

FRIENDS ^{OF THE} COLUMBIA GORGE

Summer 2021



Opportunities for Awe

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Founded in 1980, Friends of the Columbia Gorge is the only conservation organization entirely dedicated to protecting, preserving, and stewarding the Columbia Gorge for future generations.

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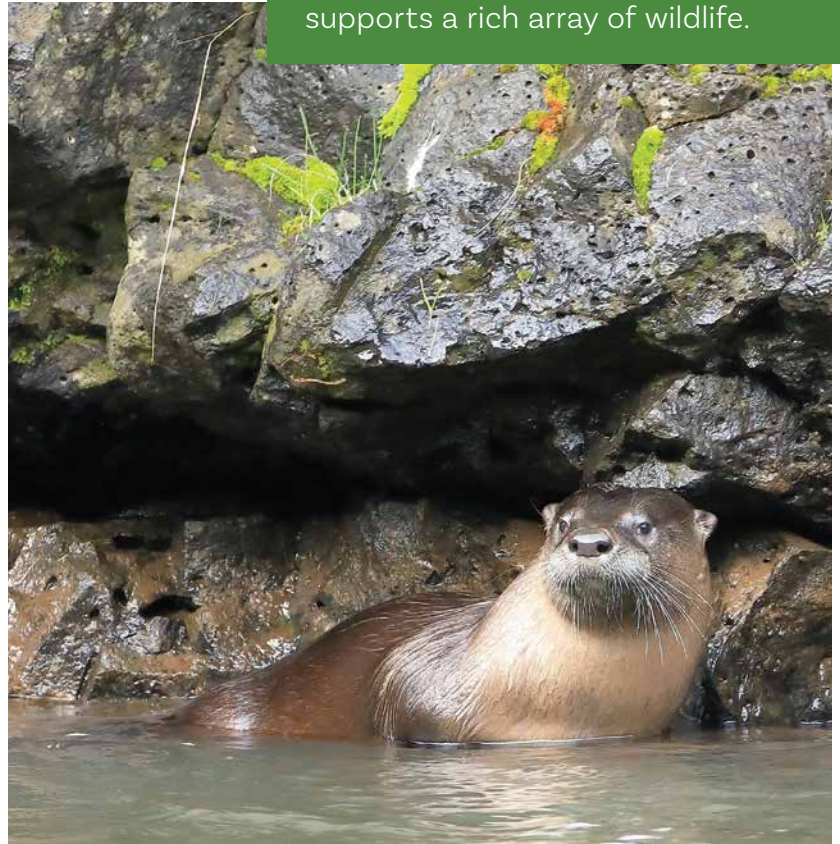
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FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

From the western waterfalls to the eastern slopes, the Columbia Gorge supports a rich array of wildlife.



Otter relaxing in the Klickitat River.

Photo: Bill Kirkland, Wildlife entry, 6th Annual Photo Contest

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Cover: Dry Creek Falls. Photo: Dan Hawk, Grand Prize winner, 6th Annual Photo Contest

Director's Letter

When the note below recently came to our office, I was struck by how counter the message is to the “urban-rural divide” and “us versus them” divisions so often seen in today’s political debates. Those narratives may generate media attention and social media likes, but they ignore the complexities of issues that Friends of the Columbia Gorge wrestles with every day, and disregard all that binds us together in the Pacific Northwest.

I'm not sure whom to thank regarding the fight against the natural gas power plant in Hermiston, but I wanted to say thank you to all those involved. I'm sad to say that I had no idea about the new construction until I saw it in the paper today and I live less than a mile from its building site. Thank you for fighting for us rural Oregonians.

—Michael, from Hermiston, Oregon

The phrase “Think Globally, Act Locally” gained resonance around the time of the first Earth Day in 1970, and its simplicity and power extend far beyond bumper stickers. We put those principles into action in 2020, when our efforts to strengthen the Gorge Management Plan resulted in wider stream buffers, more protected wetlands, and less development allowed in forested areas. These changes protect local ecosystems and increase the climate resilience of the Columbia Gorge overall, better preparing it to meet future climate impacts.

In the coming year, you’ll see Friends take on local concerns that tie directly to national and global issues, like climate change and racism. At the state level, Friends actively supported passage of Oregon Senate Bill 289, to create stronger penalties for hate and bias crimes that occur on public lands—a local response to racial injustices that occur in Oregon and throughout our country.

Thinking globally and acting locally affirms that we cannot live our lives as zero-sum games with winners on one side and losers on the other. When the United States faced a nuclear standoff with the Soviet Union nearly 60 years ago, President John F. Kennedy denounced “us versus them” mindsets in an oratory masterpiece, stating,

“So, let us not be blind to our differences – but let us also direct attention to our common interests. ...For, in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s future. And we are all mortal.”

Those words still ring true.



