

The logo for Friends of the Columbia Gorge is located in the top left corner. It consists of a green square with a white, jagged line at the top, resembling a mountain range. Below the line, the text "FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE" is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font.

FRIENDS OF THE
COLUMBIA
GORGE

A dark, horizontal brushstroke background is positioned behind the text "PLACE. PEOPLE. IMPACT." in the center of the image.

PLACE. PEOPLE. IMPACT.

PROTECTING WHAT WE LOVE

ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

PASSING THE BATON: LEADERSHIP TRANSITION AT FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

I started my job as executive director of Friends of the Columbia Gorge at the age of 35 in August 1998. At the time, there were six staff, the typewriter had just been removed from the front desk, and I was handed a stack of floppy disks with important files as computers were not yet trusted.

Twenty-seven years later, much has changed, mostly for the better, and this annual report comes full circle for me as I will retire next year and pass the baton to a new leader. We've posted the job description for my position and hope to hire the organization's next executive director in early 2026. That will give my successor plenty of transition time with me and I will be at their disposal until June 2026.

I'm proud that through nearly three decades of my tenure, Friends of the Columbia Gorge has grown into one of the most respected and effective conservation organizations in the Pacific Northwest. We've stopped major development threats, we helped remove salmon-killing dams and smog-creating coal plants, and purchased and protected some of the most significant landscapes of the Columbia Gorge.

One of the most important cultural aspects of Friends of the Columbia Gorge has been transparency and continuity. One form of transparency has been openness in sharing retirement plans. Recently, I had two senior leaders provide me with a two-year notice of their upcoming retirements, which allowed me in both cases to hire their replacements well before they retired and provide smooth transitions. I shared my intentions with our board over a year ago during our strategic planning process so the board would have plenty

of time to create a thoughtful succession plan. They've done that with a succession committee made up of board and staff members and the hiring of a national recruiting firm.

Continuity is about creating an ethos, a culture, that lives beyond individuals and allows the organization to keep growing and thriving. Our Board Chair Pleschette Fontenet is a great example of that continuity. Though she has only been on the board for six years, she has helped shape the culture of the organization by bringing new, energetic board members aboard. Over the past several years, I've watched them, as well as new staff, come in and thrive, as well as watching long-tenured staff move into more senior roles as they claim a larger stake in the future of the organization.

While this news may come as a surprise to some of you, we have eight months until the transition is complete. I hope to connect with all of you in the meantime as none of this journey would have been possible without you. You, our members, have provided me with hope and inspiration and most important, love. I am forever grateful.



Kevin Gorman
Executive Director

LOOKING BACK: REFLECTING ON DONOR IMPACT

As you flip through these pages, you'll see how your contributions bring the Gorge to life. Every single gift translates into results we can see and feel: habitats restored, unpermitted development turned back, trails advanced, students inspired, and connections between people and the land strengthened.

We're approaching the summit of our Share the Wonder campaign. With just \$600,000 to go, your support is helping us reach the peak of this \$6.6 million goal, a powerful reminder of what a community can achieve when it sets its sights on something bold.

Throughout the year, we've seen how your support fuels real moments on the ground: volunteers planting oaks, students hiking and discovering, native turtles reclaiming their ponds, and communities stepping up to protect the places they love. Behind every milestone are the faces, dedication, and energy of this donor community.

I am honored to steward this work alongside you. Thank you for your trust, generosity, and belief in the Gorge and in Friends.

With gratitude,



Lori Warner
Director of Philanthropy

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND PLACE THROUGH OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

In 2025, we offered 24 guided outings led by staff, board members, volunteers, and community partners. From classic hikes to creative ways of connecting with nature, our outings provided opportunities for people to experience belonging through movement, mindfulness, culture, and curiosity.

This spring, we partnered with Geoff Babb, creator of the AdvenChair, to host two accessibility hikes that opened new opportunities for exploration in the Gorge. Participants enjoyed wildflower and birding outings at Catherine Creek and Steigerwald, showing how accessibility strengthens connections to both nature and community.

Another highlight has been our growing partnership with People of Color Outdoors PDX (POCO). By the end of 2025, we will have co-led six outings, including hikes, bike rides, and nature journaling sessions. Through this collaboration, we have connected with many new community members who might not have joined a Friends outing before.

These experiences are creating lasting memories, meaningful connections to the Gorge, and fostering a more inclusive outdoor community that celebrates and reflects the diversity of those who love this special place.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next year's outings will build on this spirit of connection, bringing new faces and familiar ones together to explore, reflect, and experience the Gorge in fresh ways.

Special thanks to the volunteers and community partners who lead, guide, and share their love of the Gorge. Your enthusiasm turns every outing into something unforgettable.



EXPLORING THE GORGE TOGETHER:

Your support opens the Gorge to hundreds of people through guided hikes, accessible adventures, and inclusive programs. Each outing *deepens connection to nature, community, and the wonder of the Gorge.*

Friends' Board Member Jayson Moorman (top left) and Outdoor Programs & Public Engagement Manager Melissa Gonzalez (right) led a hike to Dry Creek Falls with People of Color Outdoors PDX. Photo by Melissa Gonzalez.

**HANDS-ON LEARNING
FOR STUDENTS:**

Your investment helped educate 1,000 students—whether in classrooms or out in the Gorge—sparking *curiosity*, inspiring *discovery*, and nurturing a *lifelong connection* to nature.

GORGE EXPLORERS: INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ADVENTURERS

This year, support from Friends' community brought the Gorge to life for more than 1,200 students through programs like Explore the Gorge and The Great Gorge Wahoo. On multi-day outings, students hiked trails, investigated wildlife, and experienced the Gorge firsthand. Curiosity turned into discovery, questions sparked learning, and these young explorers carried the Gorge home with them long after their visits.

Beyond field programs, our education team connected with peers across the country at the Feather River Land Trust's K-12 Leadership Conference, bringing new ideas back to enhance student learning in the Columbia Gorge.

We also continued our "Gorgeous Wildlife" webinar series. In "Clawsome Carnivores," wildlife biologist Jocelyn Akins shared insights on wolverine research, Brent Lyles of the Mountain Lion Foundation discussed reducing human-lion conflicts, and Oregon State Parks ranger Miranda Mendoza demonstrated how to identify tracks and scat. In "Under the Surface," herpetologist and OSU PhD candidate Christopher Cousins discussed the elusive Cascade Torrent salamander, along with Friends' Youth and Community Education Specialist Kenzie Hammond, who taught participants how to identify Columbia Gorge salamanders.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue to expand youth engagement opportunities, connecting more students to the Gorge, and inspiring the next generation of Gorge stewards through creative, hands-on experiences.

Partners and speakers who made these programs possible include St. Andrew Nativity School, Canyon Creek and Jemtegaard Middle Schools, Camas-Washougal Community Chest, the Winthrop family, and Carrie Nobles.

At the wilderness survival station, Sima Seumalo of the Johnson Creek Watershed Council teaches students the art of fire-starting. Photo by Monique Trevett.

PUSHBACK FROM FRIENDS, ALLIES, PUBLIC SAVES GORGE COMMISSION FROM DEFUNDING

In March 2025, the Columbia River Gorge Commission, the bi-state agency responsible for protecting the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, faced its most serious threat in 40 years. The Washington State House of Representatives unexpectedly voted to eliminate its funding, violating a legal compact requiring equal contributions from Washington and Oregon. If enacted, this would have forced Oregon to match the cut, effectively shutting down the Commission. Without it, the Gorge would have lacked coordinated land-use oversight, leaving its scenic landscapes, wildlife, farmland, and cultural heritage vulnerable to pressures from development and industrialization.

In response, Friends launched a public campaign to oppose the cuts by mobilizing advocates, working with allies, engaging the media, and countering misinformation spread by Skamania and Wasco County officials. Friends emphasized that dismantling the Commission would undo decades of bipartisan conservation efforts and expose the Gorge to irreversible harm.

