

FRIENDS OF THE COLUMBIA GORGE

Fall 2002 Newsletter



for parcels totaling more than 6,700 acres. A stipulation of the amendment requires that the Forest Service make offers to buy these lands within a three-year period, or the lands will convert to zoning that will allow more development and increased logging and mining.

Timeline clock is ticking

The three-year timeline will expire in 2004, just about the time that the Pacific Northwest begins commemorating the 200th anniversary of Lewis & Clark's Corps of Discovery. The Gorge is one of the last places along the Trail where the landscapes are relatively unchanged from 200 years ago. A national poll of likely voters taken in 2000 identified the Columbia Gorge as the most recognized attraction on Lewis & Clark's Trail.

The convergence of these factors prompted Friends of the Columbia Gorge to partner with the Trust for Public Land and two local Sierra Club groups, the Columbia Group in Oregon and the Loo Wit Group in Washington, to initiate the Lewis & Clark Landscapes Project. The goals of the Lewis & Clark Landscapes Project are to build public and congressional support for protect-

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Gorge Expects \$10 million for Land Acquisition

Largest appropriation in the nation

By Tiffany Kenslow, Field Organizer, tiffany@gorgefriends.org

All signs indicate that the Forest Service will receive a \$10 million congressional appropriation for its Gorge Land Acquisition Program in 2003.

This \$10 million is the largest appropriation ever received by the National Scenic Area, and also the largest land acquisition appropriation in the country for FY2003. Support from the entire Northwest congressional delegation was critical to securing the

funding. In particular, Senator Patty Murry from Washington, and Senator Gordon Smith and Representative Earl Blumenauer from Oregon worked diligently to secure these funds.

This funding comes at a critical time for the Columbia Gorge. In 2000, an amendment to the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act resulted in a surge of land offers to the U.S. Forest Service: 187 offers

Pastoral lands on Mount Pleasant, seen across the river from the Vista House, are among the properties offered to the Forest Service for public purchase. photo: Ken Denis

preserving scenic areas

INSIDE
Holiday Gift Insert

Executive Director's Letter

Last May, a University of Oregon landscape architecture student named Sean Stroup traveled to Lyle, Washington, to undertake a college project. His focus was the possibility of resurrecting the Klickitat Rails to Trail project, which calls for transforming an old rail bed along the Klickitat River into a multi-use trail for local residents and visitors alike.

Sean developed his college project to honor his late grandfather, who lived most of his life in Lyle and loved the beauty of the land there. Sean never dreamed that the project would lead to his arrest by the Klickitat County Sheriff for criminal trespass on public land.

Sean's crime was to walk on Washington State Parks land, which adjacent landowners have argued for years belongs to them. Their argument continues despite losses in court and the Washington Assistant Attorney General's insistence that this is indeed public land. Nevertheless, Klickitat County's prosecuting attorney listened to the landowners rather than the law, and brought criminal charges against Sean.

The Assistant Attorney General of Washington sent a scathing letter to the County, stating in part, "I am not sure how I could have been clearer in communicating that State Parks owns the trail and permits public use of that trail. ...It is the duty of law enforcement officials to uphold the law, not to assist others in violating the law."

Newspaper articles appeared in Seattle and Portland papers, and two Gorge newspapers strongly chastised Klickitat County's heavy-handedness. The County eventually dismissed the charges, but did so "without prejudice," meaning the county can reinstate them at any time during the next two years.

Ironically, Sean's project and his subsequent arrest have re-ignited the languishing Rails to Trails project. Local residents are organizing hikes, litter pickups and blackberry removal along the trail. One Saturday in early October, 33 people hiked the trail with Sean and his parents. During the hike, "No Trespassing" signs and gates that had sprung up on the public land were removed. The adjacent landowners who had harassed Sean last spring were there, too, reaffirming their objections, but their contentious rhetoric was ignored.

The seriousness and absurdity of Sean Stroup's arrest and the renewed surge of interest in the Klickitat Rails to Trails project exemplify the tremendous opportunities and complicated challenges of the Gorge.

Sean Stroup, walking a rail bridge along the Klickitat River with his mother, Beverly Anderson, has re-ignited interest in the Klickitat Rails to Trails project.
photo: Linda Rankin

More hikes on the trail are planned this Fall—check www.gorgefriends.org for details. I'm sure Sean and the spirit of his grandfather will be out on the trail, too.

