

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Summer 2008 Newsletter

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Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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Take Action Today! Protecting Our National Heritage



Photo: Oliver Dalton

The Columbia River Gorge Commission voted this spring to allow urban-scale development on protected National Scenic Area lands. In doing so, the commissioners blatantly abandoned their duty to uphold the National Scenic Area Act and protect the Columbia Gorge.

Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski and Washington Governor Chris Gregoire are key to getting the Gorge Commission back on track. These governors together appoint 6 of the 12 voting members of the Gorge Commission. They have the

authority and responsibility to appoint Gorge commissioners who will uphold the National Scenic Area Act, not bend to the will of special interests.

Contact Governors Kulongoski and Gregoire today and urge them to appoint civic leaders to the Gorge Commission who will stand up to special interests and protect the natural, scenic, cultural, and recreational resources of the Columbia Gorge!

Governor Ted Kulongoski: (503) 378-4582
FAX: (503) 378-6827

Governor Chris Gregoire: (360) 902-4111
FAX: (360) 753-4110

Active citizen support makes the difference! Your actions for Gorge protection are crucial to our success. Contact your Senators and Representatives using the information below, or check www.senate.gov or www.house.gov for other offices.

Oregon

Sen. Gordon Smith, (202) 224-3753
<http://gsmith.senate.gov/public/>
Sen. Ron Wyden, (202) 224-5244
<http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/>
Rep. David Wu, (202) 225-0855
Rep. Earl Blumenauer, (202) 225-4811
Rep. Darlene Hooley, (202) 225-5711
Rep. Greg Walden, (202) 225-6730
Rep. Peter DeFazio, (202) 225-6416

Washington

Sen. Patty Murray, (202) 224-2621
<http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm>
Sen. Maria Cantwell, (202) 224-3441
<http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/>
Rep. Brian Baird, (202) 225-3536
Rep. Doc Hastings, (202) 225-5816
Rep. Norm Dicks, (202) 225-5916
Email your **Congressional Representative** by logging on to www.house.gov/writerep/

On the cover: Fisherman enjoying fall weather on the Columbia River. Check out our enclosed hiking brochure to put yourself in the Gorge this fall. Photo: Calvin Sanders

Director's Letter

Kevin Gorman at the Annual Picnic.

Photo: Keren Rosenblum

Outside my office hangs a beautiful old print depicting a Gorge development proposal circa 1914, during construction of the Historic Columbia River Highway. The proposal it details called for the world's tallest elevator going up the cliff face near

River Gorge. But true enhancement under the Act actually comes from minimizing development, not expanding it.

This summer, genuine enhancement is occurring on three Gorge properties, where buildings are being removed to improve scenic views, restore wildlife

Genuine enhancement is occurring on three Gorge properties, where all buildings are being removed to improve scenic views and wildlife habitat and promote public recreation.

Mist Falls, golf links and polo grounds above Angels Rest, a hotel on Devils Rest, and an electric light and power generating plant at Wahkeena Falls. All were "proposed improvements to the wonderful scenic holdings" of the Gorge.

The proposal's audacity is breathtaking, but current development proposals like the Gorge casino and Broughton destination resort, which wrap themselves in words like "improvements" and "enhancement," are arguably no less audacious. The word "enhancement" has been especially co-opted, because the goal of the National Scenic Area Act is to "protect and enhance" the Columbia

habitat, and promote public recreation.

These developed properties were directly adjacent to hundreds of acres of pristine public land. By this fall, they will again be part of an unspoiled landscape.

Two of these properties—a parcel near Wyeth and a residence at Major Creek—are owned by the Forest Service. On the Major Creek property, which Friends' founder Nancy Russell sold to the Forest Service, a previous owner had a life estate on the property and continued to live there until she passed away earlier this year. That house has now been removed.

Another enhancement is removal of the Cleveland house at Cape Horn (see



page 6). Acquisition and deconstruction of the 5,500-square-foot house, garage, and barn by Friends' land trust has spurred the Forest Service's Cape Horn recreation planning process (see page 7).