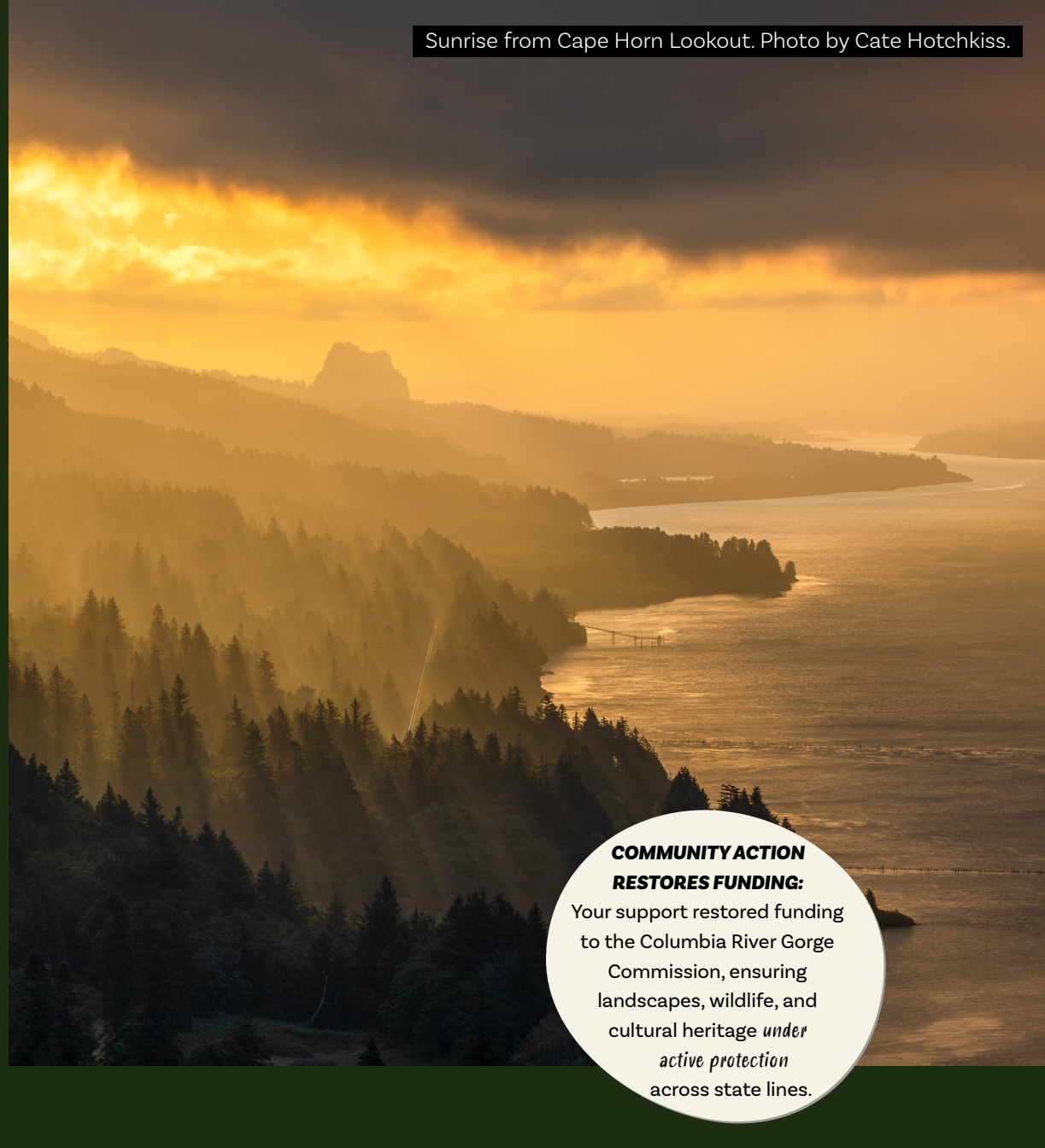
The campaign succeeded. Facing widespread public pressure, the Washington Legislature reversed course and restored most of the Commission's funding. Although the final budget included a 27% cut, it avoided the elimination initially proposed. Click/tap the QR code to read our article "Holding the Line: How the Gorge Commission was Saved."



LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue to monitor state budget proposals and work with legislators to ensure that both Washington and Oregon maintain stable funding for the Columbia River Gorge Commission. Securing consistent support is essential to protect landscapes, wildlife, and cultural resources across state lines.

Thanks to the dedicated advocates, volunteers, and partners who raised their voices, submitted comments, and made this grassroots victory possible. Their energy and persistence directly influenced the reversal of funding cuts and protected the Gorge.



COMMUNITY ACTION RESTORES FUNDING:

Your support restored funding to the Columbia River Gorge Commission, ensuring landscapes, wildlife, and cultural heritage *under active protection* across state lines.

Eagle Creek was one of the areas in the Gorge that would have been eligible for sale if public pushback hadn't stopped the proposed selloff. Photo by Thye-Wee Gn.

**PROTECTING
WHAT WE LOVE:**

Your support helped block the largest public land sell-off in U.S. history, keeping the Gorge *wild, accessible, and protected* for everyone to enjoy.

GRASSROOTS ACTION HELPS STOP THE LARGEST PUBLIC LAND SELL-OFF IN U.S. HISTORY

A provision in the budget reconciliation bill, also known as the “Big, Beautiful Bill,” threatened the largest public land sell-off in U.S. history, mandating the sale of 2.2-3.3 million acres without public input, environmental review, or Tribal consultation. Though national parks and wilderness areas were exempt, National Scenic Areas were not, putting the Columbia River Gorge at serious risk. Over 22,000 acres, including beloved sites like Dog Mountain and Eagle Creek, could have been sold to developers or extractive industries, causing irreversible damage to critical habitats and recreation areas.

Friends mobilized quickly, partnering with national conservation allies. Over 4,000 supporters submitted comments to Congress, and a strong social media campaign brought national attention. In July, the Senate parliamentarian ruled the provision violated Senate rules, effectively blocking it, but public pressure also played a significant role in pushing lawmakers to revise the bill. This grassroots victory saved thousands of acres in the Gorge and underscored the power of collective action to defend our public lands.

Click/tap the QR code to watch Friends’ viral social media video about the proposed selloff that generated thousands of online comments from across the country.



LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue to monitor federal land proposals closely, advocating for public input, environmental safeguards, and protections for the Columbia River Gorge. Strategic outreach and coalition-building will remain key tools for defending these landscapes in the coming year.

Thanks to the dedicated advocates, volunteers, and partners who raised their voices, submitted comments, and helped shine a national spotlight on this threat. Their energy and persistence directly influenced the reversal of funding cuts and protected the Gorge’s landscapes, wildlife, and cultural heritage.

FRIENDS DEFENDS LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND, A PILLAR OF GORGE PROTECTION

Since its creation in 1964, the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) has been one of the nation’s most effective programs for conserving public lands and supporting recreation projects. In the Gorge, more than \$76 million has been invested through LWCF, helping protect Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Cape Horn, Catherine Creek, Dog Mountain, and many more iconic sites. Nationally, LWCF has funded over 45,000 projects.

In 2020, passage of the Great American Outdoors Act guaranteed full, permanent LWCF funding at \$900 million annually. But the Trump Administration’s proposed 2026 budget sought to divert LWCF funds toward deferred maintenance and timber production—a move that was rejected in the Congressional budget after strong public opposition, reaffirming LWCF’s conservation purpose.

However, a recent Department of the Interior order imposed new restrictions. It grants local governments veto power over land sales to federal agencies, bans certain nonprofit partnerships, and allows states to use LWCF funds to purchase federal lands, potentially forcing them to “buy back” already protected lands.

Friends is working with allies in Congress and the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition to oppose these changes and ensure LWCF remains focused on expanding public access, conserving habitat, and protecting the Gorge and public lands nationwide. Click/tap the QR code to learn more.



LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will work with congressional allies and conservation partners to defend LWCF and ensure its dollars protect habitat, expand public access, and preserve the Columbia Gorge for generations to come.

Thanks to the many supporters who wrote letters, made calls, and urged their elected officials to protect the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Your advocacy helped amplify the Gorge’s voice in Washington, D.C. We also thank the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition for supporting Friends’ trip to D.C., enabling our team to meet directly with legislators and defend the LWCF’s conservation mission.



