

Friends of the Columbia Gorge



Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Fall 2019 Newsletter

**Building
Climate
Resilience**

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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Activists in the Gorge speak out on climate change.

Photos: Left, Peter Cornelison; right, Brent Foster



Take Action: Climate Threats

Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust is hard at work incorporating climate change impacts and resiliency into the management of our lands. The reality is that no matter who you are or where you live, any responsible plans for the future must now include the mounting impacts of climate change.

That reality also applies to the management plan for the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, where climate-change impacts are becoming apparent. Unfortunately, not a single mention of climate change is included anywhere in the Gorge-wide management plan, although climate change will likely affect every aspect of the Gorge: habitat for wildlife species including salmon, native forests and vegetation, scenic views and recreation, and community safety, development, and wellbeing.

Addressing the impacts of climate change on resources and communities is crucial to creating a livable future for the Gorge. So climate change must be a top priority in the Gorge Commission's management plan review.

How you can help: Please write to the Gorge Commission today, urging them to make planning for climate change a priority for management plan review. The commission has identified and held workshops on numerous other priorities, but they have not identified climate-change planning as a top priority or given any clear indication of how climate-change concerns will influence the management plan.

Mail your letter or postcard to:

Columbia River Gorge Commission
#1 Town & Country Square
57 NE Wauna Avenue
White Salmon, WA 98672

WHO WE ARE

Friends of the Columbia Gorge was founded in 1980 by John Yeon and Nancy Russell, with champions led by Senator Mark Hatfield. We work to ensure that the beautiful and wild Columbia Gorge remains a place apart, an unspoiled treasure for generations to come.

✉ gorgefriends.org/subscribe f t i @gorgefriends

Correction:
Our apologies to Joe and Pat Campbell. Our Summer newsletter, in May, should have identified them as cofounders of Elk Cove Vineyards (not Elk Grove Winery).

Director's Letter

The relationship started with an abrupt cancellation, followed by a second cancellation. By the third time John Yeon proposed dinner at his country place in the Columbia Gorge, Bruce and Nancy Russell began to wonder about this revered yet eccentric Portland architect who they knew only through reputation. That third try, on August 1, 1979, changed history.

The youngest member to serve on the Oregon State Parks Commission, John Yeon singularly and creatively protected the Gorge for decades. He traveled to Washington, D.C., to support limits to the impacts of Bonneville Dam and he bought a 78-acre property across from Multnomah Falls that he meticulously landscaped into a work of art and conservation.

That summer of 1979, John saw both opportunity and threat in the future of his beloved Columbia Gorge, and as he approached the age of 70, he knew he needed to pass the torch.

Forty years ago this summer, John Yeon invited Nancy Russell, 22 years his junior, to an evening dinner at The Shire, hoping that the Gorge's moonlit beauty would inspire her to take the lead in a growing community effort to protect the Gorge from the threat of development. It worked. The meeting that evening led to the founding of Friends of the Columbia Gorge, and eventually to the creation of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Today, the Gorge's iconic natural beauty and vibrant mix of communities and cultures make it one of the Pacific Northwest's most beloved treasures.

John used the Gorge's beauty to – as Nancy put it – “court” her to become a protector of the Columbia Gorge. Nancy fell deeper in love with the Gorge that night because she understood its survival was at stake. That fateful dinner ensured that the Gorge would indeed survive John's greatest fears.

From taking school children out to experience the Gorge to leading educational hikes with local community partners, Friends has built on John and Nancy's model to court new generations of Gorge stewards. These new members, volunteers, advocates, and community partners have been essential in our many accomplishments over the past four decades.

Looking forward another 40 years, it is in our hands today to ensure that the Columbia Gorge not only survives, but thrives. And with your continued support it will.



Kevin Gorman, Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org



Photo: Bruce Pentland

“Beauty and seduction are nature's tool for survival, because we protect what we fall in love with.”