Development "enhancement" proposals for the Gorge will come and go, as they have for the past century. But real enhancement like we're seeing this summer will have a positive impact on these landscapes for generations to come.

Kevin Gorman
Executive Director



Gorge "enhancements," circa 1914, proposed by the Columbia Highlands Scenic Homes Company:

1. World's tallest elevator
2. Angels Rest golf and polo grounds
3. Hotel on "Hood River Scenic Road"
4. Devils Rest hotel
5. Electric light and power plant

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.

Urban Sprawl Proposals Threaten the Gorge

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

The City of The Dalles has proposed a major urban area boundary expansion that would absorb one square mile of protected National Scenic Area land into the urban area for commercial and industrial development. The proposed expansion would also set aside 900 more acres for future expansion.

This is just one of three pending expansion proposals. The cities of Lyle and Hood River are also anxious to push growth beyond their urban boundaries. If approved, these proposals would erode the scenic beauty of the Gorge and set a precedent that rewards poor urban planning.

The proposal by The Dalles City Council is particularly troubling because the city's population has actually decreased slightly since the 2000 census, from 12,185 to an estimated 11,926 residents last year. Also, directly across the U.S. 197 bridge, thousands of acres of undeveloped urban area land lie unused in Dallesport. Even if The Dalles were experiencing rapid growth, Dallesport could easily help accommodate decades of new urban development.

Undeterred by these facts and despite significant local opposition, the city planning director has recommended that the city pressure the Columbia River Gorge Commission to approve a major urban area expansion and further, to lobby Congress to amend the Columbia River Gorge National

Scenic Area Act to allow The Dalles's urban area to sprawl into Scenic Area lands.

Thirteen urban area boundaries were established by Congress in the Scenic Area Act, totalling 28,500 acres within the 292,000-acre National Scenic Area. Land uses within the urban boundaries are not

in perpetuity. Since the 1986 passage of this landmark legislation, the Gorge has experienced moderate population growth, but because of the generous urban area boundaries created by the legislation, no serious attempt at major urban area expansion has come up until recently.



Vacant land in the Dallesport urban area (which shares an airport with The Dalles) could easily accommodate decades of regional growth. Map: Friends of the Columbia Gorge GIS

directly regulated by the Scenic Area Management Plan but rather by local land use planning ordinances. The intent was to confine urban growth to these areas to protect the Gorge's natural scenic beauty

In the Scenic Area Act, Congress prohibited wholesale expansion of urban areas into surrounding Scenic Area lands, but left the door open for minor urban boundary revisions, subject to

The west side of The Dalles seen from Chenoweth Table, showing proposed expansions and current boundary. Photo: Jozsef Urmos





The City of Lyle is proposing an urban area expansion of more than 240 acres, above and west of the developed area in this photo. Photo: Kevin Gorman

stringent criteria requiring protection and enhancement of scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources; and protection of agricultural lands, forest lands, and open spaces. The Act also requires a demonstration of the need to revise an urban boundary based on legitimate population growth estimates and a demonstration of maximum land use efficiency within and along existing urban boundaries. Under the Scenic Area Act, only the Gorge Commission may approve a minor revision to an urban area boundary.

To better understand Congress's intention in designating urban area boundaries, in June the Commission invited a panel of speakers to its meeting, each of whom had been involved in developing the Scenic Area legislation. The invited panelists included former congressional staff members, local elected and appointed officials, and a former executive director of Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

The speakers' general consensus was that when Congress passed legislation allowing only "minor revisions" to urban area boundaries, it meant boundary revisions involving very small pieces of land. According to written testimony submitted by Friends' former director Bowen Blair, the Scenic Area Act sponsors intended that "minor revisions" meant no more than "two or three acres." The panelists also noted that the urban area

boundaries established by the Act were quite large, particularly in Washington, to satisfy opponents of the Scenic Area legislation.

After the speakers' presentations, the Gorge Commission directed its rules committee to develop rule concepts to better clarify the conditions under which minor revisions to urban boundaries may occur. The rules committee will present its recommendations to the full Commission in September.

