

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Fall 2007 Newsletter

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*A sprawling resort development proposed for this site
would increase allowable development density by 600%.*

Photo: Peter Cornelison

Take Action Today!

Despite months of public outcry and hundreds of comments in opposition, the Columbia River Gorge Commission is considering approval of an to approve an amendment changing the Gorge-wide Management Plan to allow an urban-scale destination resort in the National Scenic Area. The language in the proposed amendment would open the Scenic Area to an unprecedented scale of development outside existing urban areas, allowing 210 residential and vacation homes along the Columbia River west of White Salmon, far exceeding current allowable development for the site.

We need your help now to stop this proposal.

The Commission's draft amendment is available for public review at www.gorgecommission.org. Even if you have already sent comments, the Gorge Commission needs to hear from you.

Please tell the Gorge Commission to deny the proposal for an urban-scale destination resort. It does not belong in the National Scenic Area!

Email: comments@gorgecommission.org

Call: (509) 493-3323

Write: P.O. Box 730

White Salmon, WA 98672

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

Oregon

Sen. Gordon Smith, (202) 224-3753

<http://gsmith.senate.gov/public/>

Sen. Ron Wyden, (202) 224-5244

<http://wyden.senate.gov/contact/>

Rep. David Wu, (202) 225-0855

Rep. Earl Blumenauer, (202) 225-4811

Rep. Darlene Hooley, (202) 225-5711

Rep. Greg Walden, (202) 225-6730

Rep. Peter DeFazio, (202) 225-6416

Washington

Sen. Patty Murray, (202) 224-2621

<http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm>

Sen. Maria Cantwell, (202) 224-3441

<http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/>

Rep. Brian Baird, (202) 225-3536

Rep. Doc Hastings, (202) 225-5816

Rep. Norm Dicks, (202) 225-5916

Email your **Congressional Representative** by logging on to www.house.gov/writerep/

On the cover: This rugged ridge rises up toward Underwood Mountain in Skamania County, just west of the proposed Broughton destination resort. Photo: © James Holloway

Director's Letter

At the time of this writing, I'm two days back from a hike on a glorious warm Sunday in October to the top of Silver Star Mountain, a 4,900-ft peak in Washington just outside the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Friends Board Chair Angie Moore, Outdoor Program Coordinator Renee Tkach and 30 Friends members were on the hike as well. One hiker had been a member of Friends for more than two decades, and another had joined just a few weeks earlier.

From the peak, we could see two Oregon mountains, Hood and Jefferson, and five Washington peaks: St. Helens, Adams, Rainer, part of Baker and part of the north Cascades range. The Silver Star landscape of mountain meadows and rock outcroppings had fantastic fall colors on display. It was one of those wonderful experiences that you didn't want to end. One hiker summed it up when she said, "Now the rains can come!" We all nodded in agreement, saying our goodbyes to the warm weather and the peak as we hiked back down.

Friends added a fall hiking series to our outreach program in 2002. People appreciate one last chance to enjoy the

Exuberant hikers enjoy views of the Gorge from the peak of Silver Star.

Photo: Kevin Gorman



Kevin Gorman at a natural arch on the Silver Star hike. Photo: Angie Moore

Gorge before the winter rains, and the program has grown in popularity. The fall series has expanded as more and more people are discovering what is special about autumn in the Gorge: the winds are much tamer, weekend crowds are much lighter, and the brilliant autumn colors transform the landscape.

I think we humans are inclined to go with the flow of the seasons, yet there is an internal urge to stretch the boundaries of those seasons, particularly with places we love to visit again and again. Those fall

hikers who were lingering on Silver Star last month are likely to be the early, pre-spring hikers meandering at Catherine Creek even before winter is over.

When Friends' hiking program began more than 25 years ago, our hikes were all packed into one annual Gorge Hiking Weekend extravaganza. Because of our members' enthusiasms for savoring the glorious spring and fall days in the Columbia Gorge, we currently hike at least 20 weekends each year.

Now the rains have come. But in just a few short months, we'll be out on the trails again. I hope you'll join us.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Gorman".

Kevin Gorman
Executive Director

Friends of the Columbia Gorge works to ensure that the beautiful and wild Columbia Gorge remains a place apart, an unspoiled treasure for generations to come.

Rustic campground or urban-scale resort?