- Louie Schwartzberg, cinematographer, TED talk, 2012



Oregon Passes Historic Oil

Legislature acts, three years after Mosier derailment and spill



The explosive oil train derailment in Mosier, Oregon, in June 2016.

Photo: Paloma Ayala

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

On June 29, one day before the Oregon Legislature adjourned for 2019, the Senate approved House Bill 2209, requiring oil spill response planning for high-hazard trains carrying millions of gallons of crude oil through the Columbia River Gorge. The bill passed with bipartisan support in both chambers and was signed into law by Governor Kate Brown on July 23.

Passage of HB 2209 marks a significant achievement for Friends of the Columbia Gorge and our allies. For four years, Friends and an environmental coalition including emergency responders, community leaders,

Tribal governments, and our allies in the legislature worked to pass legislation to require oil train spill response plans.

Washington state passed a comprehensive oil train bill in 2015, and even with opposition from the oil and railroad lobby, it passed the first year it was introduced. California had already passed landmark legislation in 2014, just one year after the deadly oil train disaster in Lac Megantic, Quebec, that killed 47 people.

Railroads block Oregon spill response

In Oregon, bills were introduced during several legislative sessions, only to be blocked by the railroads. After the June 2016 derailment

and fire in Mosier, Oregon, Friends and our allies were confident legislation similar to Washington's would pass in Oregon. But in 2017, a comprehensive spill response bill was gutted by the railroad lobby to shield railroads from liability and public disclosure. At the end of the session the weakened bill was pulled from the floor of the House and sent back to committee to die due to public opposition and media criticism.

Why is Oregon so different from our neighboring states regarding this and other environmental legislation? Possibly because Oregon has extremely lax campaign finance laws. According to The Oregonian, Oregon

Train Spill Response Bill

ranks first in the United States for corporate campaign contributions per capita and sixth in railroad contributions. Some of the strongest opponents of oil spill response laws received large contributions from the railroads.

Odds improve in 2019

Despite the uneven playing field, several factors changed in 2018 that improved the odds of a good bill passing in 2019. At Friends' request, the Oregon Conservation Network, an umbrella organization of environmental groups, made passing an oil train bill a priority for 2019. Governor Kate Brown solidly supported such legislation, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) introduced a bill at the governor's request. A legislative work group was formed to build consensus around the proposed legislation, and legislators who had questioned the state's authority over the railroads were educated on the distinctions between state and federal jurisdictions. By 2019, one legislator who staunchly opposed holding railroads responsible had left the legislature, and no one wanted to see 2017's legislative mess repeated in 2019.

Four bills were introduced for the 2019 session. Two introduced at Friends' request required state-approved spill response plans for up to the entire lading of an oil train; spill response trainings; proof of railroad financial responsibility for cleaning up a spill involving the entire oil train; fees assessed to the railroads; and advanced notification of oil train shipments. The DEQ introduced a substantially similar bill, then the House Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness introduced HB 2209, the product of a work group involving industry, state agencies, legislators, and limited public involvement.

Committee bill caps response, liability

HB 2209 requires railroads transporting large amounts of crude oil through Oregon to develop spill response plans and submit them to DEQ for review and approval. The bill also requires spill response trainings and requires railroads to provide DEQ with proof of financial ability to pay for oil spill response and cleanup costs. But in its details, the bill is weaker than the legislation drafted by Friends. It caps railroad liability and spill response at just 15 percent of the train lading, doesn't require notification, and it initially made taxpayers pay for spill response planning and trainings. Friends and our allies pushed hard to remove the cap on liability and spill response, require notification, and require the railroad to fund the program.

Some legislators on the committee resisted, but eventually bowed to pressure from the House Speaker and Senate leaders, amending the bill to require fees to fund spill response planning and trainings. But they refused to budge on notification or raise the 15 percent cap on spill response and liability. By comparison, the 2013 derailment in Lac

Megantic, Quebec, spilled and ignited more than 1 million gallons of crude oil, which was 33 percent of the train's load. So HB 2209 could still leave local governments on the hook for tens of millions of dollars in clean-ups.