Kevin Gorman, Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org

Rural communities and small towns dot the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic area. Mosier, Oregon. Photo: Debbie Asakawa





Challenging Energy Projects That Threaten the Columbia Gorge

Michael Lang, Conservation Director

In 2020, the largest point source of climate pollution in Oregon, the Boardman coal power plant, was finally shuttered through a court supervised consent decree. This victory resulted from a dedicated, combined campaign started in 2005 by Friends of the Columbia Gorge and allies including the Sierra Club, Columbia Riverkeeper, and others to stop development of energy projects and fossil fuel terminals that would harm the Gorge and contribute to climate change.

A legacy of stopping fossil fuel projects

In 2011, Friends led efforts to stop construction of the Troutdale Energy Center, a fracked-gas power

plant proposed at the mouth of the Sandy River, the gateway to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. We also worked with many allies to stop several coal and oil terminals from being built on the Columbia River and throughout the region and to pass legislation to reduce the dangers of transporting crude oil by rail through Oregon and Washington. Had these multiple projects gone unchallenged, the cumulative effects would have been devastating to the region and would have substantially contributed to worsening climate change.

While greenhouse gas emissions were a major concern, for the most part these projects were not stopped due to climate impacts, as state laws did

Columbia Gorge air quality would be compromised by emissions from the proposed Perennial Energy project in Hermiston, Oregon. View to the east from upper Catherine Creek. Photo: Becky Kuperstein, 6th Annual Photo Contest

not yet exist to regulate carbon emissions. This is changing, as projects in Washington State are subject to its State Environmental Policy Act and recently passed Climate Commitment Act, which will create a statewide system to cap carbon pollution and set limits for individual businesses.

Oregon lags behind

Unfortunately, Oregon does not have a state environmental policy act, and a comprehensive analysis of environmental impacts of energy projects, including climate impacts, is not available. While the Oregon Global Warming Commission's 2018 Report to the Oregon Legislature warned of dire state impacts—including to the agricultural, forestry, and fishing industries—the Oregon Senate's Republican caucus has walked out of sessions repeatedly when faced with passage of comprehensive climate legislation.

Governor Brown's executive order on climate

In 2020, Oregon Governor Kate Brown issued Executive Order 20-04, directing “state agencies to take action to reduce and regulate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions toward meeting reduction goals of at least 45 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2035 and at least 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050.” The governor's order specifically directs the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE) “to exercise any and all authority and discretion to help facilitate Oregon's achievement of the GHG emissions reduction goals set forth in the EO.” ODOE is also directed to consider and integrate climate change, climate change impacts, and Oregon's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals into its planning, budgets, investments, and policy making decisions.

Oregon DOE business as usual

Despite this order, the Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC), staffed by ODOE, continues to approve fossil fuel energy projects, disregarding climate impacts, the governor's executive order, and their own rules.

Recently, ODOE concocted an illegal scheme to revive an otherwise-dead fracked gas power plant proposed in

Hermiston, called the Perennial Wind Chaser Station. In an attempt to keep the project permit from expiring, ODOE unilaterally altered the previously approved construction schedule for the project and purported to waive numerous mandatory pre-construction conditions in the permit. ODOE did so without first obtaining approval for these changes from EFSC, as required by state law. ODOE then allowed Perennial to start work on a road and bridge at the site, despite Perennial's noncompliance with the permit.

With our ally Columbia Riverkeeper, Friends sought judicial review against ODOE and Perennial in the Multnomah County Circuit Court, alleging that ODOE's decisions violated state law. ODOE and the Perennial developer both filed motions to dismiss the case. Incredibly, ODOE attorneys made a cynical argument that the issue of climate change is merely a “political choice” that does not harm Friends and Riverkeeper or give us standing to sue. We couldn't disagree more.

Not dead yet

In early April 2021, a day before oral arguments on the motions to dismiss, a Perennial attorney notified the Circuit Court that the gas plant would no longer be built, that Perennial would ask EFSC to terminate the permit and would withdraw its motion to dismiss. Then, in a stunning reversal just two weeks later, the company announced that they want to go ahead with the project after all, claiming that a prospective buyer for the project had emerged.

All of this could have been avoided if ODOE had followed the law, adhered to the executive order, and allowed the EFSC permit for this project to expire. At this point, the future of Perennial's project remains uncertain.

Friends will continue to fight against new fossil fuel power plants being built in areas that would harm air quality in the Columbia Gorge. We are fully committed to ensuring that the Gorge is protected from the escalating effects of climate change. ■

Fighting Bias & Hate on the Trails

Burt Edwards, Communications Director

Pamela Slaughter grew up in the Portland area and has long loved the outdoors. She has worked tirelessly over the past decade to create opportunities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) to get outside and connect with nature—founding People of Color Outdoors, a nonprofit, safe-space community with over 1,000 members.

Pamela also relates to the anxiety that many BIPOC community members feel when they imagine exploring natural spaces. Once on a family hike at Multnomah Falls, years ago when her children were younger, white supremacists hurled insults at her family, even shoving their pit bull at her family as they walked by. She has other examples, but Pamela still strongly believes in the importance for people of color to experience and enjoy nature.