Gorge Commission closer to approving developer's wish for a 210-unit destination resort

Kelley Beamer, Conservation Organizer, kelley@gorgefriends.org and Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

Transforming the Broughton mill site along the Columbia River west of White Salmon into a recreation enhancement site is a concept supported by nearly everyone, including Friends of the Columbia Gorge. With an internationally renowned windsurfing site next door, recreational development at the Broughton property could serve windsurfers and their families and reduce overcrowding for summer recreation.

Unfortunately, the Columbia River Gorge Commission staff is not heading down that path. Rather, the Commission is considering weakening current Gorge protection rules for the benefit of a single developer, allowing what would be the

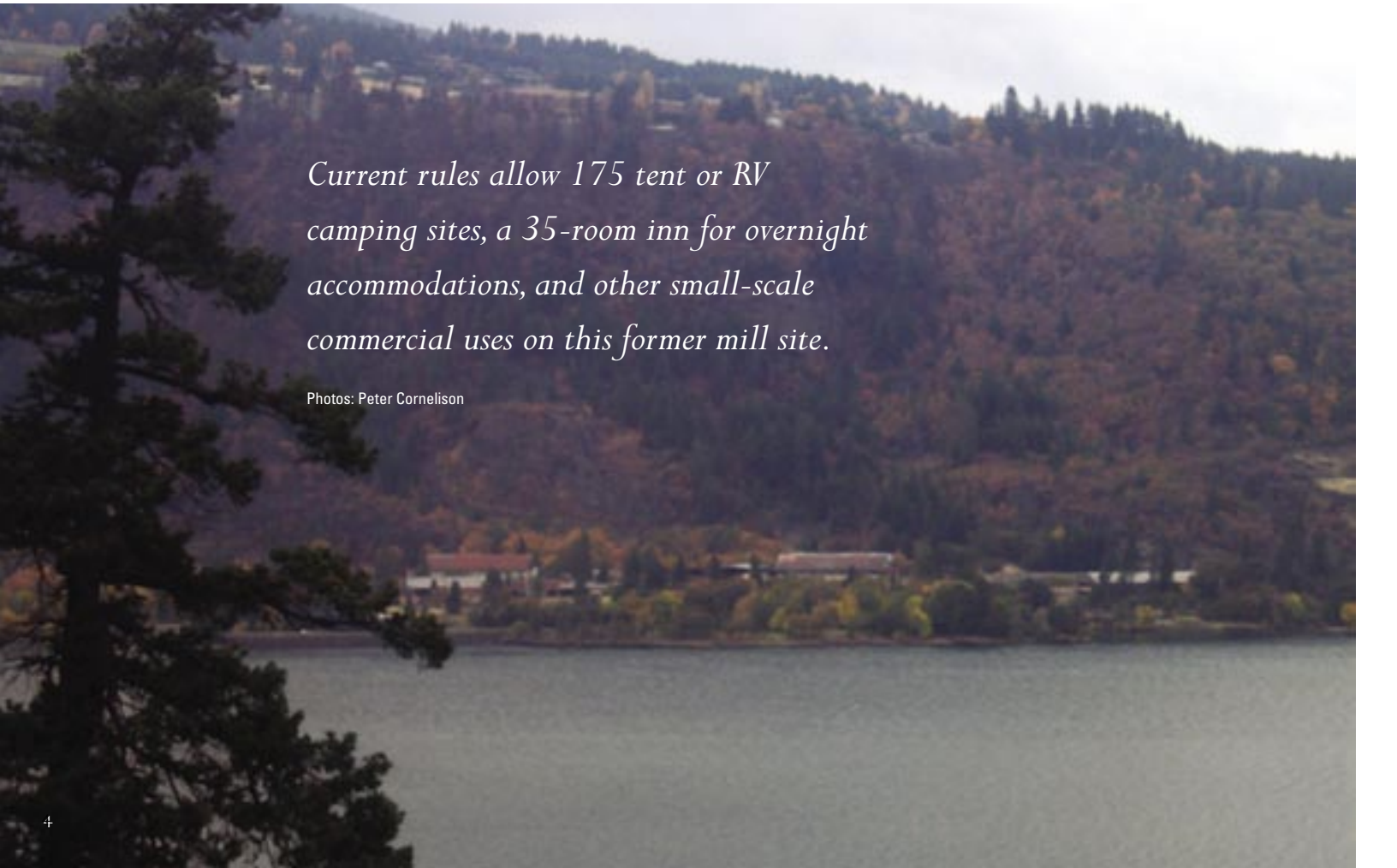
first urban-scale development **ever** in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

At the request of Broughton Lumber Company, the Commission staff proposal includes 210 vacation houses and permanent residences, a lodge, restaurants, bars, retail business and indoor recreation facilities.