Sincerely,



Kevin Gorman
Executive Director

Mission Statement

Friends of the Columbia Gorge shall vigorously protect the scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

We fulfill this mission by ensuring strict implementation of the National Scenic Area Act; promoting responsible stewardship of Gorge lands and waters; encouraging public ownership of sensitive areas; educating the public about the unique natural values of the Columbia River Gorge and the importance of preserving those values; and working with groups and individuals to accomplish mutual preservation goals.

—Adopted November 20, 1997



Citizen Involvement Update

Friends' Outreach & Volunteer Happenings

By Betsy Toll, Volunteer Coordinator, betsy@gorgefriends.org

Expanding our Gorge Hikes

The numbers of hikers on Friends' 2002 Spring Wildflower Hikes grew considerably over previous years, and our Late Season Hikes, new last year, more than tripled in numbers this year.

It's great to see so many new faces and long-time Gorge lovers experiencing the beauty of the Gorge. But this popularity can be hard on the trails, challenging for leaders, and present a different hiking experience than many hikers expect in the Gorge.

In 2003, we aim to double the number of hikes offered throughout the blooming season. We are planning more than 50 hikes from mid-March through Gorge Hiking Weekend in mid-June. New hikes and perennial favorites will mean fewer hikers on the trails at one time, and lots more opportunities to volunteer!

The 2003 calendar will also include special outings for members only, and some Lewis & Clark hikes, so watch for details when the hiking brochure comes out in our winter newsletter. ■



Hikers in the hills above Lyle, WA.
photo: Ken Denis



Volunteers have removed this dense blackberry thicket on the Bridal Veil loop trail, revealing a view of Cape Horn. photo: Betsy Toll

Stay Connected!

Are you subscribed to Friends' Gorge Activities Update list? A few times each month, we e-mail information about upcoming outings and activities, Gorge issues, and actions you can take to help ensure that Gorge protections remain strong.

If we have your address, you may already be subscribed. If not, send your e-mail address to betsy@gorgefriends.org and we'll put you on the list. (Note: This list is never used to solicit contributions or send junk mail!) ■



Bridal Veil Restoration Progress

Friends' volunteers have already made visible inroads at Bridal Veil State Park since our long-term restoration effort began there in July. Crews of stewardship volunteers have been showing up each month for the first phase of this project.

Cathy Robart, our new AmeriCorps team member, is scheduling the work parties and recruiting volunteers. Come on out to Bridal Veil on the second Saturday of every month, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. to pitch in. If you know a church or work group, scout troop, school or other service organization that might want to help, please contact Cathy in our Hood River office at 541-386-5268 or e-mail cathy@gorgefriends.org. ■

Friends' AmeriCorps team member Cathy Robart (left) had a great time on our Late Season hike at Coyote Wall.

photo: Diana Karabut



Conservation and Legal Program Highlights

In the Courts and in the Field...

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

Sandy River Delta Invaded by Cattle Grazing

The U.S. Forest Service recently reintroduced private cattle grazing on public land at the Sandy River Delta, bypassing the public and disregarding environmental laws. Through an innocuous-sounding “vegetation management permit,” the Forest Service allowed the grazing of 120 cattle and the construction of miles of fencing. The Forest Service did not publicly announce the permit and did not conduct any environmental analysis of its potential effects.

When Friends of the Columbia Gorge learned of the grazing, we threatened to sue the Forest Service for violations of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and the Endangered Species Act. Through negotiations with Friends, the

Forest Service agreed not to renew the permit (which ended October 31) and also agreed to halt any cattle or sheep grazing at the Delta while the Sandy River Delta Plan remains in effect. If the Forest Service wishes to revise the Plan to allow for more cattle or sheep grazing, it must evaluate the grazing through a public process.

Just east of Troutdale, the Sandy River Delta marks the point where the urban landscape of the Portland metro area gives way to the natural splendor of the Columbia River Gorge. For most of the twentieth century, the Delta was battered by dams, dikes, logging, cattle grazing, and highway construction. Plans for golf courses, industrial development, truck-weighting facilities, and housing developments were announced and, fortunately, scrapped. In 1991, the Forest Service purchased the 1,500-acre

Delta, enabling it to be forever preserved as Oregon’s western gateway to the Gorge. Today, the Delta is the largest remaining undeveloped floodplain in the metropolitan region.