Over the past year, there has been a sharp increase in hate and bias crimes across the Pacific Northwest, with a reported 366 percent increase last year in Oregon alone. This has been compounded by all too frequent stories in the media of members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities subjected to senseless violence while out on simple walks or just running errands.

We must do better as a society. Gorge residents and visitors alike should never fear that they or their families will be attacked for their race, ethnic background, gender identity, or religion while out to enjoy nature.

Last year, Gov. Kate Brown's Office listened to growing community safety concerns and worked to craft legislation adding new protections on state public lands. With support in the Oregon legislature from Senate and House leadership, SB 289 passed towards the end of session with strong margins in both houses and was signed into law by Gov. Brown on June 23. The new law seeks to reduce and eliminate bias crimes and incidents on state managed property by creating penalties sufficient to provide a deterrent to the perpetrators. This includes suspending or revoking access to fishing, hunting, shellfish, and other recreational licenses for a period of at least six months, but not longer than five years for offenders.

Friends has been working with allies to support the bill's passage and increase public discussion on ways to increase accessibility and safety outdoors. In late May, Friends hosted a webinar, "Outdoor Access for All," featuring a number of leading voices from the

BIPOC community and moderated by OPB science and environment reporter Monica Samayoa. This webinar (available as an archive at gorgefriends.org/outdoor-access) is the first of series of discussions Friends hopes to facilitate amplifying a broad and diverse array of voices on the challenges and opportunities of protecting, preserving, and stewarding the Gorge. ■



Pamela Slaughter, third from left (leaning on railing), encourages people of color to enjoy Oregon's great outdoor opportunities. Photo: Courtesy of People of Color Outdoors

A Vision of Future Stewards of the Gorge

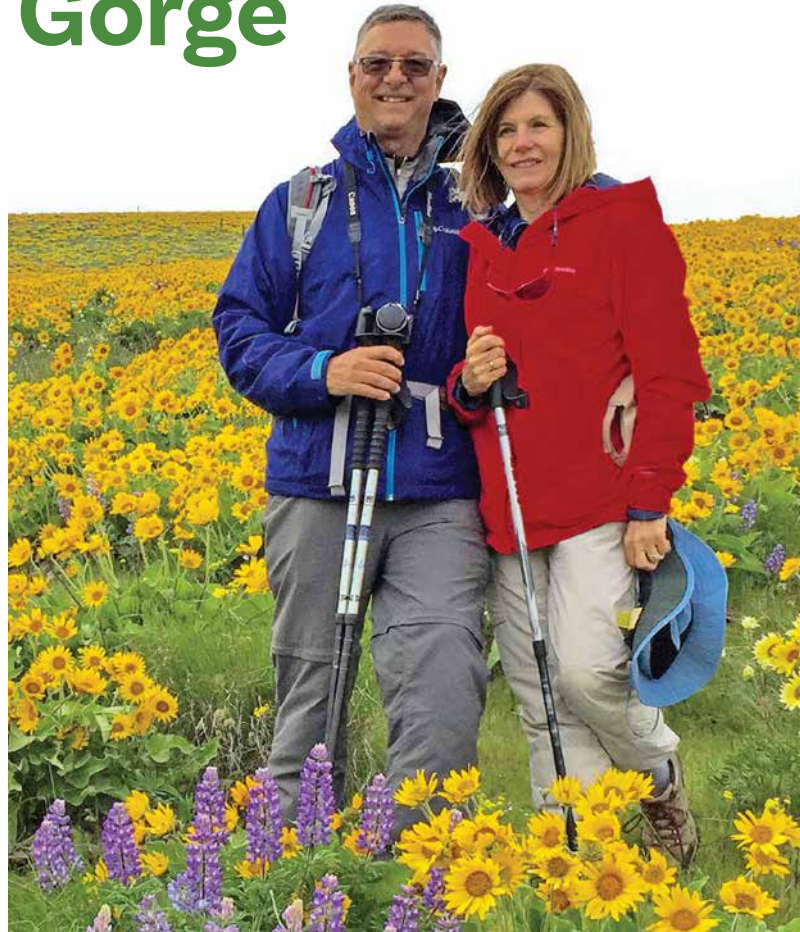
Pam Davee, Director of Philanthropy

Mark and Claudia Sanzone have shared many wonderful moments in the Columbia Gorge, but some of their fondest memories are times they spent with kids from Washougal during Friends' annual *Explore the Gorge* youth education program.

During these special weeklong programs, the Sanzones have had the opportunity to take students from the local middle schools outside the classroom to introduce them to the real wonders of the Gorge. Hamilton Mountain is just one example. Many of the kids had never been there, although it's practically in their own backyards. "Rodney Falls is beautiful," says Claudia, "and I am hoping that their experience will create new stewards of the Gorge. It is a real eye-opener for them to realize that it belongs to them."