The Gorge Commission is ignoring its own precedent for the Broughton site. In 1989, the Commission denied a proposal for a 62-unit destination resort at the Broughton site, concluding that it would harm resources and violate the Scenic Area Act's requirement that commercial development and uses be sited

in the Gorge's existing urban areas. The following year, the Commission approved a reduced proposal for a 45-unit resort at the Broughton site, as long as all units were temporary rentals rather than permanent residential housing.

Now, the current Commission staff proposal would create a defacto urban area in the Scenic Area and set a terrible precedent for future development. This action by Commission staff directly contradicts the Commission's prior decisions that development on such a scale would be inconsistent with the Scenic Area Act unless it occurs within existing urban areas.



Current rules allow 175 tent or RV camping sites, a 35-room inn for overnight accommodations, and other small-scale commercial uses on this former mill site.

Photos: Peter Cornelison

Public pushback

Since the prospect of a destination resort was first announced, public opposition has been rising. According to the Commission staff, almost 85% of the hundreds of comments received are opposed to changing the rules for this one developer. And while the developer argues that a massive resort would be good for Gorge businesses and residents, opposition is strong from both of those camps.

For example, Underwood resident Chris Lloyd sees a troubling economic imbalance in the proposed changes. He has pointed out that the proposal would “set a dangerous precedent whereby the costs of maintaining the Scenic Area are further pushed onto the backs of the average property owners who have to abide by very strict rules, while large developers can write their own.”

Landowner Michael Fuchs purchased a ramshackle farm west of the proposed Broughton site that he is gradually restoring. He has worked with the Skamania County Planning Department for two years to ensure he is meeting all Scenic Area regulations.

In his letter to the Gorge Commission, Fuchs states, “I was shocked to read Commissioner Palena’s comment that ‘the developer should set the scale of development . . . and Skamania County needs to maximize the economical potential of the property.’ I would much rather have set the scale of my development, but because the policies were already in place for my project, I stayed within the set boundaries and limitations. So should Broughton’s project.”

Business opposition

Opposition is also growing in the business community, partly due to a report



And while the developer argues that a massive resort would be good for Gorge businesses and residents, opposition is strong from those camps.

by the developer stating that “Broughton Landing has the potential to affect lodging business in the surrounding areas by introducing more competition for lodging and transient guests.” This report, obtained by Friends through a public records request, states that the proposed development would increase the number of short-term lodging facilities in the Gorge by 15%, directly competing with existing hospitality establishments.

Jane Nichols, a Hood River bed-and-breakfast owner active in the Gorge



business community, represents a group of 13 business owners who do not want to see a 210-unit destination resort in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The group recently stated that “a 210-unit resort with vacation homes, full-time residences and commercial retail businesses reaches far beyond a rural-scale development We do not feel a resort such as this should be allowed outside the urban area boundaries of the Columbia Gorge.”

A public hearing on the Broughton proposal is tentatively scheduled for mid-December. Friends will continue to work with concerned citizens and businesses to ensure that the public’s love of the Gorge is not overrun by commercial developers “loving” it to death.

See our Action Alert on page 2.