**PROTECTING PUBLIC LANDS,
PRESERVING THE GORGE:**
Your support defends the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the nation’s most effective tool for *expanding public lands and recreation access.*

\$2.5M in LWCF funding helped the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service create Steigerwald Lake National Wildlife Refuge by acquiring six parcels. Photo by Kate Green.



POLICY WORK

PROTECTS THE GORGE:

Your investment drives policies that protect recreation, strengthen land-use planning, and tackle air quality challenges. These actions keep Gorge *lands and communities resilient.*

LEGISLATIVE WINS IN SALEM, OLYMPIA STRENGTHEN CONSERVATION AND RECREATION

During the 2025 legislative sessions, Friends staff met with lawmakers to advance key conservation priorities, including Oregon’s new Recreational Immunity law, which protects local governments and private landowners—like Friends at Mosier Plateau—from liability when opening land for public recreation.

Friends advocated for funding the Columbia River Gorge Commission in both Oregon and Washington. Following Washington’s cut to the Commission’s budget, Friends met with Oregon legislators to ensure that there wouldn’t be any further cuts to the Commission’s budget beyond matching the cut Washington made.

Friends continued its involvement with the Stand Up to Factory Farms Coalition to address air quality issues in the Gorge that are caused by large-scale confined animal feeding operations (CAFOs) in Eastern Oregon. While the bill that the coalition was supporting did not pass, Friends will continue to advocate for policies that address the climate change and air quality impacts of factory farming in the state.

Finally, Friends successfully opposed bills that would have weakened Oregon’s land use planning system by promoting urban sprawl at the expense of farmland and forests. Click/tap the QR code to read a full recap of our legislative agenda and results in both Oregon and Washington.



LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue engaging with legislators to defend strong land-use planning, protect recreational access, and tackle environmental and public health threats. Strategic advocacy will remain essential to preserving the Gorge’s landscapes and communities.

Thanks to our incredible volunteers, supporters, and partners who shared their time, expertise, and voices to help Friends advance critical legislation and protect the Gorge’s lands, waters, and communities.

Oregon’s new Recreational Immunity law protects private landowners who open their lands for public use—like Mosier Plateau—from liability if visitors are injured. Photo by Cate Hotchkiss.

PROTECTING THE GORGE THROUGH LEGAL REVIEW

Each year, Friends' legal team reviews and comments on roughly 200 National Scenic Area land use applications. This process (known as "development review") ensures that new construction, rebuilding, and land use projects follow Scenic Area standards designed to protect the Gorge's views, wildlife, and community character.

- In Clark County, an applicant withdrew a request for two large agricultural buildings on a parcel that had no demonstrable agricultural use.
- In approving a new dwelling, Skamania County required landowners to reduce scenic impacts by maintaining vegetative screening while allowing defensible space for wildfire safety.
- Skamania County applied multiple conditions of approval to a bed and breakfast inn and to proposed commercial events to ensure that neighbors and Gorge resources will not be negatively affected.
- Skamania County conditioned its approvals of an addition to an existing house and the construction of a new residential accessory building on these structures not being used as separate dwellings. Similarly, Hood River County denied additions to buildings and placed conditions of approval on other projects. And in Wasco County, similar conditions of approval were applied to an agricultural building. All of these outcomes will help reduce impacts on scenic, cultural, natural, and recreational resources.
- Hood River County added conditions of approval to ensure that a temporary dwelling would not become permanent and adopted Friends' legal reasoning on interpretation of the County's zoning ordinance.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friends' legal team will monitor development proposals and work to ensure compliance with the Scenic Area Act and county ordinances.

Thanks to local residents, county planners, and partners who share information, attend hearings, and submit comments that strengthen the protection of Gorge lands and communities. We also thank our legal team for providing expert analysis on every proposed development in the Gorge.

Columbia River from Memaloose State Park. Photo by Robert Meyers.



PROTECTING THE STANDARDS THAT PROTECT THE GORGE:
Your investment supports Friends' legal team in ensuring that every development project meets National Scenic Area standards, *upholding the laws* that protect the Gorge's resources.

A group of Northwestern pond turtles in a pond at Turtle Haven. Photo by Monique Trevett.

SAVING NATIVE TURTLES:

Your investment *restored pond habitats and protected native turtles*, removing nearly 4,000 invasive bullfrogs to give endangered Northwestern pond turtles a home and a future in the Gorge.

ADVANCING NORTHWESTERN POND TURTLE CONSERVATION

This year, the Friends' Land Trust team made measurable progress improving aquatic habitat for the endangered Northwestern pond turtle in Washington. In collaboration with key agencies and partner organizations, we strategically removed invasive American bullfrogs, a predator that preys on baby turtles and reproduces exponentially.

Our efforts extended beyond Friends' preserves (Turtle Haven and Alashík) to include adjacent Forest Service lands. Together with our partners, we removed nearly 4,000 bullfrogs and dedicated over 2,000 hours to this critical work. These numbers are a tangible demonstration of what your support makes possible.

Volunteer land stewards were essential to this season's success. During seven Visual Encounter Survey days, a dozen stewards searched for the region's two native turtle species: the Northwestern pond turtle and the Western painted turtle. Thrilling sightings of both species, and plenty of smiles along the way, highlighted the success of these collective efforts.

Click/tap the QR code to read "Shell by Shell: Saving the Gorge's Turtle Sanctuaries" from our spring 2025 magazine.



LOOKING AHEAD

Thanks to these efforts, the first season of data collection provided robust baseline data to build on in the coming years. Next year, restoration efforts will continue with targeted invasive species control and habitat enhancements to give native turtles an even stronger foothold.

Thanks to our incredible volunteers, partners, and agency collaborators—Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Forest Service, and Mt. Adams Research Stewards—for making this season's successes possible.

PERSISTENCE PAYS OFF: FRIENDS DEFEATS PROPOSALS FROM ILLEGAL MINING

For eight years, Friends has battled the owners and operators of the Zimmerly mine, winning nearly every legal case and appeal against the illegal sand and gravel operation in southeast Clark County, just inside the boundary of the National Scenic Area.

The unpermitted mining activities harmed salmon habitat and threatened local residents' health, safety, and welfare with water and air pollution, massive heavy truck traffic, and intrusive noise.

Fortunately, new extraction ceased several years ago thanks to Friends' legal work. But violations continue, including dumping, stockpiling, hauling, and roadbuilding, which are under active investigation by enforcement authorities.

In April 2025, Friends secured an important win when the Columbia River Gorge Commission issued an appellate order confirming that any new mining land use application must seek review for the unpermitted ditches and drainage system, and must disclose details about natural seeps and springs plus any potential impacts to water resources.

An incomplete land use application for mining filed in 2024 remains pending. Click/tap the QR code to read more about Friends' victories against the illegal mining.



LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue to monitor unpermitted activities at the site and urge authorities to ensure legal compliance.

Thanks to concerned community members and Friends' staff and legal team, whose vigilance and advocacy made these victories possible and helped protect the Gorge from unlawful industrial activities.



DEFENDING THE GORGE THROUGH LEGAL ACTION:
Your investment *holds the line* against illegal mining, helping keep salmon streams clean, scenery protected, and the Gorge resilient.

New stockpiling and other mining-related violations continue to occur on the Zimmerly property, as seen here in June 2025. Photo from Friends' archives.

**KEEPING COMMUNITY
ROADS SAFE:**

Your support prevented industrial-scale mining from overwhelming a rural residential road. By *mobilizing community voices*, we protected the safety and character of this special community at the western gateway to the Gorge.



CLARK COUNTY COUNCIL TWICE REJECTS ZIMMERLY ROAD PROPOSAL

In July 2024, the Clark County Council considered a proposal from ZP#5, LLC, the company that owns the illegal Zimmerly mine, to convert SE 356th Avenue—a privately owned rural residential road—into a publicly owned mining haul road. The goal was to resume mining at the site. Accepting the proposal would have exposed Clark County to hidden legal, financial, and liability risks.