Mark flies above the Gorge as a paraglider, so his experiences have an added perspective. "While viewpoints are great, they do not match being several thousand feet above the river." When his mom visits them, she says the Gorge reminds her of Norway, where she grew up.

Moving to Portland from California in the late 1970s, Claudia missed the Sierras, so she immediately joined Mazamas to get her climbing fix. Initially, she saw the Gorge peaks as places to get to the top of as quickly as she could. But when she began exploring Gorge trails with hiking buddies who were members of Friends, she began to sense that this magnificent place was a whole lot more than that. Friends' hikes were slower-paced, and she learned about the geology, wildflowers, and wildlife surrounding her. Thinking back, she noted, "It was spending time in the Gorge and truly seeing it with others who loved it that made me also fall in love with it."



Mark and Claudia agree that the work Friends does to protect land for future generations is vitally important and they're happy to have been part of the *Preserve the Wonder* land campaign. Their personal conservation philosophy also aligns with Friends' commitment to land being accessible to all.

When Claudia and Mark decided to make Friends a part of their legacy, they agreed that they wanted to do so not only so their own grandkids would have access to a beautiful, protected landscape. They also wanted to ensure more inclusion and diversity among those who enjoy the Gorge. As Claudia succinctly stated, "I'd like to see access for all, and for everyone who goes there to feel welcome, safe, and comfortable."

We couldn't agree more, Claudia and Mark. Thank you so much for all you do to make it possible, both now and for the future! ■



A New Opportunity for Awe

Mika Barrett, Accessibility Project Manager

Dawn quietly transforms night into day as the early morning sun begins peeking over the Cascades, and the eastern sky above the Columbia Gorge lights up in orange, pink, and yellow hues. Only a handful of places in the Gorge offer panoramic sunrise vistas of the steep canyon walls and the mighty Columbia River reflecting the light. In western Washington, the gateway to the Gorge at Cape Horn holds a treasure on land recently acquired by Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust. After more than 15 years of patient focus and effort to secure this property from private ownership, the new land trust addition has the potential to dramatically expand access to one of the most iconic areas of the Columbia Gorge.

Located on a majestic bluff, the new land trust property lies along the upper Cape Horn trail system leading to the Nancy Russell Overlook. Nestled amid a coniferous forest and deciduous stands, the Cape Horn Preserve is home to spectacular wildflowers and views, and unlike many recreational sites in the Gorge, the opportunity to experience awe here doesn't require you to slog straight uphill or climb narrow switchbacks. This new

property at Cape Horn is generally level and open, offering real possibilities for increasing accessibility to serve residents and visitors beyond the customary Gorge hikers.

A snapshot of history

Prior to its contemporary context, the Cape Horn area had long been within the traditional territory of native peoples of the Lower Columbia River, also known as the Big River. In the 19th Century, peoples of the Lower Columbia suffered from widespread epidemics and displacement from colonization, following Lewis and Clark's expedition. By 1846, native communities around Cape Horn had been replaced by a homestead settlement for the white settlers arriving from east of the Mississippi River. Today, some peoples of the Lower Columbia are part of federally recognized tribes, including but not limited to the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe. Throughout the 20th Century, this remarkable place faced a steady series of development threats.

Protecting a special place

In the 1980s, the Cape Horn bluff was platted by developers as a subdivision—a place where only a few with significant resources would have the privilege of connecting to the land and taking in its stunning views. The large houses that speculators were planning would have been highly visible from 12 designated Key Viewing Areas, which is the highest number of any Friends acquisition to date. Even after the passage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, the proposed development they called Rimview Estates threatened to change Cape Horn forever.

But those developers hadn't considered the vision of Friends founder, Nancy Russell. In 1988, Nancy's passion for Gorge protection began catalyzing the extraordinary efforts that would shape the Cape Horn area as we know it today. In the 1980s, there was no public land at Cape Horn, no public trails or access. But over the next two decades, one parcel at a time, most of the land moved into public ownership, thanks to dedicated conservation buyers including the Russell family. Our land trust's latest 36-acre acquisition on the Cape Horn bluff brought to completion an agreement Nancy Russell made with the landowners in 2005. Fifteen years later, the last

piece finally fell into place. It could not have happened at a more opportune time.

More than a view

Cape Horn is much more than just rugged aesthetics, and this latest conservation acquisition provides a timely opportunity to expand access to the wonders of the Gorge by opening conversations that will include new voices and perspectives that have long been left out. It invites us to think differently and include partnering with underrepresented communities to build a shared vision for the future of this iconic area. It includes a deliberate effort to serve a broader population, so the wonder of a Cape Horn sunrise is more welcoming, safe, and accessible to all.