Despite those drawbacks, if properly implemented, HB 2209 will substantially improve oil spill response planning in Oregon and better enable the state to respond to the next derailment and spill. Oil trains will never be safe, but with HB 2209 as law, the Columbia Gorge and communities across Oregon will be better protected when future oil train derailments and spills occur.

Oregon still needs requirements for 24-hour notification of oil train schedules, periodic reporting on oil train traffic, and true worst-case-scenario planning and financial responsibility by the railroads, but HB 2209 is nonetheless a significant step. The Oregon Environmental Quality Commission must now draft rules to implement the legislation, and Friends will monitor the process to be sure the rules work to reduce and mitigate the threat that oil trains present in the Columbia River Gorge and Oregon communities. ■



A stopped oil train blocking a local road in Skamania County. Photo: Patrick Mulcahey



Friends Settlement Will Protect Historic Resources and Corbett Community

Nathan Baker, Senior Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends

This summer, Friends of the Columbia Gorge entered into an innovative settlement agreement with the current owners of the View Point Inn, a historic property in Corbett. The product of months of negotiation, the agreement is carefully designed to allow the restoration and use of the historic inn building for commercial purposes, while limiting potential impacts to the Corbett community.

Built in 1924 and originally named the Palmer House, the View Point Inn was initially operated as a roadhouse for travelers along the Columbia River Highway. After Interstate 84 began diverting commercial traffic, the Inn was eventually converted into use as a private residence, and was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985. To this day, it remains the only

privately owned property listed on the National Register in the entire Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

At several different points in the 1990s and 2000s, the owners of the Inn resumed commercial uses on the property, but went well beyond what was allowed under the Scenic Area rules, in the process watering down Gorge protections and harming the local community with excessive noise and traffic. The Inn was severely damaged by fires in 2008 and 2011. It has sat vacant and in disrepair since the second fire, and was in serious danger of being lost forever to the elements.

In 2016, Corbett residents Heiner and Sheron Fruehauf purchased the property with a plan to restore the Inn and use it as a wellness retreat center, including reestablishing

overnight lodging. After conferring with Multnomah County and Friends, the Fruehaufs scaled down their initial proposal and agreed to several permanent restrictions.

The resulting agreement between Friends and the Fruehaufs will maintain the existing building footprint, allow a slight second-story expansion of the existing garage, and screen the parking area from designated key viewing areas. A small number of limited commercial events will be allowed to take place on the property, subject to agreed-upon restrictions on hours of operation, outdoor noise, and other aspects.

Friends wishes the Fruehaufs well with their efforts to restore the View Point Inn to its former glory, while protecting Gorge resources and the Corbett community. ■

Building Climate Resilience in the Columbia Gorge

Dan Bell, Land Trust Director, dan@gorgefriends

In the world of land trusts, making wise decisions is crucial. That tract you bought 20 years ago will still be the same tract, in the exact same place, 50 years from now. Land acquisition is about permanence – that’s the point. But climate change throws wild cards into the mix.

For western pond turtles living in Friends’ Turtle Haven Preserve at the base of Dog Mountain, our decisions will have lasting impact. Environmental forecasting predicts that in years ahead pond turtles will need to adapt to lower water levels and higher water temperatures. Over time, entire turtle populations may need to cross the landscape in search of ponds with cool, consistent water. They may need to make

a slow trek to higher elevations or north-facing slopes in search of livable habitat.

Our challenge is to make decisions today that not only conserve current habitat, but also the lands that affected species may call home decades in the future.

In the face of climate change, how do we know a property will still provide important habitat, generations from now?