Before the hearing, Friends mobilized members and supporters to submit comments and speak out in opposition. Following strong advocacy from Friends staff and local property owners, the Council voted unanimously to reject the proposed road dedication.

Undeterred, Zimmerly lobbied the Council to reconsider. On December 2, 2024, less than a month before two Councilors would leave office, the Council held a rehearing. Friends once again mobilized the community to warn the Council about the risks.

The Council again unanimously rejected the road dedication, thus continuing to protect SE 356th Avenue as a quiet, rural residential road where future industrial-scale mining activity is prohibited. Click/tap the QR code to read more.



LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue to oppose any new proposals to convert residential roads into mining haul roads. We will engage supporters and work with local officials to prevent industrial encroachment and to preserve the safety, quiet, and scenic integrity of Gorge communities.

Thanks to Clark County residents, neighboring property owners, and Friends staff who spoke out at the hearings. Your engagement was key to the Council's unanimous decisions and to keeping SE 356th Avenue as a safe, quiet community road.

Illegal use of SE 356th Avenue as a mining haul road, as shown in 2018. Photo from Friends' archives.

VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION: STEWARDSHIP ACROSS THE GORGE

This year, Friends hosted 25 work parties throughout the Gorge focused on invasive weed removal, plantings that benefit pollinators, and fire restoration. In addition to work parties, a number of volunteers commit to a deeper level of engagement as Land Stewards and, new this year, Community Scientists.

Twenty-five volunteer Land Stewards have been dedicated to monthly stewardship for up to four years. Adopted preserves include Cape Horn Trail, Sams Walker and St. Cloud Day Use Areas, Turtle Haven, Beacon Rock State Park, and Mosier Plateau. The impact is noticeable in fewer weeds and more native plant success. Stewards enable restoration success. In addition to diligent invasive weed maintenance, this year they planted oaks and forbs, monitored rare plants, surveyed Northwestern Pond Turtles, performed trail maintenance, and conducted litter clean-ups.

This spring, Friends piloted a new community science project in partnership with the Forest Service and a Gorge bird conservation activist to monitor Western bluebird populations and behavior in east Gorge oak habitats. Community scientists monitored 30 western bluebird boxes weekly to note bluebird activity and clutch size.

LOOKING AHEAD

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of volunteers, the first season of data collection really “took flight,” providing robust baseline data to build on in the coming years.

Thanks to all the volunteers who served as Land Stewards, work party participants, and community scientists. Their time, energy, and dedication are what make these successes possible.

Volunteers spread native seeds at Coyote Wall in December 2024. Photo by Sarah Skelly.



WHERE PASSION TAKES ROOT:

Your support fuels a *community of caretakers*: volunteers planting oaks, removing invasive weeds, and tending wildlife habitats. Season by season, their dedication turns effort into thriving ecosystems.

Before and after photos show the effects of the Rowena Fire at Mt. Ulka. Photos by Cate Hotchkiss (top) and Sara Woods (bottom).



POST-FIRE RESTORATION:

Your support launched restoration at Mt. Ulka Preserve after the Rowena Fire. From *ash to new growth*, native plants are taking root, guiding recovery, and supporting the resilience of the Gorge and the communities that call it home.

RESTORING MT. ULKA AFTER THE ROWENA FIRE

The Rowena Fire ignited on June 11 along I-84 near Rowena, Oregon—approximately six miles west of The Dalles. Within 24 hours, it expanded rapidly to several thousand acres, ultimately burning 56 homes and 91 additional structures.

By the time it was fully contained, it had burned 3,700 acres, including the entirety of Friends' 55-acre Mt. Ulka Preserve.

Wildfires can bring both opportunities for regeneration and threats to natural landscapes, particularly with invasive weeds. One major concern at Mt. Ulka is rush skeletonweed, a Eurasian species. Despite years of control efforts by Friends' staff, rush skeletonweed thrives after fire. Reduced competition, added nutrients from burned plant material, and its ability to regenerate through root sprouting allow this weed to spread aggressively after a burn.

Friends' staff began planning restoration efforts immediately. Recognizing the risk of a weed outbreak, staff have intensified control measures and are preparing the preserve for reseeding with native plant species in the coming seasons.

LOOKING AHEAD

Restoration will focus on controlling invasives, reintroducing natives, and monitoring the land's recovery. While many homes were affected by the fire, our focus is on restoring the natural lands within our care, which supports broader ecosystem recovery. In doing so, our work will contribute to the broader resilience of the Gorge landscape that communities call home. We are also partnering with United Way of the Columbia Gorge to support families affected by the Rowena and Burdoin Fires*, recognizing the importance of both human and ecological recovery.

Friends extends our thoughts to those affected by the Rowena and Burdoin Fires, and acknowledges the tremendous losses experienced by families and communities.

*This annual report covers Friends' 2024-25 fiscal year (July 2024 - June 2025). The Burdoin Fire started in July 2025, so it is not included in this report.

PUBLIC ACCESS MADE PERMANENT AT MOSIER PLATEAU TRAIL

Friends' Gorge Towns to Trails project envisions a 200-mile loop trail connecting urban areas across the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, crossing public and private lands along the way. It's an ambitious vision laid out in the original management plan for the National Scenic Area, and one Friends and our partners continue to advance. Trails are challenging to piece together, and it can take years, if not decades, to assemble connected trail corridors.

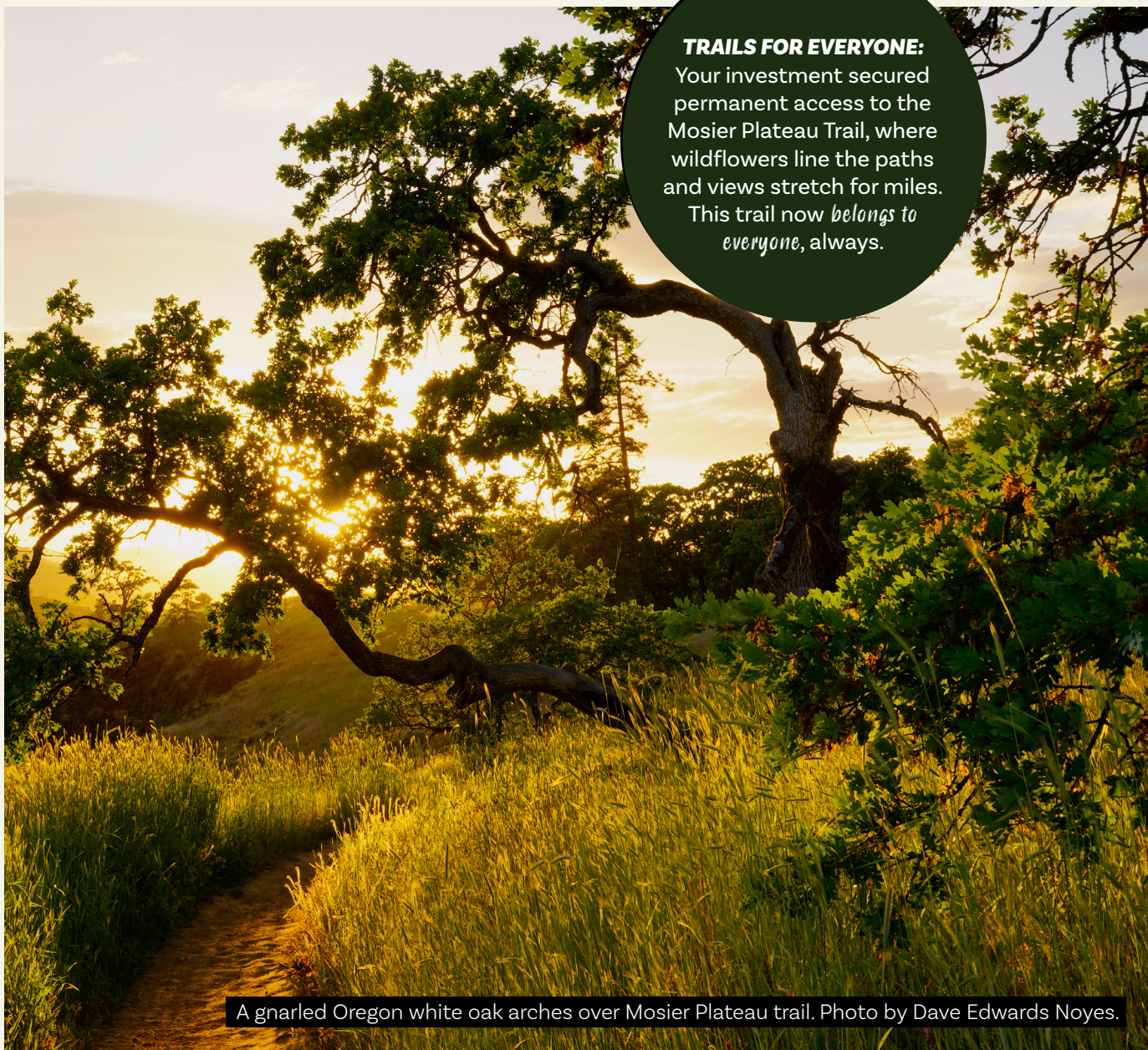
In May, the Povey family, long rooted in the Mosier community and generous supporters of Gorge conservation, donated a permanent trail easement to Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust along the Mosier Plateau trail. Previously, the public had the right to cross the property under a limited-duration license, but with the Povey's donation, the trail corridor is now permanently protected. The City of Mosier and Friends' Land Trust cooperatively manage the trail.

Since its construction in 2013, the Mosier Plateau Trail has become one of the most popular hiking destinations in the Gorge, especially in spring when wildflowers are on full display. With this permanent access, the Mosier Plateau Trail continues to welcome people of all ages to experience its wildflowers, sweeping views, and quiet moments in nature—today and for decades ahead.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue working with partners to finalize trail planning and design, creating accessible, safe, and connected trails for all who love the Gorge.

Special thanks to the Povey family, the City of Mosier, and Friends' Land Trust staff who made permanent public access possible.



TRAILS FOR EVERYONE:
Your investment secured permanent access to the Mosier Plateau Trail, where wildflowers line the paths and views stretch for miles. This trail now *belongs to everyone, always.*

A gnarled Oregon white oak arches over Mosier Plateau trail. Photo by Dave Edwards Noyes.



**BUILDING THE
PATH FORWARD:**

Your investment is laying the groundwork for a *200-mile loop trail* linking Gorge towns and communities. Even in the face of challenges, the project moves forward and creates lasting opportunities for recreation, connection, and access.

CONNECTING COMMUNITIES: GORGE TOWNS TO TRAILS

We've been working diligently with the planning consulting firm Parametrix and in close collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to advance the Mosier-to-The Dalles Trail project, part of the larger Gorge Towns to Trails initiative. While meaningful progress has been made and a final draft of the plan is ready for review, several setbacks have delayed finalizing it. Federal-level changes have significantly impacted USFS operations, and just as we were preparing for the final Community Representative Group (CRG) Meeting, the Rowena Fire affected the entire planning area, forcing a pause.

Now, with USFS employees furloughed for an unspecified period of time, the project is again in a holding pattern. Despite these challenges, we remain committed to moving it forward and will work closely with Parametrix and USFS to bring a final draft back to the CRG as soon as possible. The final plan will highlight the overall vision, compile community input, and provide design and policy considerations to guide the future of the trail. This is a long-term endeavor, requiring years of careful planning and collaboration.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will finalize the draft plan, incorporate community feedback, and publish design and policy recommendations, coordinating with USFS, Parametrix, CRG members, and partners to move the trail vision forward.

Thanks to our partners, funders, and CRG members for their persistence, input, and dedication in helping advance this complex trail project. Their collaboration ensures that this vision continues to move forward despite significant challenges.

Mosier Plateau, one of the many beautiful landscapes between Mosier and The Dalles, OR, that will form a part of the eventual trail linking the two towns. Photo by Cate Hotchkiss.

GORGE STEWARDSHIP THROUGH TRIBAL COLLABORATION

Friends' 2024–2027 Strategic Plan identifies expanding relationships with Indigenous partners and tribal governments as a key objective, aimed at strengthening Friends' ability to protect, preserve, and steward the Gorge.

The plan calls for tangible steps, including transferring lands to Indigenous entities. Friends is currently working with two tribal-adjacent entities on land transfers, consistent with commitments in the plan.

Friends is also collaborating with other land managers to facilitate expanded access for First Foods gathering by tribal members, creating more consistent and ongoing opportunities.

Through these projects and future initiatives, Friends is putting its commitments into action, seeking equitable outcomes that reach as many community members as possible—especially tribal and native communities.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue advancing land transfers, expanding access for First Foods gathering, and developing collaborative projects with Indigenous partners. These efforts will guide long-term stewardship and strengthen relationships across the Gorge.

Thanks to our tribal partners, community collaborators, and agency allies whose guidance and engagement help shape these efforts.

Indigenous fishing platforms near Bridge of the Gods. Photo by Dan Hawk.



PARTNERING WITH TRIBAL COMMUNITIES:
Your investment restores connections to the land, supporting partnerships that return access for *First Foods gathering* and affirm the Gorge as a place of shared care and belonging.



Created by Mayer/Reed, this conceptual design for Cape Horn features universal access trails, a gathering pavilion, new oak groves, and a viewpoint overlooking the Gorge that will be the highest accessible vista in the National Scenic Area.

**OPENING THE
OUTDOORS TO ALL:**

Your investment opens trails and natural spaces to people of all abilities. Together, we are creating *inclusive outdoor experiences* that welcome everyone to connect with the Gorge.

GORGE ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT: CAPE HORN AND CATHERINE CREEK

We continue to move forward with the Gorge Accessibility Project (GAP) at sites across the Gorge—including Cape Horn and Catherine Creek. Launched in 2021, GAP aims to improve accessibility at public recreation sites by engaging diverse community stakeholders through its steering committee to ensure that outdoor spaces are welcoming and inclusive to all.

Friends has worked closely with the GAP Steering Committee, landscape design firm Mayer/Reed, and DAO Architecture to develop accessibility-focused designs for Cape Horn and Catherine Creek. Significant progress has been made, though major federal-level shifts—such as the defunding of diversity and equity initiatives and reduced U.S. Forest Service budgets—have made implementation challenging. In addition, securing funding for accessibility-related projects has become increasingly difficult.

Despite these obstacles, Friends continues to advance the goals of GAP at Cape Horn with limited resources and remains actively engaged in identifying new funding sources. At Catherine Creek, now managed by the Forest Service, Friends will continue to advocate for trailhead improvements that align with the project's accessibility objectives.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will advance accessibility improvements at Cape Horn by securing new partnerships and funding.

Thanks to the GAP Steering Committee, Mayer/Reed, DAO Architecture, and all partners who have contributed expertise, energy, and creative solutions to this work. Their dedication keeps the vision of a more inclusive Gorge alive and advancing.

1

SHARED PURPOSE

Protecting the Gorge forever

TOGETHER, YOUR GENEROSITY RAISED
\$3.06 MILLION TO PROTECT, PRESERVE, AND STEWARD THE COLUMBIA GORGE.



5,000+

Members
Protecting the Gorge



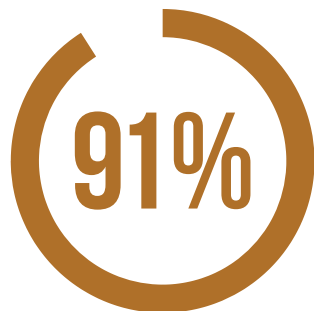
450+

Conservators & Guardians
of the Gorge Giving Circles



408

New
Donors



of Share the Wonder
campaign goal achieved

225

Share the Wonder acres
protected at Heartleaf
Bluffs and Alashik

1,200

Students
experienced the Gorge through
youth education programs.



Donations came from neighbors, members, individuals, families, foundations, and businesses across Oregon, Washington, and beyond.

**YOUR GENEROSITY
POWERS THIS MOMENT:**

Your investment is turning restored habitats, protected lands, and new trail connections into the *next chapter* of the Gorge's living story.



Sunrise from the Portland Women's Forum Scenic Viewpoint. Photo by Chris Elkinton.

**SHARE THE WONDER:
NEARING THE SUMMIT**

Two years ago, Friends launched the Share the Wonder capital campaign, a bold effort to protect, connect, and restore lands that tell the Gorge's story, places where conservation makes a difference. Today, that vision is visible in action: new lands protected, critical habitats restored, and trail connections advancing. Thanks to the generosity of this community, more than \$6 million has been raised toward our \$6.6 million goal. Each gift has helped bring the campaign's promise to life, transforming ideas into tangible conservation outcomes across the Gorge. Scan the QR code to explore the campaign and make a gift.



LOOKING AHEAD

With the summit in sight, the campaign's final phase will focus on completing fundraising and celebrating the conservation successes it has already made possible.

Heartfelt thanks to the passionate members, supporters, partners, businesses, foundations, and communities whose early commitments, leadership gifts, and sustained giving have carried Share the Wonder to its last switchback.

GOAL: \$6.6M

\$6M RAISED TO DATE



FINANCIAL REPORT



JULY 1, 2024 - JUNE 30, 2025

Friends of the Columbia Gorge is fortunate to have the support and generosity of our donors, volunteers, activists, and partners. Thanks to that generosity, we met a year of financial uncertainty with determination and purpose. While managing a tight budget, we focused on what matters most – protecting the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Your belief in our mission enabled us to continue creating lasting impact when it was needed most.

Consolidated results for fiscal year 2024–2025 show operating income at \$3.1 million and operating expenses at \$3.1 million. Operating income includes the planned annual draw from endowments and reserve funds set aside for current-year projects. In addition, Friends received donations and pledges of just over \$1.2 million for the Share the Wonder capital campaign and \$61,000 gifted to our endowment fund.

Friends also contributed \$75,000 in property taxes, even when legally exempt, to support local Gorge communities and schools.

Our \$7.3 million in endowment funds include the Matthew Winthrop Fund and Vic Clausen Fund for outdoor youth education, and the Marjorie Abramovitz Fund for land trust activities. General operations endowments include the Conservation Director Endowment, the Mary D. and Thomas W. Holman Fund, the Nancy Russell Fund, and the Barbara Pooley Wilson Fund. These funds are managed by Ferguson Wellman Capital Management and monitored by Friends’ board finance committee.

Transparency is essential to Friends’ accountability to members, donors, partners, and the communities we serve. Friends of the Columbia Gorge is a Better Business Bureau Accredited Charity and an Accredited Land Trust, distinctions that reflect adherence to 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.

LOOKING AHEAD

Friends will continue to prioritize responsible financial management while investing in programs that protect and restore the Gorge. We remain committed to maintaining transparency, ensuring long-term stability, and leveraging resources effectively to achieve measurable impact in the year ahead.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, volunteers, and partners, whose contributions, stewardship, and trust enable Friends to operate with transparency and financial integrity while advancing our conservation mission.



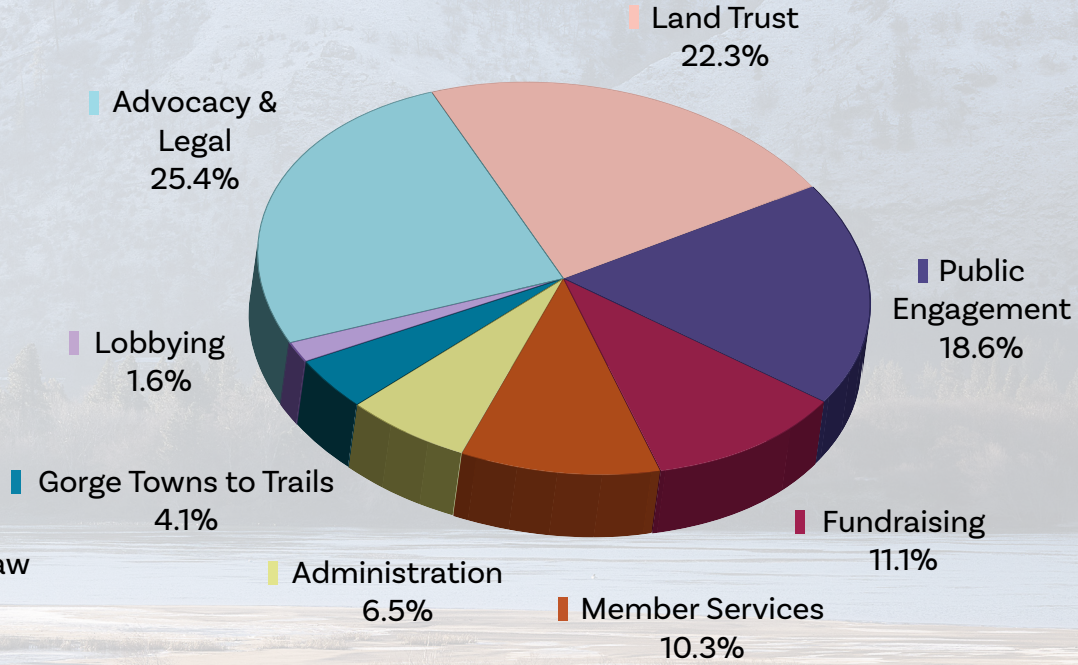
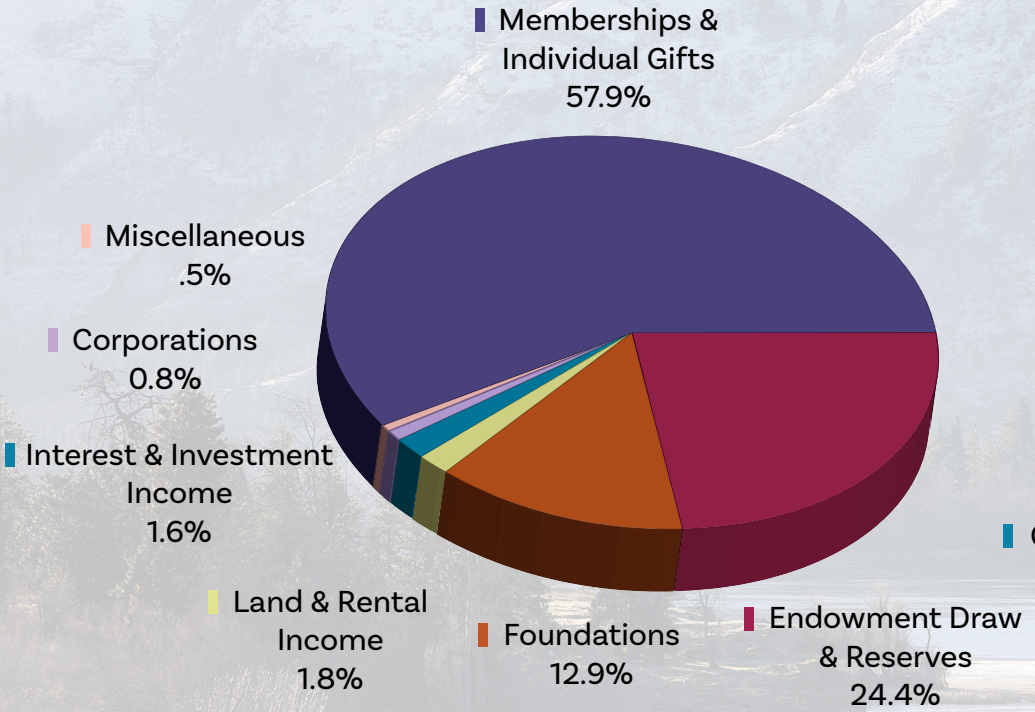
Erin Randall
Senior Accountant