Creating a community vision for Cape Horn has inspired Friends to rethink our operations and the ways in which we accomplish our mission. We've restructured our land trust team to increase our focus on equitable access, cross-boundary land stewardship, and trails and recreation options that are safe for all. This summer, we are assembling a core planning team of external partners to initiate the conceptual design process for Cape Horn Preserve and to increase opportunities for all individuals and families to connect with this inspiring landscape. ■



Sunrise from Cape Horn. Photo: Daniel Rappoport

Beauty and Wonder in Images and Haiku

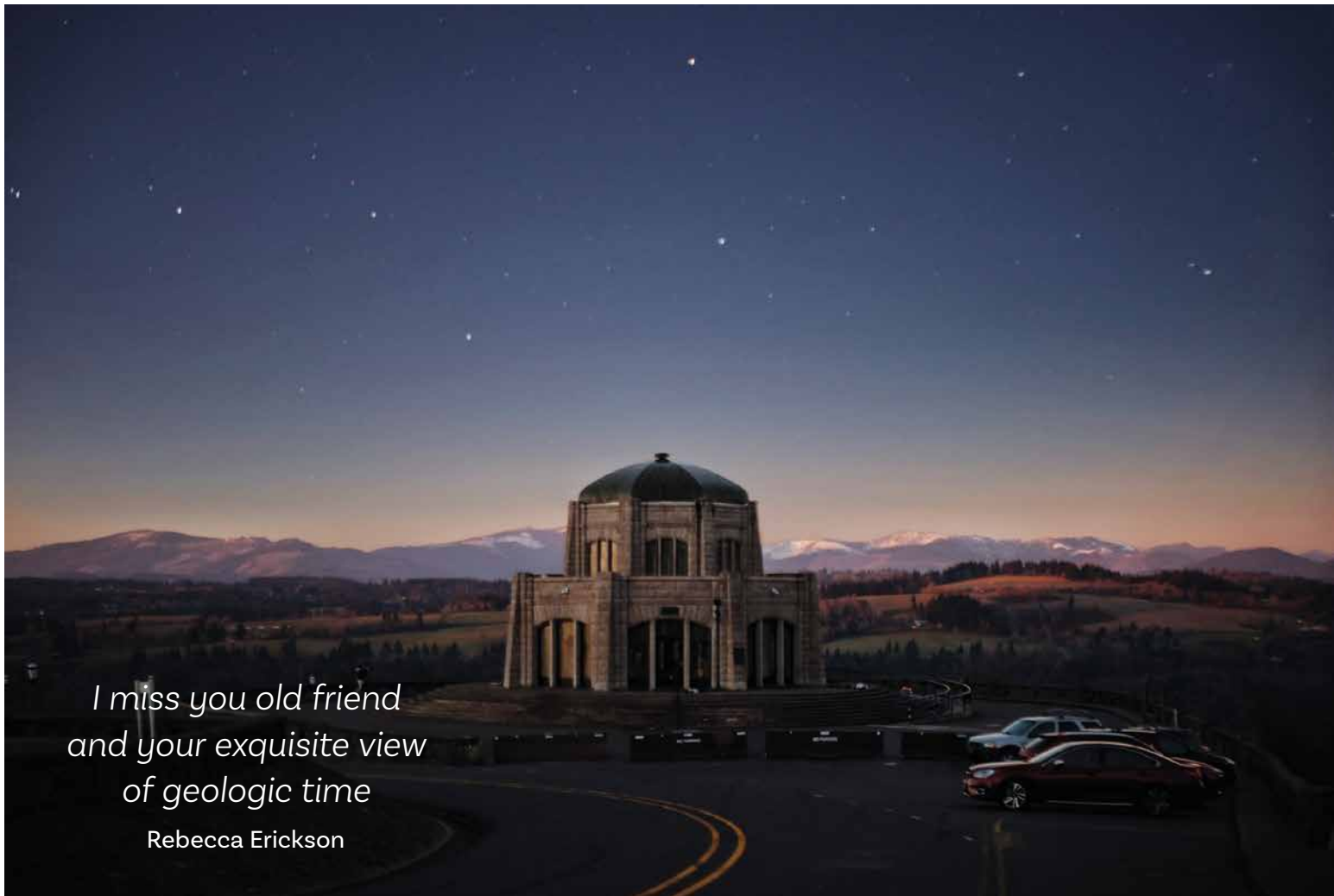
Natasha Stone, Community Engagement Specialist | Stan Hall, Digital Content Specialist

This April, Friends' second Spring Gorge Haiku Challenge launched in celebration of National Poetry Month and International Haiku Poetry Day, April 17. Tying in to our planned Earth Day efforts, we invited the public to reflect on Amanda Gorman's poem "Earthrise" for inspiration (recently featured in a special YouTube video).

Friends' 6th Annual Gorge Photo Contest launched last fall, titled "Picturing Perfection." Ninety photographers entered a total of 385 photos, capturing a wide range of the natural and human-designed resources that make the Columbia Gorge a national treasure.