The Sandy River Delta Plan

In 1995, the Forest Service prepared the Sandy River Delta Plan, to restore and enhance the Delta’s natural resources and recreational opportunities. Numerous agencies and conservation groups have assisted with the Forest Service’s efforts since then to bring wetlands, wildlife habitat, and native vegetation back to the Delta.

The Sandy River Delta Plan is still in its infancy, but improvements in the Delta’s natural appearances and functions are evident. The Delta provides habitat for deer, bald eagles, osprey, coyotes, waterfowl, turtles, red-legged frogs, and even the occasional bear. It also offers the westernmost recreational opportunities within the National Scenic Area, including hiking, mountain biking, angling, hunting, horseback riding, bird watching, and rock climbing.

Prior to public purchase, overgrazing in the Sandy River Delta was responsible for a litany of environmental and ecosystem problems, including loss of native vegetation, soil compaction, and infestations of noxious weeds. Cattle grazing at the Delta poses the possibility of significant negative impacts to ecological restoration, wildlife, and recreation. The Sandy River Delta Plan does not specifically prohibit or

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“The Forest Service did not publicly announce the permit and did not conduct any environmental analysis of its potential effects.”



Cattle find their way outside the fences at the Sandy River Delta, roaming freely into restoration, recreation, and riparian areas.

photo: Nathan Baker

Gorge Supporters Testify before OR Legislative Committee

By Tiffany Kenslow, Field Organizer, tiffany@gorgefriends.org

In October, the Oregon Legislature's Subcommittee on Gorge Commission Review completed its hearings held in Gorge communities over the past several months. Meetings were held in The Dalles (Wasco County), and in Hood River and Cascade Locks (Hood River County). The Subcommittee—a joint committee including state Senators and Representatives—was convened to hear accounts from the public as to how well the Columbia River Gorge Commission is functioning.

Friends sent hundreds of postcard alerts and e-mail action alerts to Gorge protection supporters prior to each of the hearings. Our Hood River Board members rallied friends and neighbors in the local community, and scores of follow-up calls brought out a strong response.

Friends' members and supporters showed up to testify at each of the three hearings in support of the Gorge Commission and the Scenic Area Act. Special kudos to those who took the time to attend a meeting and testify in front of the Committee, and to everyone who sent letters as written testimony.

The Committee heard from many Gorge residents and supporters that the protections mandated in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act must be implemented and enforced if we hope to maintain one of our country's greatest natural scenic treasures. Supporters reminded the legislators that the Columbia River Gorge Commission is responsible for enforcing these protections, and that adequate bi-state funding of the Gorge Commis-

sion is critical to the long-term protection of the Gorge.

Public input supporting Commission funding was especially timely, because the Oregon and Washington Legislatures will soon determine the Commission's budget for the coming biennium. The Gorge Commission is currently reviewing the entire Management Plan to improve Gorge protection, cut down on red tape, and promote fairness to landowners. Full funding for the Commission is essential for this important work to be done.

For more information about opportunities to help protect the Gorge, contact Tiffany Kenslow in our Hood River office at 541-386-5268 or tiffany@gorgefriends.org. ■

Conservation and Legal Program Highlights Sandy River Delta Invaded... (continued from page 4)

support cattle grazing for vegetation management purposes, but does state that if grazing is considered as a management tool, smaller animals such as goats would be more appropriate than cattle.

The Sandy River Delta is one of the few places in the Gorge where there is a concerted effort to both protect *and* enhance public lands. Friends hopes this effort will continue and that the temporary reintroduction of cattle grazing this Fall was merely a minor bump in an otherwise ecologically promising road. ■



Cattle were brought in to graze reed canary grass. Scientific literature states that continual overgrazing is necessary to successfully control reed canary grass, although continual overgrazing leads to soil erosion, negative impacts on riparian areas, and other problems.

photo: Nathan Baker



Funding Gorge Protection

Development Director's Report

By Jane Haley, Development Director, jane@gorgefriends.org

Friends' Founder Honored

Nancy Russell, Friend's founder and Chair Emerita, was honored recently as Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year by the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Nancy received her award at the Association's 16th Annual Philanthropy Day luncheon in the Grand Ball Room of the Hilton Hotel in downtown Portland.

"Nancy has worked tirelessly over the past 20 years to make sure this organization has the resources to be an effective advocate for Gorge protections," commented Friend's Executive Director Kevin Gorman.