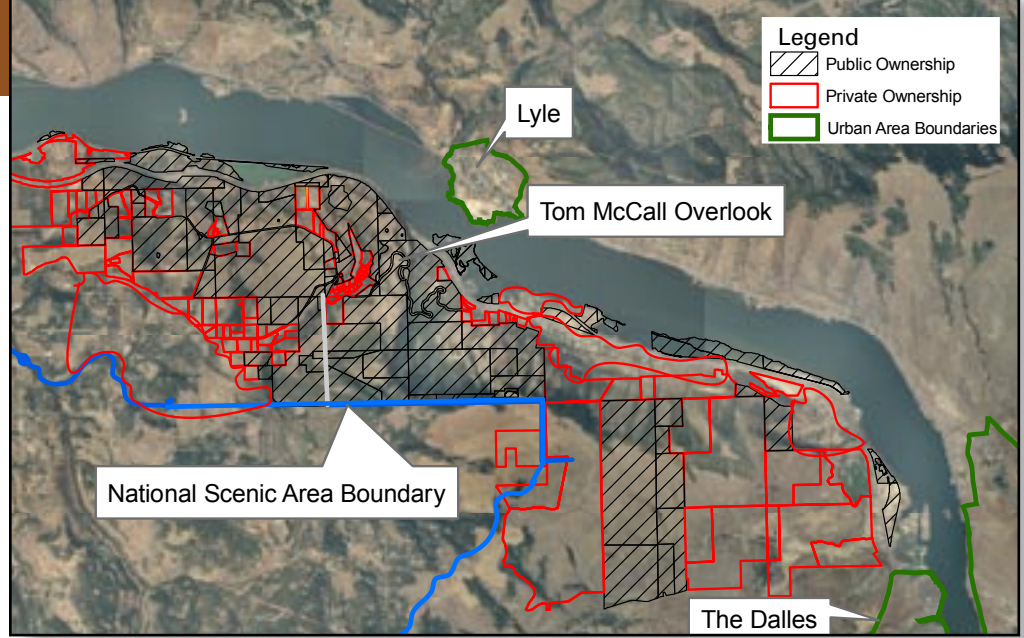
Acquisition Focus: Memaloose to The Dalles

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

Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust focuses acquisition efforts on Mt. Pleasant, Cape Horn, and Burdoin Mountain in Washington, and a stretch we call “Memaloose-to-The Dalles” in Oregon. This latter landscape covers an area in Wasco County extending from just east of the Mosier urban area, through Rowena and Sevenmile Hill, to the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center in The Dalles.

When the National Scenic Area Act passed in 1986, there was very little public land in the eastern Gorge. Land trusts and public agencies started from scratch, piecing together parcels from willing sellers to create the publicly owned landscapes we enjoy today, including Tom McCall Preserve and Columbia Hills State Park. However, much of the landscape remains in private ownership.

An extensive pattern of informal trails currently links the Memaloose Overlook on Oregon Hwy. 30 with Sevenmile Hill;



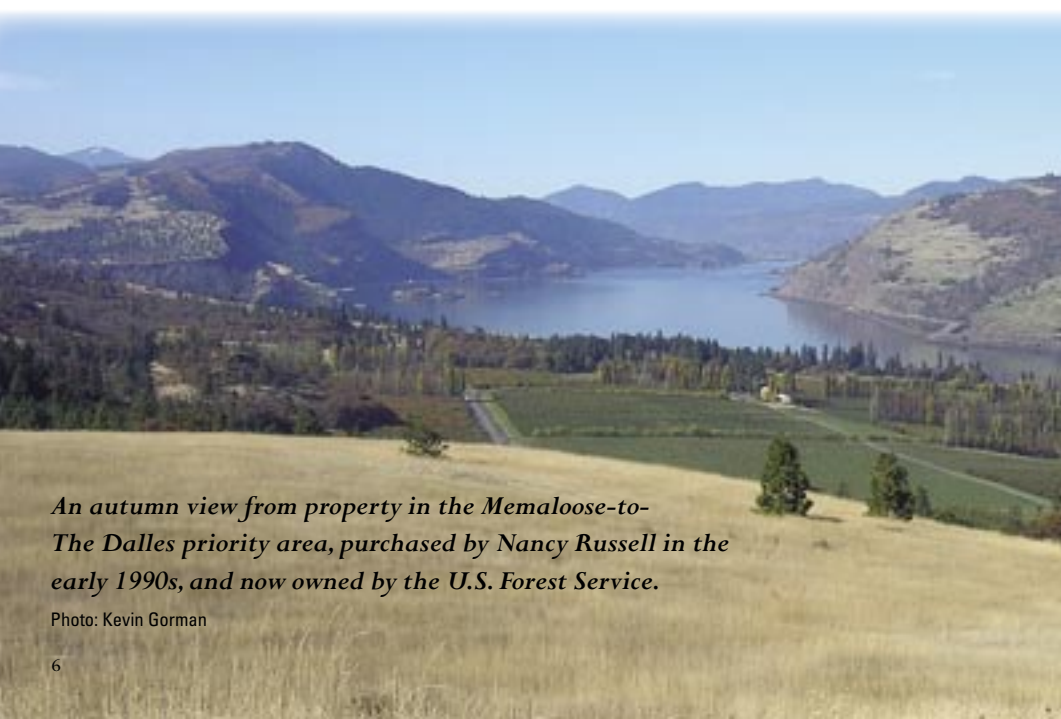
Memaloose-to-The Dalles Priority Area. Map: Friends GIS/Kate McBride

the U.S. Forest Service is considering formalizing this trail system in the future. In addition to the parcels already secured, a few key purchases or conservation easements could eventually allow a trail system that would extend from the Mosier area to The Dalles.