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	June 30, 2025	June 30, 2024
Land and Related Assets	\$ 14,299,339	\$ 14,299,339
Cash and Investments	\$ 9,997,353	\$ 9,992,338
Other Assets	\$ 2,162,073	\$ 3,011,470
Total Assets	\$ 26,458,765	\$ 27,303,147
Liabilities	\$ 1,312,206	\$ 2,164,809
Net Assets	\$ 25,146,559	\$ 25,138,338
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$ 26,458,765	\$ 27,303,147

OPERATING REVENUE: \$3,060,592

OPERATING EXPENSES: \$3,060,592



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



NORMAN YEON LEGACY CIRCLE

Jules Abbott
Matthew and Carolyn Adams
Ruth Allen
Michael Allen and Jane Harris
Lenny Anderson and Gisela Foerstermann
Pippa Arend
Debbie and Steve Asakawa
Coila Ash
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Suzanne Bader
Elaine Ballou
Leslie Allen Bancroft and Brian Lowry
Tom Bard
Louis Barker
Cynthia Barret and Karen Johnson
Carole L. Beauclerk
Maureen and Larry Becker
Christopher Van Bommel
Richard Benner and Lavinia Gordon
Day Bennett

The Norman Yeon Legacy Circle (NYLC) is a dedicated group of Friends supporters who have made a lasting commitment to conservation of the Columbia Gorge by making a provision for Friends of the Columbia Gorge in their estate plans. Through their gift planning, they will ensure the protection of this beautiful and wild landscape for generations to come.

We are thankful for the generous gifts of all our NYLC members. Thanks to their support, the Gorge will remain a vibrant, living place for future generations.



Linda Besant and Martha Goetsch
Sandra Birkner and David Crout
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Lydie P. Boyer
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Ed Caswell
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North Cheatham
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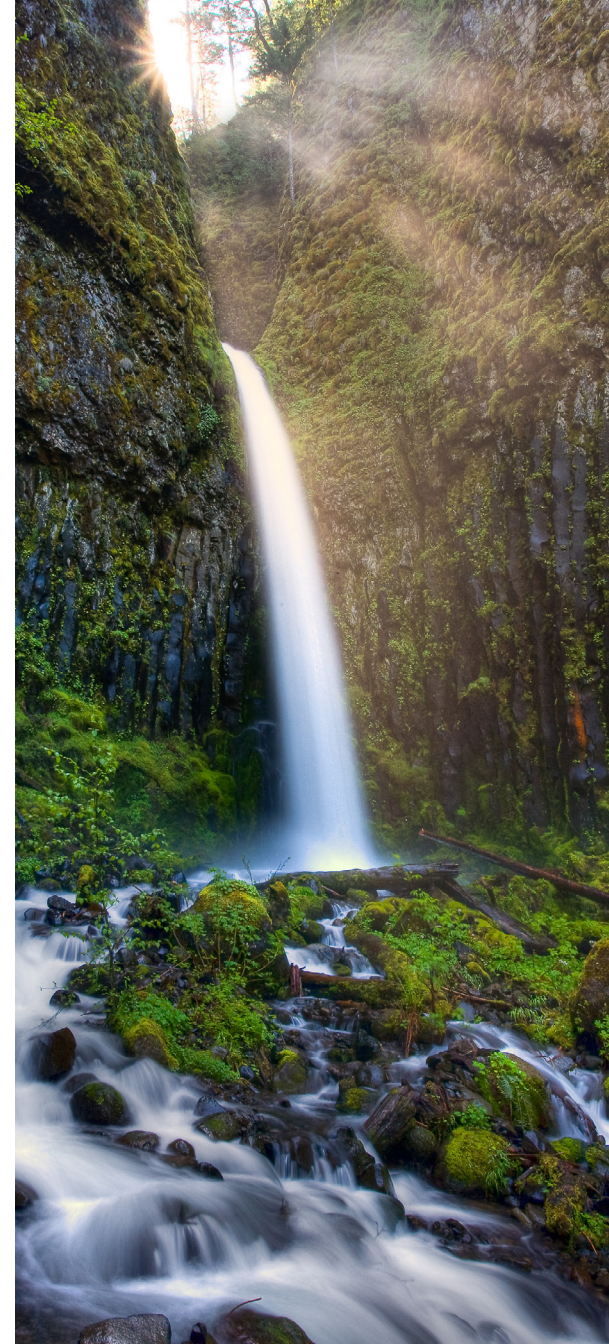
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Todd Coward
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Jeanne and William Dalton
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Pam and Bob Davee
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Meg Larson
Joy Lasseter
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Eric Lichtenthaler and Dixie Stevens
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Mimi Maduro and Michael Stevens
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Jeff Malmquist
Keith Maples
Susan Masta and Jay Wright
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David May and Theresa Papas
Rafael and Andrea Maya
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Kathleen McHarg and Ramsay Weit
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Lucy Nonnenkamp
Carlton Olson
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Jay and Gayle Palmer
Nancy and John Palmer
Santino Paperini
Patricia and Ron Peterson
Anne Philipsborn and Rick Ray
Anne and Chris Pierce
Barbara Pollock
David Pollock
Jim Pollock
Betsy Porter
Kristin Price
Bernadette and Keith Price
Pierre Provost
Claire Puchy
Norma Reich
Kathleen K. Reid
Chris Robuck

Sunbeams at Dry Creek Falls. Photo by Daniel Rappaport.





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Gayle I. Rothrock
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Mark and Claudia Sanzone
Susan Saul
Elizabeth Schilling
Mark Schmidt and Janet Warren
Mary Ann and Robert Schmidt
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Hazel and William Sefler
Anna L. Sestrich
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Andrea Lara Silva
William Simonson
John Slosar
Laurie Smith
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Donald Vinton
Brian Wagner
Janet Wainwright

Daniel Webb
Bruce Weber
Kit Whittaker and Tom Whittaker
Michele and Matt Wier
Alan Wilcox
Edyth Willard
Brian and Cynthia Winter
Diana Wolford
Beverly Wong
Sandy Wright
Jean Zylka

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Marion Beals
Gerel Blauer
Betty Bonham
Harvey Britten
Janice Camp
David Champlin
Otna Crawley
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Jane Kendall
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Elizabeth Lawrence
William Lawrence
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Marge Riley
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L. Joan Stevens
Douglas Stoudt
Donita Swenson
Pat Towle and John Vitas
Doris Troxel
Elaine and Ben Whiteley
Anne Whitteker
Deborah A. Wiley
Norman Yeon

Early grass widow blooms at Rowena Crest in the Columbia Gorge. Photo by John Williams.

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+**

Bill Booth
David Goulder and Marlene Salon
Jan and Steve Oliva
Jim Pollock
Kathleen Tack
Marsha Warner and Evans Van Buren
Bob and Liz Warren

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Debbie and Edmund Campbell
Joe and Pat Campbell
BeBe Chiarito and James Marquard
Joan Childs and Jerry Zaret
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Bob and Nancy James
Portland Garden Club
Lucy Nonnenkamp
Kathleen Reid
Carolann and Peyton Storli
Cyndi and Eric Strid

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John Taylor and Barbara West
Randall Weisberg
Edyth Willard

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

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Farron Brougher and Tracey Tomashpol
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Martha Stevenson
Rachel Witmer
Loring and Margaret Winthrop
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Mark Andrew Van Der Veer
Elisabet and Leo Van Swam

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Rex Breunsbach
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Gayle Rothrock
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Debbie and Steve Asakawa
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Susan Blackman
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Gerard Blais
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Marcia Freed and Martin Schwartz
Thomas Freni and Tracie Lynne-Freni
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Claire and Zanley Galton
Monte Garrett
Susan Gilbert
Alice Goldstein and Donald Oman
Tim Golik
Kevin Gorman and Michelle Kinsella
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Jim Grube and Diane Schultz
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Ed Mueller
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John Parry
Jim and Mary Ann Pastene
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Margaret Ranies
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Stewards
\$500-\$999