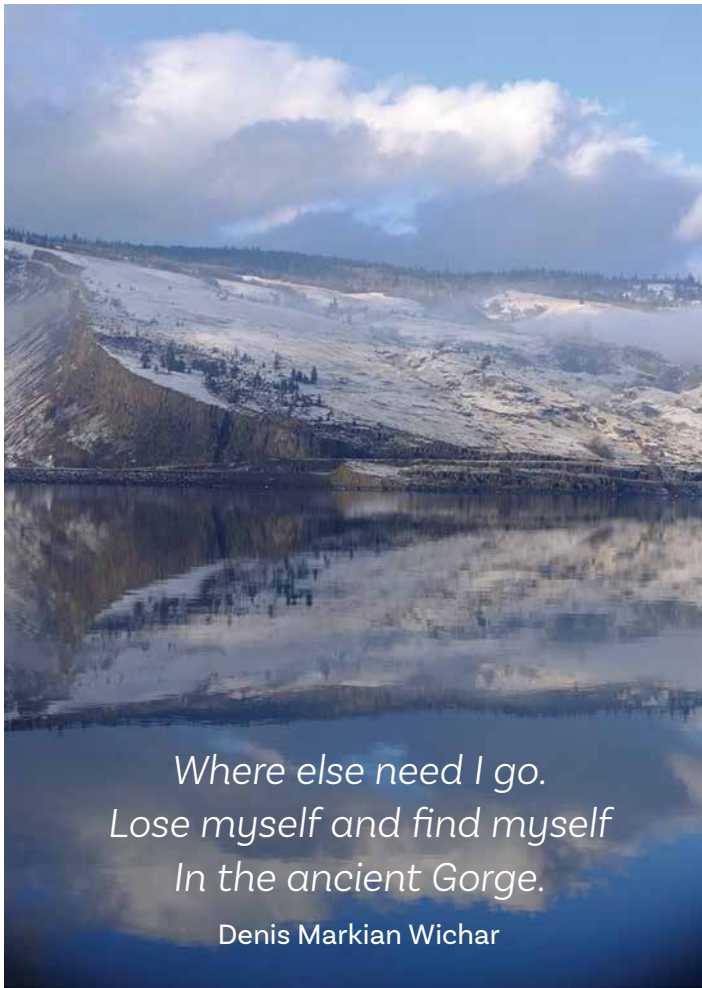
A few selections of nearly 100 haiku entries we received are on these pages, coupled with photos from the Picturing Perfection contest. Reflecting on these poems and images inspires us to continue to our work to protect the Gorge and this shared home we call Earth.

Our 6th Annual Photo Contest Grand Prize winner, Dan Hawk's image of Dry Creek Falls, is featured on our cover. Additional submissions are also elsewhere in the newsletter. To view all winners, honorable mentions, and finalists, visit gorgefriends.org/photocontestwinners.



*I miss you old friend
and your exquisite view
of geologic time*

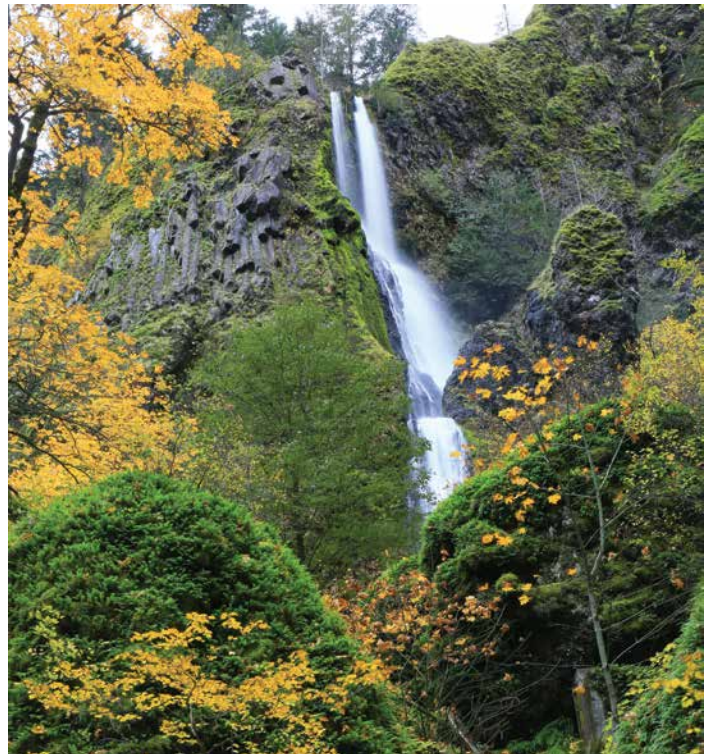
Rebecca Erickson



*Where else need I go.
Lose myself and find myself
In the ancient Gorge.*
Denis Markian Wichar

*River full and wide
Trembling voice of waterfall
Peace of mountainside.*

Mary Jo Tyler



*Free Columbia
Learn her name simply spoken
Nch'i-Wàna, home*

Barbara Hersey

- Opposite: **Vista House starview at twilight.** Photo: Aidan Sweet, Youth Photographer winner, 6th Annual Photo Contest
Above left: **Coyote Wall syncline reflects in the still winter river.** Photo: Laura Payne, Scenic Eastern Gorge winner, 6th Annual Photo Contest
Above right: **Autumn color paints Starvation Creek.** Photo: Karen Reeves, Scenic Western Gorge entry, 6th Annual Photo Contest
Lower left: **A youth fishes on a traditional platform near Cascade Locks.** Photo: Jan Sonnenmair, Gorge Community Life winner, 6th Annual Photo Contest.

