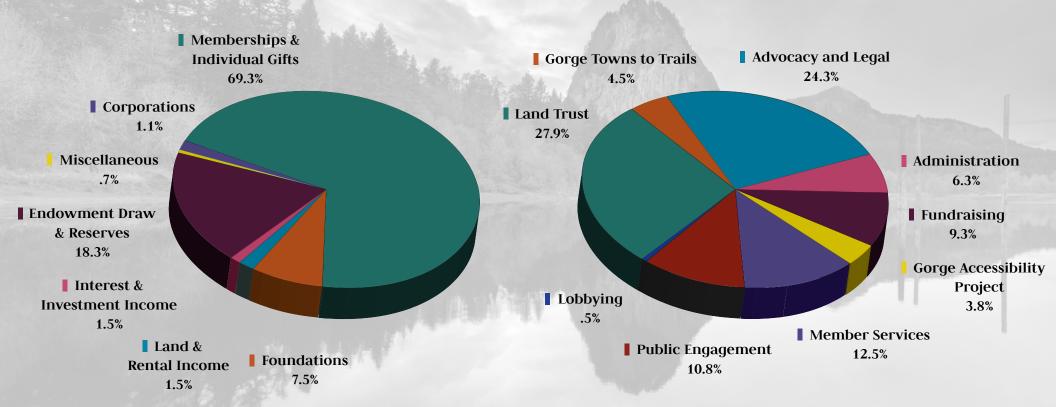
Friends believes that transparency is essential for ensuring accountability to our members, donors, partners, and the communities we work with. Friends of the Columbia Gorge is a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity and an Accredited Land Trust—a distinction awarded to land trusts meeting the highest national standards for excellence and conservation permanence.

For additional information, including past annual reports, 990s, and other financial statements, visit *gorgefriends.org/accountability*.

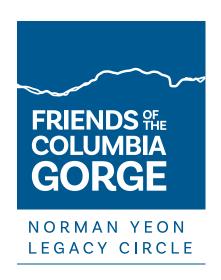


Paige Unangst Finance Director

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION		
	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2022
Land and Related Assets	\$10,239,744	\$10,945,660
Cash and Investments	\$9,886,822	\$10,235,572
Other Assets	\$1,618,677	\$392,863
Total Assets	\$21,745,243	\$21,574,095
Liabilities	\$348,196	\$364,868
Net Assets	\$21,397,047	\$21,209,227
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$21,745,243	\$21,574,095



This is an unaudited financial statement. Friends' board engages Kern and Thompson, LLC, to perform an annual independent audit.



It is with full hearts that Friends of the Columbia Gorge welcomes the 2022-2023 class of legacy donors to the Norman Yeon Legacy Circle. This year, 13 dedicated individuals have made a visionary commitment to long-term Gorge protection as a part of their legacies, ensuring the natural wonders found today will be preserved for future generations.

We announce the passing of seven very special members of the Norman Yeon Legacy Circle. We are profoundly grateful for Peter Hurley, Jane Koenig, William Lawrence, Nancie McGraw, Donald Sharpe, Carol Smith-Larson, and Deborah A. Wiley for including Gorge protection, preservation, and stewardship as a part of their estate plans. Their philanthropy will allow Friends to share the wonder of the Gorge well into the future. They will be remembered along with 53 other very special donors who made this ultimate commitment to the Gorge.

We are thankful for the gifts and intentions of all our Norman Yeon Legacy Circle members. Thanks to our legacy members' kind support, the Gorge will remain a vibrant, living place for future generations.

New Legacy Circle members this year in bold.

Jules Abbott
Blaine Ackley and Fran Beebe
Leslie Joan Allen
Lenny Anderson and Gisela Foerstermann
Pippa Arend
Debbie and Steve Asakawa
Coila Ash
Suzanne Bader
Elaine Ballou
Tom Bard
Cynthia Barrett and Karen Johnson
Carole Beauclerk
Larry and Maureen Becker
Richard Benner and Lavinia Gordon
Day Bennett

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North Cheatham
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Donald Clark
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Mary Clifford and Warren Morgan
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Jane Corboy and John Rogers

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Barbara Duerden Marcia Dunham Joan Durgin Debbie Durham Robbie Earon