To date, some 5,200 acres in the Memaloose-to-The Dalles area have already been brought into public ownership, held by Wasco County, Oregon State Parks, Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Columbia Land Trust, and the Forest Service. Friends founder Nancy Russell owns several parcels in this area totaling 115 acres, which she is holding for conservation purposes.

One of the Memaloose-to-The Dalles area’s best-kept secrets is the easy access to walking trails and scenic viewpoints for all ages and abilities, where the public can enjoy spectacular wildflower displays in spring and fabulous autumn vistas. Nancy Russell’s good-humored references to the Memaloose area as a “geriatric Dog Mountain” confirm this combination of breathtaking beauty and very easy access.

Friends’ land trust board has made several site visits to properties that could help fill in the gaps for trail connectivity and protection of rim top vistas. The possibilities are exciting and we will continue our efforts in this area in the coming year. Stay tuned!



An autumn view from property in the Memaloose-to-The Dalles priority area, purchased by Nancy Russell in the early 1990s, and now owned by the U.S. Forest Service.

Photo: Kevin Gorman

Cape Horn Update

The U.S. Forest Service has started the legal process for public acquisition of our Land Trust’s first purchase, the Cleveland property on top of Cape Horn. Assuming Gorge acquisition appropriations from Congress will be in place this winter, deconstruction of the house on the property will begin in spring, so that we may sell the property to the Forest Service in fall of 2008.

Autumn Brings Out the Hikers

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

Our fall hikes this year featured outings that focused on animal tracking, history, geology, and photography. New members and long-time Friends joined us out on the trails as autumn colored the Gorge landscape.

Members-only hikes once again proved popular, offering special activities for current members and prompting 14 new hikers to join Friends. These hikes are often limited to small groups, with special leaders and a particular focus, and sometimes cover areas ordinarily off-limits to the public.

Special thanks to all our terrific trail volunteers, who volunteered their time and knowledge to make our fall hikes a hit again this year!



Hood River BnB. Photo: Peter Cornelison

Businesses Speak Up for the Gorge

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, peter@gorgefriends.org

Jane and Jim Nichols, proprietors of the Hood River BnB, are business owners and active supporters of the National Scenic Area Act.

Table Mountain. Photo: Kevin Gorman



The New Table Mountain Trail

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

One of the most challenging hikes in the Gorge has undergone a facelift. Table Mountain will offer hikers a fresh new look just in time for the hiking season next spring.

Work to reroute the Table Mountain trail involved a partnership of the Washington Department of Natural Resources and NW Service Academy to rectify erosion problems. Friends of the Columbia Gorge contributed input throughout the project on Scenic Area requirements, and Friends staff attended field trips to preview the improvements.

Undisturbed upland and wetland forests, mountain meadows and rare plant populations are just a few of the features hikers encounter on a Table Mountain hike. Table Mountain also boasts the Gorge's largest concentration of Howell's Daisy, *erigeron howellii*, one of 15 Gorge wildflower species found nowhere else in the world.

A new and improved Table Mountain hike will be on our 2008 spring hiking schedule. Look for the brochure in our next newsletter.

From Jane's dining room, guests look out on a fabulous Gorge view with Mt. Adams in the distance. Their business is dependent on visitors who enjoy the beauty and recreation the Columbia Gorge offers. Preserving this view, and the Gorge itself, is important to them both ethically and economically.

An active member of the Gorge business community, Jane recently spoke on behalf of 13 local bed-and-breakfast owners in testimony before the Gorge Commission on the

Broughton development proposal. Their position states, "What the Gorge needs is workforce housing in the urban areas of the Gorge," she stated, "not more short-term vacation lodging of the type that Broughton Landing is proposing to build."

Businesses like Hood River BnB benefit from the National Scenic Area. By standing up and advocating for it, Jane and Jim Nichols make a strong statement that protecting the Columbia Gorge is important business.