Friends has recommended that the Commission update the rules to accurately reflect language in the Scenic Area Act and define "minor revision" in a manner consistent with the intent of Congress. However, this recommendation is not without risks. The current Commission has shown a propensity toward decisions that expand commercial and residential

"The National Scenic Area boundary is there for a reason. We don't need a small minority of people changing that."

*— Matt Bowen
Gorge business owner*

development within the Scenic Area, in violation of the Scenic Area Act and against the wishes of most Gorge residents, who are increasingly concerned about large-scale development and urban sprawl in the Columbia River Gorge.

As development pressure escalates, support for Scenic Area Act protections grows stronger. Polling conducted by Grove Insight in fall 2007 showed that Gorge area residents oppose urban expansion by a 54% to 39% margin (+/-5.7%). In The Dalles, expansion opponents have gathered more than 400 local signatures opposing the current expansion proposal.

Friends continues to protect the Scenic Area and the livability of Gorge communities by vigorously opposing efforts to expand urban areas beyond the limits established in the National Scenic Area Act.

Photo: Peter Cornelison



Business owner Matt Bowen of The Dalles has helped gather more than 400 signatures from local residents who oppose urban area expansion. Matt recently stated, "Expanding the urban area of The Dalles will take away our small town life style. The National Scenic Area boundary is there for a reason. We don't need a small minority of people changing that."



Friends' riverfront property near Stevenson.

Photo: Kate McBride

Land Trust Acquisitions Feature Ice Age Floods and Skamania Riverfront

Focus on Special Landscapes

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

Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust recently acquired two properties that highlight the unique and increasingly rare aspects of the Gorge. The first property is a 64-acre parcel in the Dalles Mountain area that is home to a *kolk* pond, a depression in the basalt bedrock that was scoured out by the Ice Age Floods (see page 12).

Vistas looking east from the parcel show large rippling scars in the landscape created by the floods, and an oak woodland ravine fed by natural springs runs through the property. Several rare plant species have been documented by Gorge wildflower expert Barbara Robinson, who first alerted the land trust to this special property. Thanks, Barbara!

Removal of Himalayan blackberry and the addition of fencing to keep out livestock are

planned to enhance wildlife habitat. Check our enclosed fall hiking brochure for a hike with Land Trust Manager Kate McBride to tour this unique landscape.

Downriver near Stevenson, an unspoiled nine-acre property lies right on the river. The land trust purchased this parcel to protect the shoreline from likely residential

development that would be highly visible from the River. This secluded parcel has an intimate cove, large promontory rocks that jut into the river, and sweeping vistas of the Gorge. Stewardship plans call for removal of invasive species and bringing in woody debris to enhance fish habitat on the shoreline. Preliminary discussions are underway with Washington State Parks about a possible partnership to turn this waterfront property into a water trail rest stop.

Cape Horn Building Removal

As this newsletter goes to print, the over-sized house that has long dominated the bluff's edge at Cape Horn is being dismantled by Green Home Construction. More than 70% of the materials will be recycled and reused through the Gorge Re-Build It Center in Hood River, including a large barn that may be reassembled for use at the Re-Build It Center.

In fall, the property is expected to be transferred to Forest Service ownership. Friends of the Columbia Gorge will work with the Forest Service to create an overlook to honor Nancy and Bruce Russell's tireless dedication to protecting Cape Horn.

Cape Horn Trail Planning Process

Renee Tkach, Outdoor Programs Coordinator, renee@gorgefriends.org

The U.S. Forest Service Scenic Area office is currently proposing a recreation development plan for the Cape Horn area. Your comments are vital to its outcome and future.

This process concludes more than two decades of effort by Friends and others to move private lands at Cape Horn into protective ownership and create a Cape Horn Park and Trail for public recreation.

In July, with input from Friends and the Cape Horn Conservancy, the Forest Service released three draft alternatives for public comment. The draft alternatives are: 1) leave the unofficial trail as is; 2) incorporate the upper trail into the Forest Service system while closing the lower trail due to environmental concerns; or 3) incorporate the full loop trail into the Forest Service system.