Kevin Ebel and Colleen Wright

Jill and Scott Eckberg

Cathy Edelman Rebecca Frickson Karen and Lee Fairchild Gwen Farnham

Sarah Fish and Neal Razi Beth Flake and David Michalek

Robin Flamm

Gerald and Heidi Fox

Johnnalee and Mark Friedman

Peter Frothingham

Jana Fussell and Karen Hightower Marilyn Goldman

Kevin Gorman and Michelle Kinsella Charles and Lisa Grindell

Nancy and Ronald Gronowski Robert Grott and Vera Jagendorf Lee Grunes and Susan Nolte

Thomas Hager Marie Hall

Ken Hansen

Lisa Hansen

Ingrid and Kenneth Harper Jane Harris

John Harris III

Christine Hartman Josephine and Richard Hawthorne

Jim Heiman and Cynthia Sulaski

Judy Henderson

Mike Hendricks and Leanne Hogie Joyce Henstrand and Peter

Kiessling

Daniel Highkin and Margaret Klute

Dale and Lucy Hill Mel Hinton

David Hmiel and Christine Knowles

Robert Hogfoss Normandie and Robert Holmes

Jan Holt

Frank and Ursula Hood

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Ann Lackey

Ken Lacour

Andrea Lara Meg Larson Joy Lasseter

David Legg

Steve Levy and Sue Van Loon

Craig Lichtenthaler

Eric Lichtenthaler and Dixie Stevens Tom Linehan and Barbara Wolman

Janet Wong Liu Constance Lively

Les Long

Aiko Low and Nick Zeller

Christopher Lunt and Robin Sherwin D. Carter and Jennifer MacNichol

Mimi Maduro and Michael Stevens

Warren Maher and Cherie

Martchenke Jeff Malmauist William Maples

Susan Masta and Jay Withgott

April Matthias

Andrea and Rafael Maya

Charles McGinnis Kathleen McHarg

John Meckel and Barbara Traver Sue Merfeld and Bruce Richmond

Anne and Frnest Munch

Alicia Munoz

Barbara and Christopher Nelson

Carrie Nobles Lucy Nonnenkamp

John Nutt

Carlton Olson Marianne Ott Joan Ottinger



Horsetail Falls in autumn © Kyle Rosso



Gayle and Jay Palmer
John and Nancy Palmer
John Parry
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Underwood

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Evans Van Buren and Marsha Warner

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Donald Vinton Daniel Webb

Bruce Weber

Kathryn and Thomas Whittaker

Michele Wier Edyth Willard

Cynthia and Brian Winter

Diana Wolford Beverly Wong Sandy Wright Jean Zylka

21 anonymous members



Tiger lilies regrowing after a burn © Trevor Leahy

MEMBER-DRIVEN CONSERVATION

The generous support of our members makes all of our work possible. Thank you to our entire community for your passion and dedication to protecting the Gorge for today and future generations.

Mt. Defiance \$50.000+

Richard Benner and Lavinia Gordon Nancie McGraw Jan and Steve Oliva Patricia Peterson Anonymous

Table Mountain \$25,000-\$49,999

Debbie and Edmund Campbell
Kathy Cushman and Paul Miller
Josephine and Richard Hawthorne
The Hetherington Fund of the
Oregon Community Foundation
Mitvah Fund of the Oregon
Community Foundation
Greg Misarti and Eleanor Warren
Lucy Nonnenkamp
Charlie Scudder and Judy Stewart

Angel's Rest \$10,000-\$24,999

Nancy Archer Bill and Joan Bailey Elaine Ballou Heather and Lester Baskin

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Guardians of the Gorge \$5,000-\$9,999

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Marshall Hieronimus Melvin Hinton **Bob Hogfoss** Bill Lanfri Elisabeth and Peter Lyon Sue Mall Carol Mayer-Reed and Michael Reed Deanna Miller Kimberlysue Morton Gavle and Jav Palmer Gayle's Gifts Charitable Fund Community Foundation for Southwest Washington Mark and Claudia Sanzone Evans Van Buren and Marsha Warner Flisabet and Leo Van Swam John and Polly Wood Anonymous

Conservators of the Gorge \$1,000-\$4,999

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