Friends Calls for Better Wind Turbine Siting

Nathan Baker, Staff Attorney, nathan@gorgefriends.org

As the development of industrial wind power projects rapidly expands in the Pacific Northwest, special care needs to be taken to avoid haphazard placement of wind towers in scenic landscapes and migratory bird flyways. Friends is currently reviewing three proposed wind projects along the National Scenic Area boundary to ensure that the unique resources of the Columbia River Gorge are protected.

In October, Friends appealed the Klickitat County Planning Department's decision not to require an environmental impact statement for a proposal to site 95 wind towers north of Wishram and Maryhill. The project site stretches for thirteen miles, roughly half of which is directly adjacent to the National Scenic Area boundary.

Each tower in the Klickitat project would be up to 422 feet tall. As viewed from the National Scenic Area, a number of towers would jut above the horizon and detract from surrounding landforms,



Visual simulation of proposed wind tower project along the NSA boundary in Klickitat County (indicated by red line). Towers would approach the height of the Seattle Space Needle, represented here.

Illustration: Jozsef Urmos (Map: Courtesy Google Earth)

permanently transforming the natural landscape. But if several towers were moved slightly to the north, the scenic impacts could be reduced or avoided.

The project site is in the Columbia Hills, a special wildlife region designated by the Audubon Society as an Important Bird Area. The County and the applicant have failed to adequately review the potential for the wind project to kill birds and bats.

At least two other wind projects are proposed along the National Scenic Area boundary: one in the Sevenmile Hill area of Wasco County, and one in the Underwood area of Skamania County. Although these projects are still in the planning stages, Friends will monitor them closely to ensure that they do not harm Gorge resources or the property values and quality of life of local residents.

Gorge ridgelines in Klickitat County, such as the Columbia Hills seen here, could be marred by wind tower development. Photo: © Rick Till





Native American rock images including Tsagaglallal, or “She Who Watches,” are threatened by air pollution in the Gorge.

Photo: Angie Moore

Update on Air Pollution in the Gorge

Kelley Beamer, Conservation Organizer, Kelley@gorgefriends.org

The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area protects one of the most stunning natural landscapes in the nation, yet Gorge air quality ranks among the most polluted of federally protected areas.

In September, a day-long summit brought air quality scientists together to consider the problem of Gorge air pollution. The focal point of the meeting was the draft “*Columbia River Gorge Air Quality Study Science Summary Report*,” the culmination of 14 years of data-gathering, modeling, and analysis of air quality, visibility, and pollution affecting the Columbia Gorge. The report was mandated by a 1999 amendment to the Management Plan that required a comprehensive study of air quality in the Scenic Area and the adoption of a Gorge air quality strategy. The Gorge Commission will use this study as it considers policy changes this coming winter.

The consensus of the assembled experts, including some of the top air quality scientists in the country, was clear: air quality and visibility in the Gorge are significantly degraded and harming the health of ecosystems Gorge-wide. The predominant pollutants are sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides. Modeling predicts only minor improvements in air quality in the Gorge by 2018, assuming that emissions controls are installed on PGE’s coal-fired Boardman power plant and that use of cleaner fuels and more efficient vehicles increases in the future.

Rebecca Hawk Elwood, representing the Yakama Nation’s “Sacred Breath Project,” participated in the conference. She spoke about the life-giving breath of Columbia River Gorge air and the

current threat that atmospheric pollutants pose to rock image stability. She noted that rock images are the written record of American Indian Tribes now known as the Columbia River Treaty Tribes. A collaborative study by these Tribes will examine preservation of Native American rock images, pollution, and pollutant sources in the Gorge.

This fall, cooperating air quality agencies will hold a public meeting to discuss potential policies to address air pollution affecting the Columbia Gorge. In early winter, the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, the Southwest Washington Clean Air Agency, and the U.S. Forest Service will present a draft air quality strategy to the Gorge Commission for its consideration.

Air quality and visibility in the Gorge are significantly degraded and harming the health of ecosystems Gorge-wide.

Cape Horn Campaign Nears Goal

Jane Harris, Development Director, jane@gorgefriends.org

Thanks to a \$1 million gift this summer from Seattle donor Tony Hovey, Friends' Campaign for Cape Horn is coming close to its \$4 million goal. The Hovey gift brought us to nearly \$3.2 million. Several more large gifts are being pursued and then we will take the campaign to our entire

membership to put us over the top in the coming year.