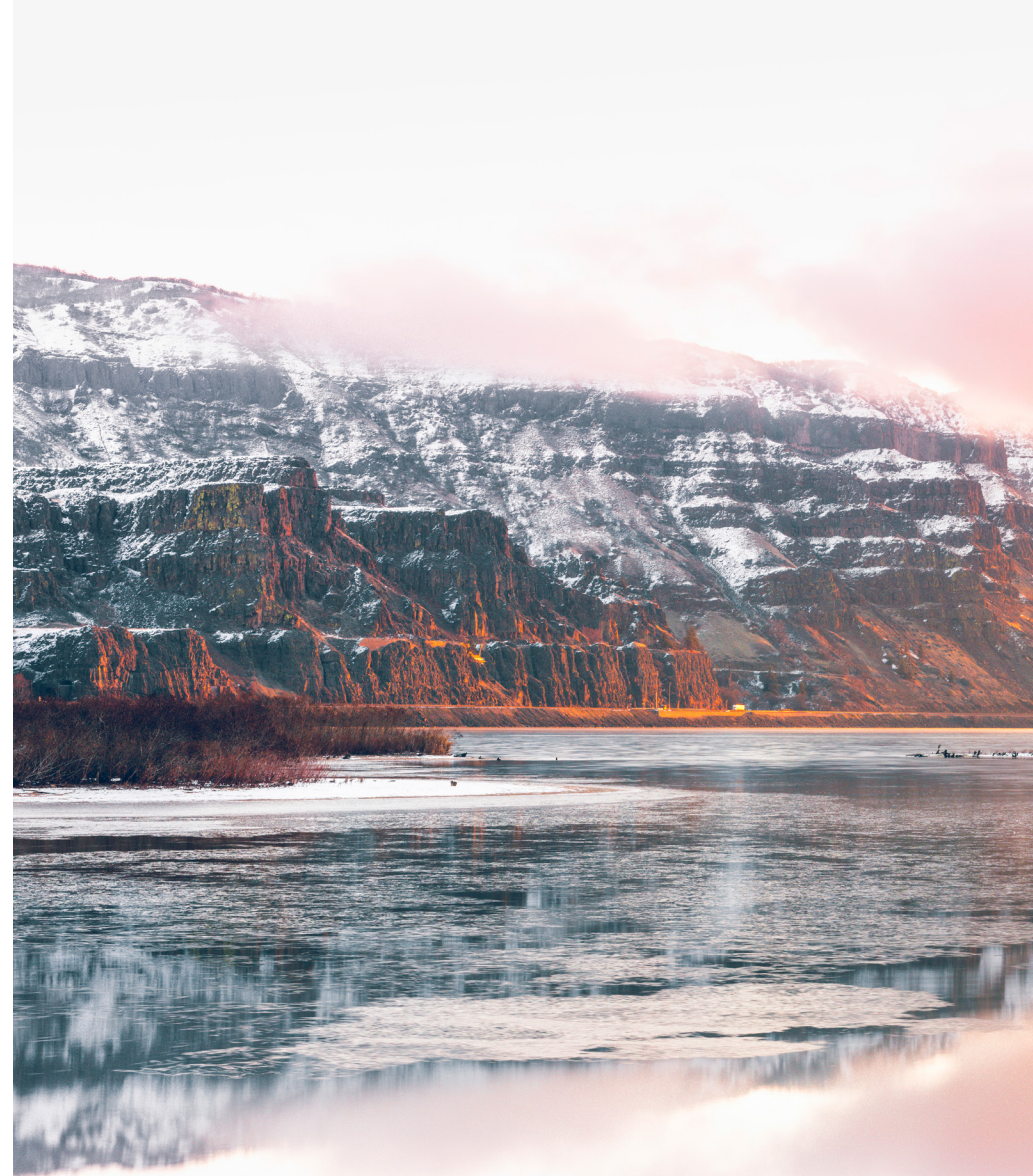
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Mia Prickett
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Lynn Raube
Jodi and Vince Ready
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Phyllis Redman
Julie and Laszlo Regos
Meg Remsen
Eileen Riordan
Randy Roach

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Richard Salerno and Katherine Schuler
Hannah Schink
Debbie and Joe Schneider
Janet Schroer and Stephen Williams
Kate Schuyler
Charles Scudder and Judy Stewart
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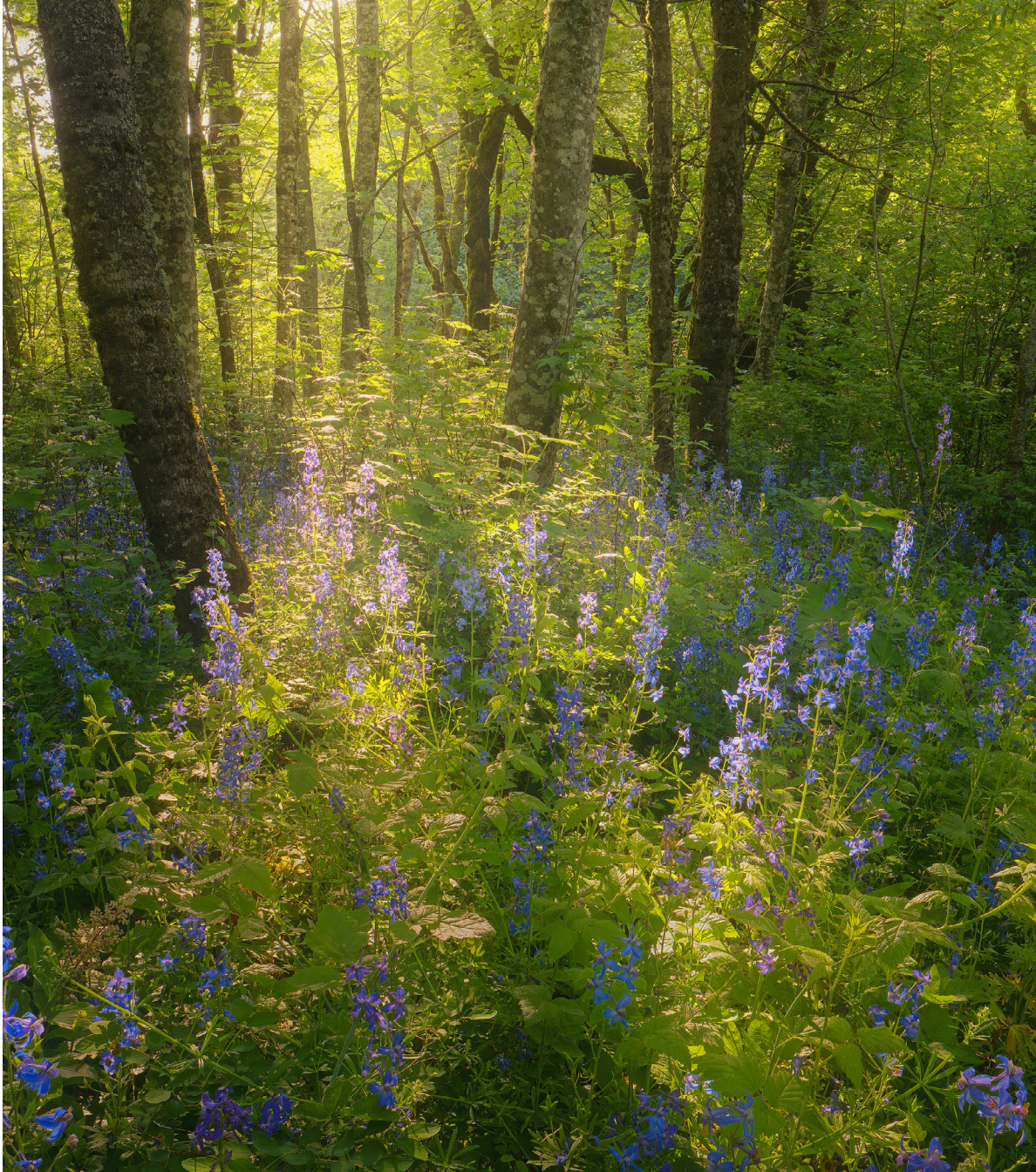


Friends' Lyle Cherry Orchard preserve seen from Mayer State Park. Photo by Paloma Ayala.

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Cape Horn Trail bursts with spring color. Photo by John Williams.

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Sunset at Angel's Rest. Photo by Joanna Pisarski.