Comings & Goings at Friends

Paige Unangst, Finance Director

Stepping Up

With a number of exciting new land acquisitions, Friends land trust has worked to create new capacity—promoting **Sara Woods** to stewardship manager, **Mika Barrett** to accessibility project manager, **Frances Fischer** to land trust coordinator, and creating a new volunteer coordinator position.

We're excited to announce that **Sarah Skelly** joined Friends in June in the new position as volunteer coordinator, based out of Hood River.

Over the past 10 years, Sarah served in various roles on Tualatin Hills Park and Recreation District Nature and Trails team, managing small habitat enhancement projects, teaching nature based activities, and leading habitat and trails stewardship programs with schools, businesses, and community groups of all ages. Prior to that, she worked as an instructor with the Columbia Estuary Partnership, exploring Columbia Basin watersheds with youth, including at Steigerwald Wildlife Refuge. In 2020, Sarah relocated to the eastern Gorge, where she spends most of her free time tracking birds and studying wildflower phenology.



Mika Barrett



Frances Fischer



Sarah Skelly



Sara Woods

Photos: Mika Barrett and Frances Fischer by Brandon Davis; selfies courtesy of Sarah Skelly and Sara Woods

And Fond Farewells

This spring, we wished fond farewells to two staff members. **Ryan Rittenhouse** served as Friends conservation organizer for eight years, and played an important role working with regional community activists as part of our coalition efforts with Stand Up to Oil and Power Past Coal. For three years, **Libby Martin** has been our rock-solid development database coordinator and has been instrumental in managing our ever-growing member database. Thanks to Libby and Ryan! We wish them both well, as they each move on to new endeavors.



Libby Martin



Ryan Rittenhouse

Photos: above left, Melissa Gonzalez; right, Friends of the Columbia Gorge archive

Upheaval & Ingenuity: Pandemic Inspires New Approaches



Burt Edwards, Communications Director

Building a wide, diverse cross-section of public support in the Pacific Northwest is critical to Friends' success. Over the past five years, we have strengthened our ability to reach a broader range of the public and develop new, interactive ways to create an expanded dialog. These efforts proved crucial last year in continuing our community engagement, youth education, and public education work as the pandemic set in.

COVID-19 shuttered our planned in-person events in 2020, but a pivot to webinars allowed us to continue engaging the public in conversations about protecting, preserving, and stewarding the Columbia Gorge. Starting with our "Gorge-ous Wildlife" series, more than 1,300 people attended Friends' public webinars last year. This winter, an ambitious community partnership brought the marvel of bald eagles in the Gorge to thousands more through a webinar and short film. Moving ahead, webinars can continue to engage those who can't easily get out on the trails or make it to a community forum in person.

Similarly, Friends has worked on ways to bring the Gorge to students who normally attend our annual Outdoor Youth Education programs. This included hosting an interactive, virtual program allowing St. Andrew Nativity School students to talk with a local fish biologist about science, conservation, and the Gorge. There's no full substitute for getting kids out into the Gorge, but these digital tools will enable Friends to supplement an array of education programs even after students return to the field.

Friends has been known for its Gorge hiking challenges over the years, but 2020 made our planned 40th anniversary community engagement challenge impractical. So staff buckled down to develop something new that could bring people together when many friends and families were physically apart. Our resulting first Spring Gorge Haiku Challenge drew poets and poems from Gresham to Germany.

Looking ahead to fall 2021 and a future largely free from the grip of COVID-19, we hope to build on all these new techniques to both relaunch and reimagine our outdoor programs. For the past several years we've worked to expand beyond traditional guided hikes to include more paddles, bike rides, events involving art, and family friendly activities. The pandemic pause has provided a unique opportunity to step back and explore new ways to better connect with communities that haven't been well represented traditionally in Friends programs.

No doubt we will see more twists and turns as 2021 goes on. But out of this adversity we're already developing a stronger set of tools that will help broaden and deepen Friends' ability to engage the public in future stewardship and conservation efforts to protect the Columbia River Gorge. ■

The American pika was the focus of our first-ever Gorge wildlife webinar.

Photo: Linda Steider, Honorable Mention, 6th Annual Photo Contest.