Another important development in the Campaign is a \$50,000 gift from the Maybelle Clark McDonald Fund which board member Ed Caswell helped secure for us. This gift provides \$25,000 initially and then requires matching gifts of under

\$1000 to earn the balance.

This fits perfectly with our plan to go to our full membership for smaller gifts to complete the campaign, giving everyone an opportunity to participate in creating this magnificent public park and trail at Cape Horn.

Cape Horn Sunset. Photo: Calvin Sanders



Check out our Holiday Store

We've redesigned our online gift store just in time for the holidays. It's easy to use and you'll find new items as well as Gorge favorites that make ideal holiday gifts. Two cozy new fleeces and a fitted two-tone women's t-shirt are featured along with our 2008 Gorge calendar and a new DVD, "Virtual Wonders of the Columbia River Gorge."

Check the gift brochure in this newsletter, or order online at www.gorgefriends.org. We fill orders daily so your selections are sure to arrive in time for the holidays.



Steven and Gayland Nance's gardens were the venue for Friends' annual conservator event.

Photo: Jane Harris

Major Donors Gather at Conservator Event

Every fall we host a party for donors who support the Gorge with a gift or gifts totaling \$1000 or more. This year the Conservator Party was held in the home of Steve and Gayland Nance, where we enjoyed visiting with our major supporters and watching a spectacular sunset from the Nances' lovely gardens.

Major donor gifts provide 25% of Friends' annual operating budget. But

their generosity extends beyond the general budget. Bequests from major donors launched our endowment fund and the creation of our land trust, and today, major donors are fueling the \$4 million Campaign for Cape Horn.

It's easy to become a Friends Conservator through our "Best Friends" program, with a monthly giving plan that enables members to contribute throughout the year. Details are online at www.gorgefriends.org.



Latourell Falls plunges some 250 feet in the western Gorge.

Photos: Oliver Dalton

Special Gifts

July 18, 2007 – September 23, 2007

IN HONOR OF NANCY RUSSELL
JULIA AND RICHARD FERREIRA
LESLIE LABBE

IN HONOR OF ANGIE MOORE
DICK AND DELIGHT LEONARD

IN MEMORY OF JOSEPH BOSSI, JR.
STEPHEN BOSSI

IN MEMORY OF VIC CLAUSEN
DC HOKE DITCH
SUSAN C CASEY
DONALD R SHANNON

IN MEMORY OF GARY MEYER
MARYLYN AND LETTY MAYHEW

IN MEMORY OF KENNETH & LAURENCE SCHRAMM
NANCY SCHRAMM

IN MEMORY OF CATHERINE MACDONALD
ELIZABETH STRODACH

IN MEMORY OF DICK THOMAS
ROSEMARY AND RICHARD PENNELL

IN MEMORY OF GRACE BENZ
VIVIAN AND BOB KNUTSON

IN MEMORY OF SHADOW, MACHU, PICCHU,
PUSS & WHITE CAT
PATRICIA AND LLOYD MEEKS

Featured Hike: Latourell Falls

Distance: Easy/moderate 2 miles, 300 ft. elev. gain

For an easy-to-moderate outing not far from Portland, the beautiful Latourell Falls loop trail offers a wonderful scenic activity in fall and winter. Some of the oldest rock formations in the Columbia Gorge are located near the parking area, and enormous trees tower in the forest above the two-tiered waterfall.

Depending on weather and personal inclinations, follow the footpath up to the top or enjoy the easy lower section. The best views are accessed by hiking up