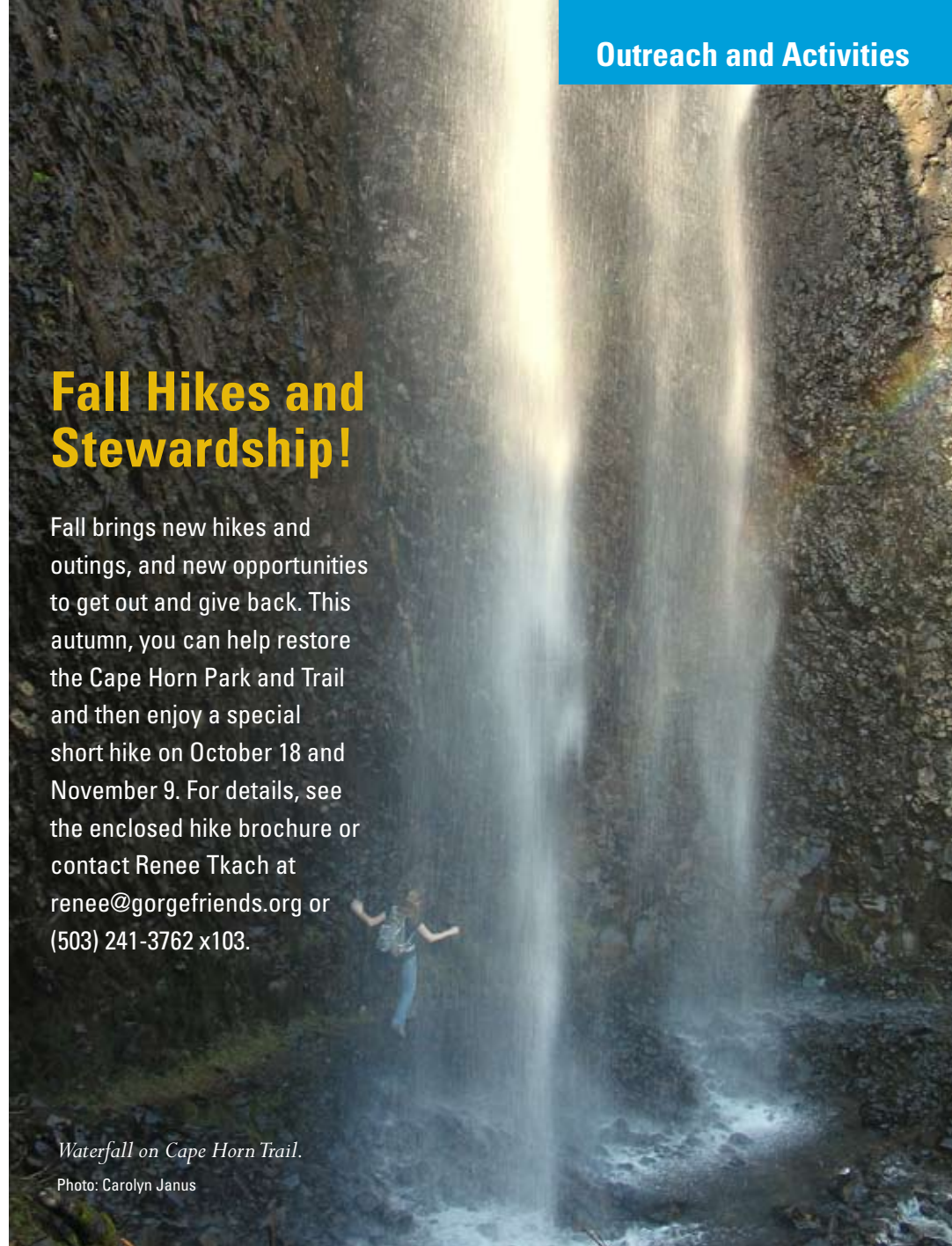
Friends supports incorporating the full loop trail, while working to mitigate environmental concerns. The Forest Service is expected to release its draft environmental assessment for public comment in late August. Please visit www.gorgefriends.org for details.

Fall Hikes and Stewardship!