The entire organization sends our heartiest congratulations to Nancy for this well deserved recognition. ■

Major Donors Gather to Celebrate

More than 85 major donors gathered in October at the home of John and Jane Emrick to show their support for Gorge protection, celebrate Friends' accomplishments, and hear about the challenges ahead. The event included a catered cocktail party and a tour of the Emricks' remarkable home which includes a magnificent view of the city and a dance floor mounted on ball bearings.

Friends' major donors contribute at the \$1,000 level and above. Gifts are made either to our general operating budget or to our endowment. Almost 25% of our annual operating budget comes from supporters at this level. We wish to thank these members for their generous support. ■

The Envelope, Please

Enclosed with this newsletter is an envelope that many of you use to send in your annual membership gift or an extra gift. Please consider using the envelope in this fall edition to make a special gift to the Friend's endowment fund. A gift to the endowment remains in perpetuity, carefully invested to create on-going funding for Gorge protection. Members may also want to include a gift to Friend's endowment in their estate plans. Since the fund's inception in 1998, more than \$135,000 has been gifted to the endowment. Interest from the fund provides much needed operating support.

For further information about our planned giving program, please call our development office at 503-241-3762 x102. ■



Left: Friends' Board member Susan Crowley (left) discusses current issues while a bovine interloper eavesdrops.

Right: Host John Emrick (left) chats with Friends' member Kate Mills.
photos: Ken Denis

Gorge Expects \$10 Million...

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ing Gorge open spaces, and to demonstrate how that protection supports the Lewis & Clark bicentennial commemoration. The Project will also work with the U.S. Forest Service and encourage the purchase of at least 4,000 acres of private lands from willing sellers. This past year has brought us 25% closer to that goal, due to the conscientious efforts of Forest Service staff.

In 2000 and 2001, the Forest Service purchased just 350 acres. In 2002, the Forest Service purchased 21 properties totaling 1,031 acres, with a value of more than \$6.4 million. In keeping with this year's successes, the Forest Service has already secured options on eight significant properties totaling more than 187 acres to be purchased with FY2003 funds.

While the 2001 accomplishments are very encouraging, an incredible amount of work remains to be done to reach the 4,000-acre goal of the Lewis & Clark Landscapes Project in the two remaining years before the deadline expires.

We estimate that the Forest Service will need \$20 million over the next two years to achieve the

The view from a 40-acre parcel bordering the Historic Columbia River Highway near Memaloose, purchased by the Forest Service in 2002. This purchase protects the view south from the highway (center of photo).

Photo: Diana Karabut

goal of protecting 4,000 acres of land. We hope to see 1,500 acres purchased by the end of 2003, and another 1,500 purchased in 2004. In order to reach these goals, the Lewis & Clark Landscapes Project will continue to build support for Gorge land acquisition and to work with our congressional delegation to ensure funds are provided to preserve the historical legacy of this national treasure. ■

Panoramic photography of many of the landscapes can be seen on the Project's website at www.lewisandclarklandscapes.org. Visit the website to learn more about the project, or contact Tiffany Kenslow, Project Manager, in our Hood River office at 541-386-5268 or tiffany@gorgefriends.org. ■

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

www.gorgefriends.org

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* Gorge residents

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The struggle of salmon to return to their natal streams is central to the history of the Columbia River Gorge.

photo: courtesy of Oregon Trout

Know Your Gorge Icons of the Columbia River

Salmon have been a defining feature of the Columbia Gorge for countless generations. While their numbers have been decimated in the two centuries since Lewis and Clark traveled the Columbia River, sizable runs still return from the ocean to make their way up the river against incredible odds, to spawn and die in their native streams.

On both sides of the river, names of some of the Columbia River salmonids—including Coho, Chinook, sockeye, steelhead, and chum—are common knowledge. Runs of wild fish and their hatchery-bred cousins still return up the Columbia through March and April, mid-June through early August, and again in fall from late-September through November.

In Oregon, the Sandy River, Eagle Creek*, and the Deschutes are good salmon-viewing places. In Washington, try the Wind, the Little White Salmon*, the White Salmon, and Klickitat Rivers.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge supports restoring healthy wild salmon populations by working to protect and enhance river habitat and riparian areas along salmon-bearing streams. Many informative websites can be accessed by searching for “Columbia River Salmon” at Internet search engines. ■

**Hatchery fish predominate in these rivers.*