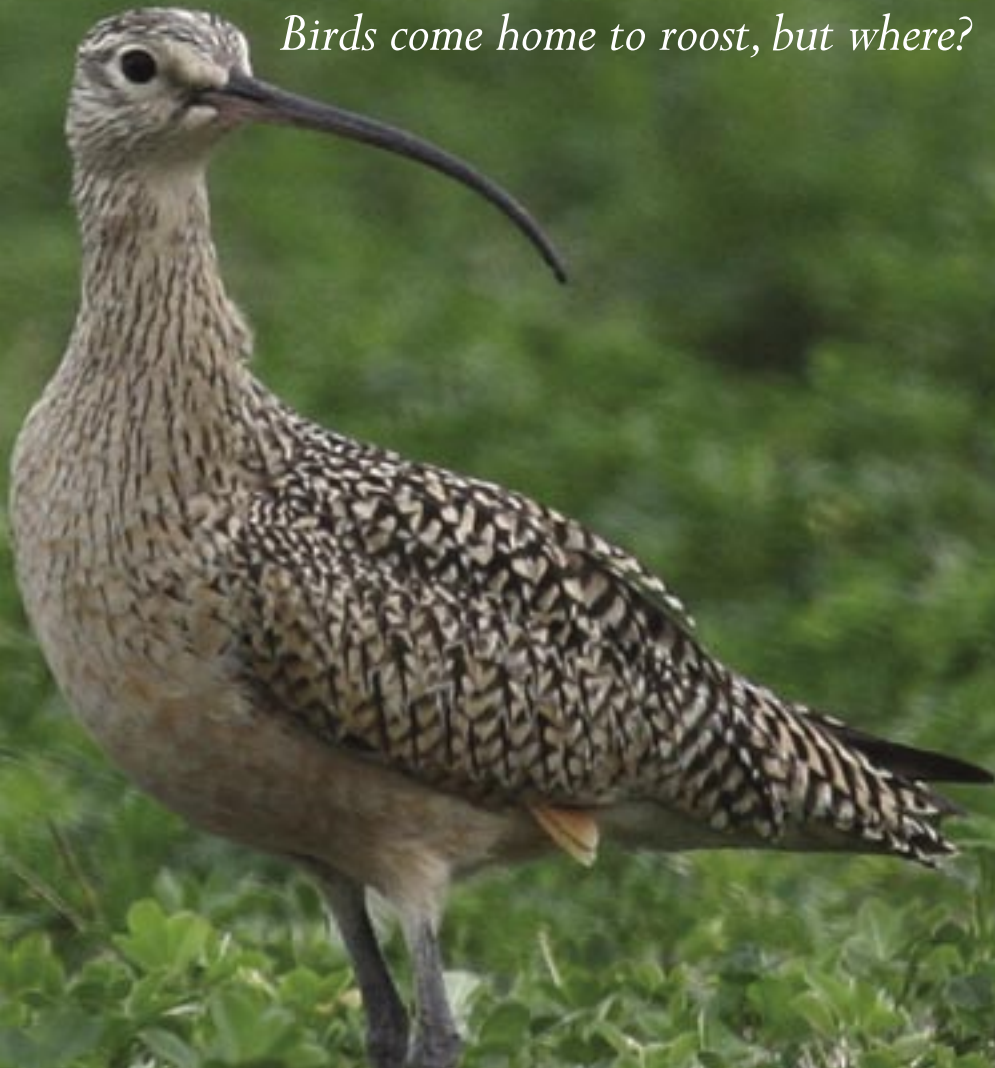
from the parking lot and continuing past the viewpoint to the top of the falls. Near the upper falls, a footbridge crosses the creek. The path descends through the woods to the bottom of the falls where you can cross under the Historic Highway to a picnic site with a stone stairway back to the parking area.

Directions: From I-84 eastbound take Exit 28 Bridal Veil. Turn right on the Historic Columbia River Highway and follow it west for two miles to the Latourell parking lot.



Know Your Gorge

Birds come home to roost, but where?



As hikers and windsurfers stow their gear and depart the Gorge for the season, thousands of migrating birds of the Pacific Flyway are moving in for the winter. One of the most fascinating visitors is the long-billed curlew, a shorebird that nests in and around Dallesport and on Gorge islands.

The Washington side of the eastern Gorge has been named an “Important Bird Area” (IBA) by the Washington Audubon Society—in an area where, ironically, some 90+ wind turbines are proposed (see article on page 8). Audubon has specifically cited wind energy development as the greatest threat to birds in the Columbia Hills.

Gorge birders have counted more than 300 species of birds in the Columbia River Gorge, surpassing species counts in the Klamath Basin. Fall and winter offer wonderful birding opportunities, so bundle up, bring your binoculars, and head out to the Gorge.

To learn more about the Gorge’s migrating birds, join the Lyle Christmas Bird Count, co-sponsored by Friends of the Columbia Gorge, on Sunday, December 16, 2007. Contact Bob Hansen at (509) 637-2736 or bobhansen@gorge.net for details.

The long-billed curlew enjoys wintering in the Columbia Gorge.

Photo: Jane Abel, courtesy U.S. Fish & Wildlife



Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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