To answer that question, Friends looked to an analysis by The Nature Conservancy (TNC) called “Conserving Nature’s Stage.” This project looked across the Pacific Northwest to identify areas with a high level of “geodiversity” – landscapes with a complexity of soils, elevation, aspect, and bedrock that make them more likely to

offer accommodating habitat to plants and animals that will be on the move in response to climate change.

Working with Nomad Mapping in Hood River, we translated TNC’s results to the scale of the Columbia Gorge. By doing so, we can focus on areas that will have the most lasting value for plants and animals already being affected by the changing climate. These places are known as the anchors of “climate resilience.”

The new analysis confirms that Dog Mountain is important to building climate resilience, and that our protective acquisition of the Turtle Haven property was prescient. Other areas including the Columbia Hills and land around Beacon Rock will also be critical.

Friends will continue studying the analyses in order to integrate this information into our land protection strategies. Unbeknownst to the turtles, we are working hard to ensure they’ll have a suitable home – even if it is a different home – generations from now. ■



Left, stewardship volunteers in Turtle Haven Preserve, where western pond turtles (above) are protected.

Photos: Left, Mika Barrett; above, Brandon Davis

Hikes, Outings & Stewardship

Fall 2019

Friends' fall hike and stewardship programs offer many opportunities to create lasting memories with family and friends while experiencing the Gorge's autumn beauty.

Register for an inspiring, educational, guided hike or outing with Friends to discover something new about Gorge wild places. Lend a hand at a stewardship work party to help keep the Gorge beautiful, safe, and weed-free.

“ I cannot thank you enough for today’s hike. What splendor!”

— Program participant



**Fall Hike Program
Registration Dates**

September Outings:
August 30

October Outings:
September 24

gorgefriends.org/hikes

Hike Program General Information

Friends' guided hike program is open to all and offers something for everyone: scenic hikes, wildlife walks, kayak and rafting trips, bike rides, family-friendly outings and child-focused exploration, and so much more.

Details and registration at

gorgefriends.org/hikes.



Photos: Top, Debbie Asakawa; above, Micheal Drewry; right, Steve Carples

OUR HIKE PROGRAM
IS SPONSORED BY
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“ I used to be a hiker when I would visit the Gorge, and now I am a steward. ”

— Stewardship volunteer and Friends member



Stewardship Program General Information

Lend a hand to remove invasive plants and plant native vegetation, or join an educational weed identification walk. No experience is necessary, and tools are provided. Earn a custom Friends T-shirt by volunteering at three or more stewardship events.

Details and registration at

gorgefriends.org/stewardship.



Don't miss program updates and registration announcements. Subscribe to our Hiking or Stewardship Enews at

✉ gorgefriends.org/subscribe.

Stewardship photos: Mika Barrett and Sara Woods

You're The Mycelium to Our Tree



Sara Woods, Land Trust Stewardship Coordinator, sara@gorgefriends.org

Mika Barrett, Stewardship Volunteer Coordinator, mika@gorgefriends.org

Without a doubt, volunteers multiply what Friends can accomplish, selflessly donating time and energy to make it all happen. Trust us, your efforts don't go unnoticed.

From stuffing envelopes to attending oil train hearings, tabling at trailheads, leading hikes, event support, and data entry, a growing cadre of Gorge lovers are committed to helping Friends protect the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

As Friends' stewardship coordinators, our stewardship volunteers are especially dear to our hearts. They're tenacious, determined, and nit-picky; and we love them for that!

Stewardship volunteers greatly amplify our capacity and expand what's possible for our land trust and public land stewardship programs. Like mycelium on tree roots enabling a tree to access more nutrients, our volunteers enable the organization to accomplish great work.



A volunteer team at Eagle Creek. Photo: Mika Barrett

Controlling invasive weeds means getting down and dirty, chopping, plucking, pulling, bagging, and removing unwanted plants. This work isn't glamorous, but in just a few years, our stewardship volunteers have transformed the slopes of the Lyle Cherry Orchard Preserve from a yellow starthistle nightmare to a nearly thorn-free, closer-

to-native landscape. Over 150 volunteers contributed 663 hours to this project alone over the past few years!