Tribute Gifts

February 1 through April 30, 2021

IN HONOR

In honor of Anderson Bailey
Lynn Read

In honor of Stephen Blackman
Janet Metzger

In honor of the Breck Family
Carole Breck

In honor of Vera Dafoe
Barbara Marquam

In honor of Gwen Farnham
Andrew and Susan Franklin
Jane Harris
George Post

In honor of Dan Hastings
Krisanne Knudsen

In honor of Christine and Martin Hecht
Sherrill Spatz

In honor of Benjamin Messer
Amanda Messer

In honor of Rick Ray
Betty and Tom Philipsborn

In honor of Ken and Jeanne Thorpe
Jan Elizabeth Thorpe

IN MEMORY

In memory of Mehdi Akhavian
Alan and Julieann Barker

In memory of Kathy Cogswell
Gretchen Kimsey
Jonathan Staver and Rachel Winer

In memory of Molly Cliff Hilts
Patty Locktov

In memory of Susanna Gabay
Susan Gabay

In memory of Dave Kruse
Cory Dolich
Sarah Fay
Brandi Frye
Bob Harris
Ted Malley
Shauna Pettit-Brown
Eric Rosenfeld
Shane Steele

In memory of Mary Laver
Murray L. Laver

In memory of Darvel Lloyd
Marie Hall

In memory of Jerry Manheim
Erin Bump

In memory of Doris Manley
Earl Simpson

In memory of Nwakaego Mbah
Stephen Mbah

In memory of Eric Ohrling
Linda Enders

In memory of Catherine Palmer
Leigh Knox

In memory of Kathleen Parry
John Parry

**In memory of
Dr. Richard "Dick" Rytting**
Andrea and Gregg Hanson
Mel Hinton
Barbara and Karl Wetzel
Nathan White
Mary Jo and Rick Wilson



American kestrels at Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge.

Photo: Bill Kirkland, 6th Annual Photo Contest

**In memory of
Doris Marie Schaefer**
Diane Hohl and Dr. Richard Hohl

In memory of Rees Stevenson
Martha Stevenson

In memory of Grace Weinstein
Leigh Knox

In memory of Matt Winthrop
Linda Chelsky
Katherine Giordano
Richard Lira and Gretchen Taylor



*Seed whips through the Gorge
Being carried by wind's wings
Landing deep in soil*

Amani Wise

Getting Out and Staying Responsible

Summer has arrived in the Columbia Gorge, and eager recreationists looking to explore the outdoors after the past year indoors are heading out on the trails.

ReadySetGorge.com presents up-to-date information on the status of recreation sites, trail closures, and hazards that you can check before your visit. Visit the website to find an updated interactive map where plenty of recreational options are listed including trailheads, picnic sites, campgrounds, equestrian sites, and ADA accessible day-use sites throughout the Gorge. The interactive map makes it easy to find the recreational experience best suited for your needs, and it can show different options and locations you might not have discovered otherwise.

Before heading out to enjoy the Gorge this summer, it is smart to plan and prepare for your outing to avoid crowds and stay safe. When out in the Gorge, be mindful of others, take care of the natural areas you visit, and pack out your trash. Enjoy local businesses and respect Gorge residents, communities, and businesses by following local COVID protocols.

For outdoor enthusiasts or newcomers looking to visit the Gorge for the first time, **ReadySetGorge.com** is the main resource hub for all things recreation in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Check them out at **ReadySetGorge.com**.

When planning Gorge outings this summer, keep these five travel tips in mind:

1. Always have a Plan B and Plan C. Check **ReadySetGorge.com/land-status** to determine what trails are open and what hazards exist. High congestion and visitation are common in summer so have a backup plan just in case a parking lot is full.
2. Go early in the day and mid-week. Avoid weekends when crowds, delays, and full parking lots are more likely.
3. Venture further afield, including Washington and eastern Gorge locations, to explore new, less busy trails. Visit **gorgefriends.org/hikes** for ideas.
4. Leave your car at home. You can reach several Gorge trailheads and help decrease congestion by using public transit like the Columbia Area Transit (CAT) and the Columbia Gorge Express. Find info at **ridecatbus.org** and **columbiagorgeexpress.com**.
5. Bring your face mask and please be mindful in the Gorge to follow local COVID guidelines to protect yourself and others.

See **ReadySetGorge.com/resources** for a list of 10 essential items to have in your pack on the trail.



FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

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A Collaboration Out of Plein Air

This summer, the Gorge's annual art "paint-out" event—the **Pacific Northwest Plein Air in the Columbia River Gorge**—is scheduled for late July.

Friends will once again partner with the Maryhill Museum of Art in Goldendale, Washington, to focus on joint public education efforts showcasing the connection between arts and conservation.

Selected Gorge plein air paintings will be on display at Maryhill throughout the month of August. For more information visit maryhillmuseum.org/events.



Shoulders of the Columbia River.

Artist: Elo Wobig, Friends' 2019 Plein Air Ribbon runner up