Fall brings new hikes and outings, and new opportunities to get out and give back. This autumn, you can help restore the Cape Horn Park and Trail and then enjoy a special short hike on October 18 and November 9. For details, see the enclosed hike brochure or contact Renee Tkach at renee@gorgefriends.org or (503) 241-3762 x103.

Waterfall on Cape Horn Trail.

Photo: Carolyn Janus



Business Owners Encourage Gorge Protection

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, peter@gorgefriends.org

Bob and Catherine Stone are owners of Stone Freeway Autocenter in The Dalles, a Subaru and GM vehicle dealership. Active supporters of protecting the Columbia River Gorge, Bob and Catherine feel very fortunate to live in “one of the most beautiful places on earth” and view themselves as stewards of this land. They regularly go on litter patrols along the Historic Columbia River Highway

and support many community activities including the Gorge Games.

Bob and Catherine enjoy hiking, cycling, and having fun in the Gorge with their grandchildren, and have a special concern that the Gorge be preserved and protected for future generations. They appreciate the many wonderful friends they have made in the Gorge and always enjoy meeting other “Friends of the Columbia Gorge” at their dealership.

Bob and Catherine Stone of The Dalles. Photo: Peter Cornelison



Friends Exposes Tribes' Influence over Casino Process

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

Ever since a massive casino complex was first proposed in the heart of the National Scenic Area, Friends of the Columbia Gorge has worked tirelessly to shine a spotlight of public scrutiny on the proposal. Recently, Friends advanced this cause with two lawsuits, both of which highlighted the undue influence the Warm Springs Tribes have had over the casino process.

In the first lawsuit, Friends, No Gorge Casino!, and several Cascade Locks citizens successfully sued the City of Cascade Locks for holding private meetings behind closed doors, where tribal lobbyists “briefed” the Cascade Locks City Council on casino-related issues.

A quorum of city council members attended at least one of these meetings, held on the Warm Springs Reservation, and the city paid their travel expenses. However, the city failed to properly announce the meeting in advance, open it to the public, and take meeting minutes, all of which is required by Oregon law.

In a written settlement, the city council agreed that for future meetings where the casino is likely to be discussed, the city will announce the meetings in advance, not prohibit the public from attending, and take minutes.

In the second lawsuit, Friends sued the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) under the Freedom of Information Act

after the agency ignored several formal requests for casino-related documents. Once Friends sued, the BIA produced more than 1,000 documents and agreed to pay Friends' attorneys fees.

Several of the released documents show that the Tribes were allowed to influence the content of the BIA's environmental impact statement for the casino. In several telling instances, tribal attorneys were given advance drafts of agency documents and were permitted to revise the documents before the agency released them to the public. Friends is bringing this serious violation of the public trust to the attention of decision-makers and elected officials.

Who's Protecting Our Gorge?

Kelley Beamer, Conservation Organizer, kelley@gorgefriends.org

In April, the Columbia River Gorge Commission voted to allow destination resorts within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, setting a dangerous precedent that opens the door to urban-scale development outside designated urban areas in the Gorge.

As our organization predicted, developers are now lined up for a piece of the action. In July, the Commission voted to consider another amendment to the Gorge-wide Management Plan to allow more resort development. With more proposals likely to come, the Gorge Commission is on a ruinous

path away from its mandatory duty to protect and enhance the natural, scenic, recreational, and cultural values of the Columbia Gorge.

The Oregonian Editorial Board noted, **“The [Gorge] Commission seems to be operating as a land-use planning agency for a ribbon of waterfront rather than as a watchdog for a National Scenic Area. It needs to get back on track and it needs to do so soon.”**

The Oregon Legislature took the first step in getting the Gorge Commission back on track when the Senate Rules Committee postponed

confirmation of Commission Chair Jeff Condit for his second term on the Commission. Condit's confirmation hearing was postponed due to concerns regarding his lack of leadership in fulfilling the Gorge Commission's mission. As Chair, Condit presided over the Commission and its staff as it committed numerous procedural violations, ignored the law, and blatantly disregarded overwhelming numbers of Gorge residents who urged the Commission not to expand commercial and residential development in the Gorge.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge looks forward to working with leaders



A spring outing above the river. Photo: Aubrey Russell

in Oregon and Washington to ensure appointment of Gorge Commissioners who support the National Scenic Area Act and who will provide leadership to restore the Gorge Commission's role and reputation as guardian of the outstanding resources of the Columbia River Gorge. The Governors of Oregon and Washington have the authority and the responsibility to make this happen. See "Take Action" on page 2 for more details.

The Oregonian stated, "It's time now for a fresh, regional, long-term vision." Friends agrees. It's time for new leadership on the Gorge Commission.

Gorge Cases Reach State Supreme Court

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

For the first time ever, the Oregon Supreme Court will preside over litigation involving the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Moreover, the court will review not just one appeal, but three appeals at the same time.

In these three appeals, a coalition of landowners, businesses, and conservation organizations led by Friends of the Columbia Gorge is challenging decisions made by the Columbia River Gorge Commission that weaken the Gorge Management Plan. The cases involve numerous issues, including the protection

of scenic landscapes, natural resources, and cultural resources from overdevelopment; Gorge Commission decisions to allow industrial fish processing plants and the proliferation of commercial development and uses; the Commission's failure to regulate livestock grazing in areas with sensitive plants and water resources; and the Commission's failure to map landslide-prone areas and avoid zoning these areas for residential development.

The Oregon Supreme Court is scheduled to hear oral arguments in all three appeals on October 29. Decisions could come as early as spring 2009.



Summer Picnic at the Top of the World

More than 250 members and guests had a wonderful time at Friends' 29th Annual Summer Picnic. Gorge lovers of all ages enjoyed the spectacular beauty of the Top of the World Ranch on Burdoin Mountain in Klickitat County. Photos: Keren Rosenblum



Cape Horn Campaign Nears Completion

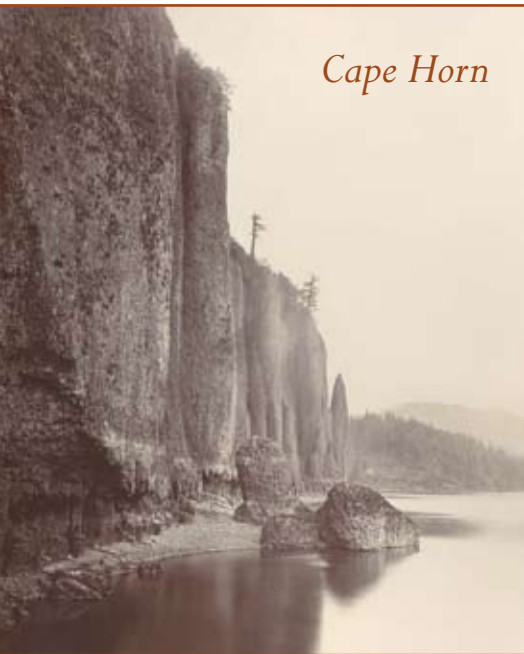
Jane Harris, Development Director, jane@gorgefriends.org

Friends' campaign to raise \$4 million to purchase and rehabilitate two properties on the Cape Horn bluff across the river from Multnomah Falls is nearing completion. With \$3,580,000

raised to date, the campaign will continue through early fall so more of our donors can see this breathtaking site in warm weather.

Our final efforts include a direct mail campaign to our general membership that has raised \$40,000 to date, and a golf tournament at Skamania Lodge sponsored

by investment firm Arnerich Massena in honor of John Gray. John has been a member of Friends for many years and is a major contributor to the Cape Horn Campaign. We are very excited that John chose Friends of the Columbia Gorge to receive proceeds from the tournament in his honor.



Cape Horn

Major Donor Event Slated for the Art Museum

This fall, our donors at the \$1000 level and above will be treated to a private party and tour of the "Wild Beauty" photographic exhibit at the Portland Art Museum. The exhibit includes 200 images of the Columbia River Gorge taken between 1867 and 1957, a photographic legacy longer and richer than that of any other landscape in the region. The Art Museum's photo curator Terry Totemeier will be on hand to lead donors through the exhibit, which includes works of master photographer Carleton E. Watkins, who created some of the earliest photos of the Gorge beginning in 1867.

This special event is scheduled for Saturday, October 11.

Photo: Carleton Watkins, Cape Horn, Columbia River, 1867, Albumen print, Oregon State Library Collection

Featured Hike: Falls Creek Falls, WA

Distance: Easy 3.4 miles, 650-ft. elevation gain

Renee Tkach, Outdoor Programs Coordinator, renee@gorgefriends.org

Come out and explore this little-known gem of Skamania County! Although it lies just outside the National Scenic Area boundary, this hike is an example of the Gorge at its best. The trail meanders through low-elevation forest along a crystal clear creek to a thundering 200-ft. triple waterfall. Fall colors and spectacular scenery make this a great family outing when summer is over.

Directions: From I-84 take Exit 44 Cascade Locks, and cross the Bridge of the Gods to Washington. Turn right on WA SR-14 heading east. At Wind River Hwy, turn left toward Carson. Continue north on Wind River Road No. 30, past Panther Creek to Forest Road No. 32062-057. Turn right and follow the signs to Lower Falls Creek Trail No. 152A. NW Forest Pass required.

Falls Creek Falls. Photo: Kevin Gorman



Special Gifts

April 24 – July 21, 2008

IN MEMORY OF **NELLIE W. HOLE**
ROBBIE WHITECOTTON

IN MEMORY OF **GRACE BENZ**
JOSEPH AND FLORENCE BEATTIE

IN MEMORY OF **NANNY ANASTASIA TAYLOR**
RANDI TAYLOR-HABIB

IN MEMORY OF **WINFIELD WAYLAND 'BURT' BURTON**
KEN AND FELICE DENIS

IN MEMORY OF **PAULA HARLIN**
DOUGLAS HICKS

IN MEMORY OF **JANET K. JOHNSON**
JAMES A. JOHNSON

IN MEMORY OF **WINIFRED ROBY BECKER**
LARISA JEFFREYS

IN MEMORY OF **FLOYD HEWETT**
LESLEY LANGAN

IN MEMORY OF **BERTHA AND WILLIAM THOMAS**
JORDAN
MELINDA BRONSDON

IN MEMORY OF **BRUCE RUSSELL**
MARIE V. HALL

IN MEMORY OF **TIMOTHY COGAN**
DOROTHY ALAND

IN HONOR OF **IRENE A. FELTER**
MARNA MOORE

IN HONOR OF **ANN ROGERS AND ROBERT G. ROGERS**
ETHEL AND HENRY ROGERS

IN HONOR OF **NANCY RUSSELL**
JOHN AND PATRICIA EDMUNDSON
MARIE V. HALL
WALTER & SYLVI LARSEN
BRUCE MUIRHEAD & DENISE PARE-MUIRHEAD
BARBARA W NIEDERMEYER
ANNE O'NEILL
GERRY O'SCANNLAIN
JEAN & JOHN THORPE
ROBERT & MARGARET WEIL

IN HONOR OF **PHILIP HEID**
HOLLY SCHMIDT

IN HONOR OF **JANE HARRIS**
DAN & LISA TRISLER

Know Your Gorge *Ice Age Floods Leave Their Mark*

More than 12,000 years ago, the cataclysmic Ice Age Floods scoured a path through the Cascade Mountains to the sea, a path we know as the Columbia Gorge.

Inundating the region, the floods carried with them enormous boulders and other debris. At certain points, flood waters rushing at 60 miles per hour created furious

deep whirlpools called “kolks,” similar to underwater tornadoes. Debris in the kolks dug holes in the bedrock, leaving rock-cut basins known as “kolk ponds.” Perhaps the best example of that phenomenon in the Columbia Gorge is a kolk pond on a Klickitat County property recently purchased by Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust.

Land Trust Manager Kate McBride will lead a hike on that property during our fall hike season, and stewardship activities to remove invasive plants from the land will begin soon. To register for the hike or inquire about stewardship events, visit www.gorgefriends.org/hikes or call (503) 241-3762 x103.



An Ice Age kolk pond on land acquired by Friends' land trust. Photo: Jozsef Urmos



Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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