The Cherry Orchard site is uphill, and volunteers first have to lug all the tools, plants, 25-lb bags of seed, and even water up the steep trail. They've pulled, bagged, and removed countless invasive plants over the years, then sown seed and planted native species to fill the vulnerable empty spaces. We aren't done with starthistle – with weeds, you're never really done. But that doesn't discourage us, especially with such fantastic volunteers on the ground with us. You are appreciated more than you know.

From simple tasks to projects that require special knowledge or advanced skills, please consider volunteering with Friends. Our volunteers are smart, quirky, sweet, and dedicated, matching the persistence of a feisty pika protecting its territory.

Thank you to everyone who is part of Friends' team, and especially to the stewardship volunteers: you are the mycelium to our trees! ■

Stewardship volunteers at Lyle Cherry Orchard.

Photo: Mika Barrett





Youth Education: The Next Generation

Friends' outdoor youth education programs expose local youth to the Columbia Gorge's wonders and significance as a national treasure. *Explore the Gorge* is offered to sixth graders in Washougal, Washington, thanks to the Vic Clausen Memorial Fund and grant support. *The Great Gorge Wahoo* is offered to seventh and eighth graders at St. Andrew Nativity School in Portland, Oregon, and is funded by the Matthew Winthrop and Buddy Nobles Memorial Funds. Both programs aim to provide rich experiences and powerful memories to deepen children's connection to the natural world close to home and help inspire the next generation of Gorge protectors.

Learn more at gorgefriends.org/youthprograms.

New Adventures

This summer, Friends' grant writer and land use planning clerk **Kate Harbour** is packing her bags for an independent study project through Portland State University's School of Urban Studies and Planning. She'll be studying international trail systems and recreation planning in South Korea, Japan, and New Zealand, with an eye to creating better systems in the Gorge and beyond.

Kate expects to return this winter and continue writing comment letters for our legal and conservation staff. We look forward to seeing her back at Friends next year. Enjoy your travels, Kate!



Photo: Courtesy of Kate Harbour

Middle school students from Washougal, Washington (above left), and the Portland metro area (below) learn Gorge history, ecology, geology, and conservation with Friends.

Photos: Top, Richard Kolbell; bottom, Nick Wiltgen





Talented Photographer Captures the Gorge

Colleen Wright, in the
Willamette National
Forest near Breitenbush.

Photo: Kevin Ebel, using a cell phone

Ephemeral beauty at
Herman Creek, after the
Eagle Creek fire.

Photo: Colleen Wright, using a cell phone

Pam Davee, Director of Philanthropy, pam@gorgefriends.org

When Colleen Wright won the grand prize in Friends' 2018 photo contest, what seemed to set her apart from previous contest winners was the fact that she used a mobile phone, not professional camera equipment.

News outlets noted that Colleen's win marked a new age of photography, in which anyone with a good eye and a smart phone can produce high-quality fine art photography.

We love the prospect of breaking down barriers and empowering more people to take photos – especially in beautiful outdoor locations like the Gorge. However, in addition to her great photography, after getting to know Colleen better, we think her story is actually the most interesting thing about our 2018 photo contest winner.

Colleen first came to Oregon by way of New York when she was 21 years old. She was asleep as her friend drove into Oregon, but she woke just in time to see Mount Hood and promise herself that she would climb it one day.

It was while achieving that goal that Colleen fell head over heels in love with the area surrounding Mount Hood, particularly the Gorge.

Colleen learned about Friends during the deconstruction of a subdivision at what is now the Cape Horn overlook. She was hiking that classic trail when she met a group of Friends' members celebrating with popsicles. She has been a steadfast supporter of Gorge protection work ever since.

Colleen and her husband, Kevin Ebel, wake up early nearly every weekend morning to beat the crowds and get out on the trail by 7 a.m. They love many spots in the Gorge, but Herman Creek is probably Colleen's favorite place to hike.

After the devastation of the Eagle Creek fire Colleen returned to her favorite trail, expecting to feel sadness and loss. Instead, she witnessed a different kind of beauty. It was raining so she only took one quick photo – the evocative shot seen here, of blackened trees covered in morning fog with the sun inching out of the clouds and burning through the mist. We are so glad that she did.

Colleen and Kevin decided to leave a legacy gift to Friends in their wills, to make a difference and support an organization that they love and respect. They know they can trust Friends to keep the Gorge wild.

Thank you, Colleen and Kevin! ■



Special Gifts

May 1, 2019 – July 21, 2019

IN HONOR

In honor of Stuart Baxter
Annie Dudley

In honor of Christine Cradler
Lawrence Ferguson Jr.

In honor of Penny Deuval
Cherie Chandler

**In honor of the wedding of
Ellen Friedman and Andrew Zapata**
Katie Ford
Gina Franta
Brenna McElhinny
Michelle Schmidt
Amy Siminski
Jillian Webster

In honor of Kevin Gorman
Julie Macpherson
Kathleen Karey Reid

In honor of Kate Lindberg
Robert and Pamela Lindberg

In honor of Rose and Miles Ludlow
M. Susan Dean

In honor of Sarah Martin
Kim McAvoy

In honor of Michael James McRae
Virginia Morell and
Michael James McRae

In honor of Anne Munch
Laura Meier

In honor of Linda Silver
Noah Silver

**In honor of the wedding of
Chris Stoll and Jennifer Mortensen**
Lara Meyer

IN MEMORY

In memory of Caroline Bailey
Ken and Felice Denis
Andrea Overbeck
Paula Overbeck

In memory of Glen Brogoitti
Erin Randall

In memory of Lizzie Clarke
Ellie Hughes

In memory of Sandra Cohen
Bruce and Diane Follansbee

In memory of John D. Cunningham
Howard and Jean Baumann

In memory of Oliver Dalton
Tom and Sandi Rousseau

In memory of David Dent
Suzanne Barthelmess

In memory of Bill and Sadie Duerden
Barbara Duerden

In memory of Daniel Eggeston
Ann Kloka
Linda Saito

In memory of Jean Eskridge
Lisa Hull and Rick Eskridge

In memory of Mary Farnham
Gwen Farnham

In memory of Neil Farnham
Gwen Farnham

In memory of Art and Olive Fletcher
Karen Fletcher

In memory of Leslie Fullmer
Carol and Gary Gross

In memory of Joan Galbi
Lisa and Ken Boone
Mary and Joe Ingvaldstad
John and Kaye Squires

In memory of Jean Gorman
Meredith and William Savery

In memory of Piper Jones
Rick and Michelle Petersen

In memory of Hannah H. May
Cynthia Gage

**In memory of
Ed and Eddie McAninch**
Jeanine and Ken Ward

In memory of Anita Platt
Bill Ward

In memory of Nancy Russell
Tom and Sandi Rousseau

In memory of Earlene Sharp
John Prince

In memory of Ruby Tye
Minda and Bob Seibert

In memory of Leif Eric Vigeland
Juliet and Tom Hagley
Janet Roberts

**In memory of
Fred Waite Whitehouse, M.D.**
Diane Hohl and Dr. Richard Hohl





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Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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 gorgefriends.org/subscribe    @gorgefriends

Leave No Trace

In late 2018, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area was chosen by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics as a **2019 Hot Spot**. This June, Friends joined the U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Washington State Parks, Travel Oregon, and the Subaru/Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers for a week of trainings and activities. Participants explored how Leave No Trace (LNT) principles can help reduce growing visitor impacts on the Columbia Gorge.



Participants in the Leave No Trace trainings learned LNT principles and practices in discussion, dialogue, and on the trail. Photos: Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics