

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Summer 2019 Newsletter



**How Much Love
Is Too Much for
the Gorge?**

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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*Gorge Area Residents

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Hikers boarding a Skamania County WET Bus at Dog Mountain trailhead.

Photo: Micheal Drewry

Take Action

The Columbia River Gorge Commission and U.S. Forest Service are currently reviewing the National Scenic Area Management Plan. One of the priority topics is recreation, and whether new recreation policies need to be adopted.

Please send a letter to the Commission and advocate for sustainable recreation in the Gorge. To learn more, see the feature article on page 4.

SAMPLE LETTER

Dear Commissioners and Staff:

Please support the following policies during the review of the Management Plan for the National Scenic Area.

- Promote new recreation opportunities, connectivity, and help the economies of local communities through *Gorge Towns to Trails*.
- Support policies for trail systems linking recreation sites, viewpoints, and Gorge communities.

Address and mail your letter to:

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

You can submit a comment online at gorgecommission.org/about-crgc/contact. Questions? Contact Ryan Rittenhouse at ryan@gorgefriends.org.

- Promote more dispersed recreation by supporting new recreation sites and discouraging overuse of existing sites.
- Limit parking and single vehicular access, and require daily use permits for over-used recreation areas.
- Promote parking in communities and the use of transit to access recreation sites.

Thank you for your consideration.

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WHO WE ARE Friends of the Columbia Gorge was founded in 1980 by the vision of John Yeon and the tenacity of Nancy Russell. Working with legislative champions led by Senator Mark Hatfield, Friends was instrumental in ensuring the passage in 1986 of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act.

We continue working today to ensure that the beautiful and wild Columbia Gorge remains a place apart, an unspoiled treasure for generations to come.



Director's Letter

To celebrate our 40th anniversary in 2020, Friends will unveil a new organizational logo early next year.

To create it, we have taken a deep dive in recent months to reflect on who we are, how the public perceives us, and the core values that define us. All those factors shape Friends' roles in relation to the Gorge as protector, visionary, and connector.

Protectors draw a line in the sand to protect what they believe is right. A visionary looks beyond the present moment to imagine the future. To succeed, though, visionaries and protectors have to embrace being connectors. Understanding that the sum is greater than its parts, connectors pull others together to achieve greater goals.

These core values have been in Friends' DNA since our inception, rotating in prominence over the last four decades. In our first decade, we were primarily visionaries – a tiny nonprofit pushing for legislation to create a National Scenic Area

within public, private, and tribal lands across two states.

In our second decade, we emerged as a protector. Protective rules for the new National Scenic Area were being adopted, but they would only work if a watchdog was fighting to ensure that state and federal agencies enforced them rigorously. We spent those years commenting, testifying, and often litigating decisions that violated the legislation we had worked so hard to pass.

In the third decade, threats facing the Gorge shifted from expansion of residential development to plans for major commercial and industrial activities: casinos, destination resorts, coal-fired plants, and more. In response, as connectors and visionaries we opened our first Gorge office in Hood River, and we launched our land trust. Friends' shifted from being just a protector and watchdog to the role of connector, becoming a community leader and problem solver.

In the last decade, we've connected with hundreds of community groups, nonprofits, government entities, and Tribes in order to block the development of more than a dozen coal and oil terminals. We launched the ambitious bi-state *Gorge Towns to Trails* project and created a new public land stewardship program, following the 2017 Eagle Creek fire. These recent efforts led to our winning a special matching grant from Grady Britton, a leading Portland-based communications firm, to sharpen our brand identity and communication approaches in order to engage more people in loving and protecting the Columbia Gorge.

That all brings us up to today. It's exciting to imagine what the next forty years will bring.



Kevin Gorman, Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org

Camas in bloom at Memaloose Overlook. Photo: Mark McConnell





How Much Love Is Too Much?

Kevin Gorman, Executive Director, kevin@gorgefriends.org

The Columbia River Gorge is loved by countless people, near and far. So many people, in fact, that a key challenge of the future is, “How do we love the Gorge without loving it to death?”

As we approach the summer season of mile-long backups on the Historic Columbia River Highway and trailheads full by 9:00 in the morning, more voices are asking what’s causing the congestion and what can we do about it?

Three primary causes of the congestion are clear. First, the region has become a prime travel destination. Portland tourism tax receipts went up 80 percent between 2010 and 2017, and from 2012 to 2017 the number of international passengers flying into Portland International Airport increased by 68 percent; domestic air traffic saw a similar rise. Second, 30,000 to 40,000 people a year are moving to the

Portland metro area, and many come to enjoy a quality of life that includes the Gorge. Finally, 99 percent of Gorge visitors get to their favorite trailhead or scenic viewpoint using one form of transportation: private automobiles.

More voices are asking what’s causing the congestion and what can we do about it?

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and other agencies have added mass transit in the Gorge. That’s great, except it’s not part of a bigger plan so it does little to address congestion.

The Columbia Gorge is not a national park, but there are aspects of national parks that should be considered to address congestion. Utah’s Zion National Park is half the acreage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and receives more

than double the visitors. Most visitors congregate along a six-mile corridor similar to our waterfall area. So Zion has implemented several strategies. In the 1970s, the Park Service took the

dramatic step to close the Scenic Canyon Road to automobiles in the busy season. Despite initial concerns, use of buses was a huge success. Congestion on the road disappeared, bicycles started showing up, and the shuttle service provided local jobs. However, the shuttle service suffered as park attendance skyrocketed. The park is now considering bringing more electric buses into Zion, as well as limiting daily entry into the most congested areas.

The Gorge has tremendous unifying factors: the National Scenic Area designation and a bistate management plan.

Similarly, ODOT recently finalized a congestion planning process for the Historic Highway. In the long run, it could mean that during busy periods, the waterfall section of the highway is only open to shuttle buses, cyclists, and local vehicles. Short-run solutions include having a flagger at Multnomah Falls and having Benson Lake serve as overflow parking for Multnomah Falls. Congestion relief steps are also occurring across the river in Washington, where the Dog Mountain parking permit system has reduced weekend congestion and improved safety. But its restrictions have at times left the parking lot half empty in peak wildflower season. We need to continue to assess, adjust, and improve.

Gorge congestion needs to be addressed holistically. Fortunately, the Columbia River Gorge Commission and U.S. Forest Service are currently reviewing the National Scenic Area management plan. Any revisions to the recreation aspects of the plan should be based on recreation opportunities, visitor expectations, and natural resource protection.

Gorge Towns to Trails — our vision for a 200-mile loop trail around the Gorge connecting communities, farmlands and wild areas — is a great example of how to protect lands through acquisitions and disperse recreation to less-popular areas and support local communities through a multi-day trekking system. We also should consider daily use permits for sensitive areas like Oneonta Gorge and recognize that some of the Gorge's most sensitive areas should simply be off limits to any expanded recreation.

Gorge transportation and recreation should be seen as an interconnecting web where transit options and trails systems traverse communities and landscapes throughout the entire Gorge.

All of these ideas require more funding, and one potential approach to that issue can be found in Washington Park in Portland. A few years ago Washington Park was facing unmanageable congestion, and various partners and stakeholders — including Metro, which owns the Zoo, Portland Parks & Recreation, the Children's Museum, Hoyt Arboretum, and others — got together

and created a Transportation Management Association (TMA).

The TMA was able to set up a uniform parking system in Washington Park that includes about as many parking spaces as Rooster Rock State Park and generates more than \$4 million a year in fees. That revenue pays for shuttle buses, websites that highlight transportation alternatives, and apps that can let people know where parking is available. Since implementing the TMA, private vehicle use in Washington Park has gone down and transit, bicycling, and car-share use has gone up.

The Gorge is admittedly more complicated than Washington Park, but it has tremendous unifying factors: the National Scenic Area designation and a bistate management plan that can bring the necessary entities together. We can't pretend to solve problems that will arise 50 or 100 years from now, but we can address our current congestion problem and embrace the opportunities in front of us. It is our time and our turn to take the reins and shape our future. ■



Overcrowding at Oneonta Gorge damages sensitive plant, fish, and wildlife habitat.

Photo: Weinstein PR

We Asked, and You Answered

Sophia Aepfelbacher, Membership Coordinator, sophia@gorgefriends.org

Friends members fund and guide our work each and every day. That's why it's so critical for us to understand what drives you to support Gorge protection, and how satisfied you are with Friends as an organization. In looking for answers, we decided a survey would be the easiest and most direct way to hear from valued members like you.

We were completely blown away by the overwhelmingly positive feedback we received from the 759 members who completed our recent online survey (a 19 percent response rate). It's an inspiring reminder that our members care deeply about our work preserving and protecting the Columbia Gorge.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to give us their valuable input! Your feedback, insight, suggestions, and questions all help shape our vision for 2019 and beyond.

So what did members say?

The issues you care most about:

- Limiting inappropriate development, fighting back against oil/coal transportation, and preventing clear cut logging (90 percent say very important)
- Combating traffic congestion/trail over-usage (59 percent very important, 36 percent somewhat)
- Environmental stewardship (55 percent very, 39 percent somewhat)

And what about membership benefits?

- The quarterly newsletter is important. (44 percent very important, 42 percent somewhat important)
- Early registration and members' only hikes are valued. (61 percent said very or somewhat important)

While most respondents indicated they are members in order to protect the Gorge, several suggested that arranging discounts at Gorge businesses or outdoor equipment retailers would be a welcomed benefit.

Many good suggestions were shared around our hiking program, specifically about how to improve the registration process. We did make some changes this year, and we are evaluating the impact of those changes to determine how we can make guided hikes more accessible. We anticipate implementing a new registration program and process soon.

“Friends presentations and publications always lift my spirits and give me hope.”

Not surprisingly, many members also expressed interest in purchasing shirts, jackets, hats, patches and other items branded with the Friends logo. As we gear up for our 40th anniversary next year, watch for the opportunity to purchase these types of items.

Protecting this wondrous place requires us to be fierce advocates for the Gorge and to be able to quickly mobilize support when needed. This year, as we work to enhance our communication, we will be inviting members to opt-in to our new texting channel.

We appreciate the time everyone took to complete the survey and will continue using the results to guide our decisions in the coming year. ■

“I enjoy spending time in the Gorge and want to see it protected now and for years to come.”



Illustration: Survey Monkey

7 Worst Weeds in the Gorge



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

Here's a common experience: you pull a few weeds in your yard, and next thing you know, more pop up. Now imagine weeding the entire Columbia Gorge.

Non-native, invasive weed species threaten the native plants and ecosystems of the Gorge, and agencies on both side of the Columbia River cooperate to combat infestations. These weeds threaten the beauty of the Gorge and its ecological diversity. We asked weed managers to name the top seven invasive plants that threaten the Gorge.

1. Garlic mustard

All the weed managers agreed garlic mustard is “Public Enemy No. 1.” It thrives in deep shade or blazing sun and stands two to three feet high, with jagged, heart-shaped leaves and small, four-petal white flowers. A self-pollinator, one square yard of garlic mustard can produce 62,000 seeds that will completely crowd out anything else.

2. Shiny geranium

This small, low-growing geranium bears a pink, five-petal flower. A single plant can produce hundreds of seeds and germinate up to three times per season.

3. Knapweed

This plant stands a few inches to a couple of feet tall, and has a deep taproot. The leaves are fern-like with white, pink or purple flowers. Similar to garlic mustard, knapweed puts out chemicals that hurt surrounding plants.

4. Hawkweed

This common invasive grows to a foot or two tall and produces yellow or orange dandelion-like flowers. The roots send out runners, making it quick to spread and hard to pull, so it readily crowds out the native wildflowers that Gorge enthusiasts enjoy.

5. Rush skeletonweed

Rush skeletonweed has a deep taproot, small yellow flowers, slender stems and sparse leaves. Like dandelions, it sends out seeds attached to downy tufts that disperse by wind.

6. Puncturevine

This innocent-looking plant has small yellow flowers and ovate leaves. It grows from a taproot and spreads almost flat along the ground, with thorny seeds that will stick in your shoes or puncture a bicycle tire.

7. False brome

This hair-covered grass grows in bunches and usually stays green throughout the year. It grows in both shaded forests and sunny meadows.

You can help

Hikers who spot any of these villains should take a photo, note the location, and contact Friends or the local county's noxious weed board. You can also help by joining a Friends' stewardship work party to combat these plants.

For more information on each plant and its ecological threats, read our full article at gorgefriends.org/weeds. ■

Above, from left: Hawkweed, garlic mustard, and false brome. Photos: Washington State Noxious Weed Control; Laura Berman; Glenn Miller, KingCounty.gov.



The Land and Water Conservation Fund

Bipartisan Protection for Public Lands

Dan Bell, Land Trust Director, dan@gorgefriends.org

With summer coming, like thousands of other folks, I look forward to enjoying public lands in the Gorge – Cape Horn, Catherine Creek, and the Sandy River Delta, to name a few. As a Gorge resident, I am also sure to find myself walking along the Hood River waterfront or relaxing at Toll Bridge Park in the Hood River Valley.

Lately I have been thinking about something that all of these places have in common: they all were made possible by the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is one of America's most important conservation programs, responsible for protecting parks, wildlife refuges, and recreation areas at the federal, state, and local levels. When you live in the Columbia Gorge, you realize the impact of the fund is everywhere, and impressively, it works without using taxpayer dollars. Instead, a small portion of revenues generated by

offshore oil and gas development supports the program, and a portion of those funds have been put to good use in the Gorge.

Over the past decade, the fund has contributed more than \$2 million to help the U.S. Forest Service purchase critical lands from willing sellers, including the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust. Numerous grants have been made to state and local governments to improve boat marinas, tennis courts, public restrooms, and more.

Despite its success, for five decades the Land and Water Conservation Fund faced a persistent challenge. Congressional legislation authorizing the program always included a sunset provision, adding uncertainty to congressional support for the fund. Broad national coalitions had to mobilize regularly through the years to push for reauthorization. Here in the Pacific Northwest, the efforts of Friends staff and members have been a key part of those fights.

This long-awaited funding stability is great news for the Columbia Gorge.

Finally, this past March, Congress permanently reauthorized the Land and Water Conservation Fund as part of a sweeping, bipartisan, public lands package. This success culminated a years-long effort by congressional champions on both sides of the aisle and stakeholders across the country. For the first time in its history, the Land and Water Conservation Fund is now a permanent program.

This long-awaited funding stability is great news for the Columbia Gorge. As Gorge popularity increases, important recreational improvements and trail connections need to be made, and scenic overlooks are waiting to be built. A reliable Land and Water Conservation Fund will help Gorge advocates plan for the future to meet the needs of the decades ahead. ■

Welcomes and Goodbyes

Paige Unangst, Finance Director, paige@gorgefriends.org

Friends is excited to introduce our two newest board members, Joe Campbell and Cynthia Winter. Joe and Cynthia will each serve for three years on our 16-member Board of Directors that brings together a wide array of interests and skills to advance the mission and vision of our organization.

Joe Campbell grew up in Hood River, where his natural passion for protecting the Gorge was cultivated. An MD focused on wilderness medicine, Joe learned the art of winemaking in 1974, when he and his wife, Pat, became pioneers in the Oregon wine-producing industry as cofounders of Elk Cove Winery in Gaston. Now retired, Joe also serves on the board of the Portland dance company Body Vox.

Long time Columbia Gorge resident Cynthia Winter is returning to Friends'



Joe Campbell



Cynthia Winter

board, where she served from 2006 to 2015. Cynthia was executive director of Habitat for Humanity in Portland and also served as director of organizational development for the Oregon Food Bank. As founder and principle of Winter Resources, a consulting practice involved in organizational leadership

and development, she also works with Solid Ground Consulting. Cynthia has served on the boards of Friends of Vista House, Slow Food Portland, and the Portland Farmers Market.

In April this year, four board members ended their terms after six years of service. We will miss the energy and talents they brought to the board, but we're delighted that none of these great people are really saying goodbye to Friends. Debbie Asakawa will continue volunteering as a member at large on the board's philanthropy committee. Pat Campbell will serve as a trustee for the Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust. Vince Ready will maintain his focus on helping with Friends' branding and communications projects, and Meredith Savery will continue serving on a special team that is consulting with Friends on fiscal strategic planning.

We are incredibly fortunate and very appreciative that, even after stepping down, these now-former board members will still be devoting their time and talents to furthering our work for Gorge protection. ■



Natalie Ferraro

In February, we welcomed back **Natalie Ferraro**, to serve as our Trailhead Ambassador Coordinator for 2019. Natalie previously worked with Friends as a conservation organizer intern.

As a life-long Northwesterner with a degree in environmental sciences from Washington State University, Natalie is a natural fit for this seasonal position with Friends. In addition, she brings previous work experience with our corporate and nonprofit partners REI and Trailkeepers of Oregon, making her ideally suited to coordinate the Trailhead Ambassador program.

In May, we made an important but difficult decision to eliminate our outreach manager position, which was held by **Maegan Jossy**. We are creating a new, non-managerial position and will share more information soon. This decision better aligns with priorities in our new strategic plan, but it also is hard to say goodbye to someone who was with us for so long. We wish Maegan well.

A Unique and Extensive Understanding of the Columbia Gorge

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

Bob Hogfoss has a long history of loving the Columbia Gorge. One of his earliest memories is of Celilo Falls, when he was just 5 years old.

A deep curiosity about the natural world and the history of place led Bob to study anthropology and ethnobotany in college. Before becoming an environmental attorney, he worked with indigenous communities and coauthored an atlas of Oregon tribes. He also spent several years fighting wildfires in the

Gorge as a member of a helicopter crew.

Between flying, hiking, and studying, Bob has a unique and extensive understanding of the Gorge. He is currently working on a book, *Natural History of the Columbia River Gorge*, that will share some of his knowledge and inspire more folks to get involved in protecting it. Ever conscious of his impact, Bob plans on donating book proceeds to Friends.

Bob believes that the groundswell of support for Gorge protection is due to

Photo: Courtesy of Troutman Sanders LLP

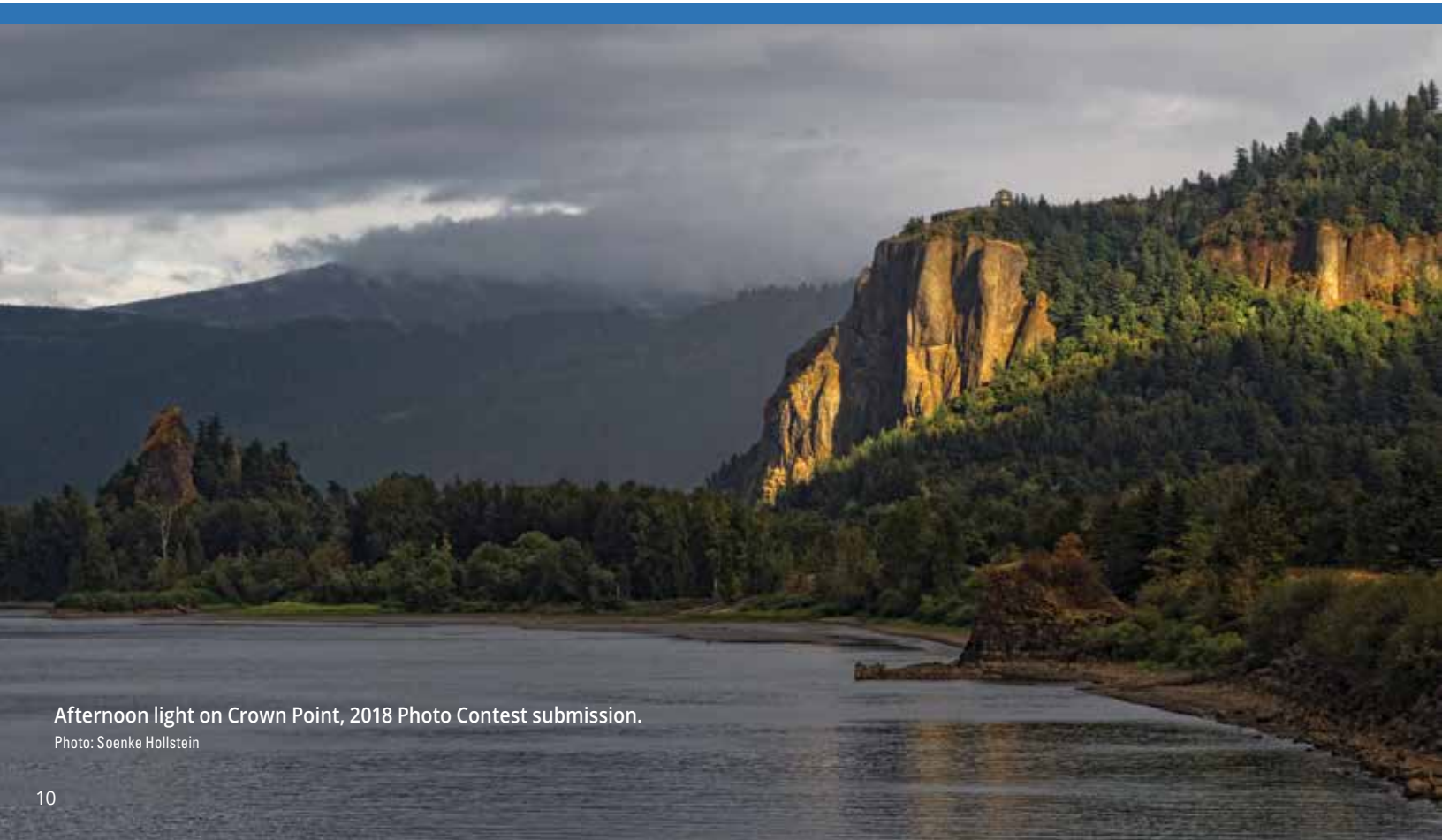


Bob Hogfoss

Friends' work, and that no other entity is as effective at preserving the Gorge.

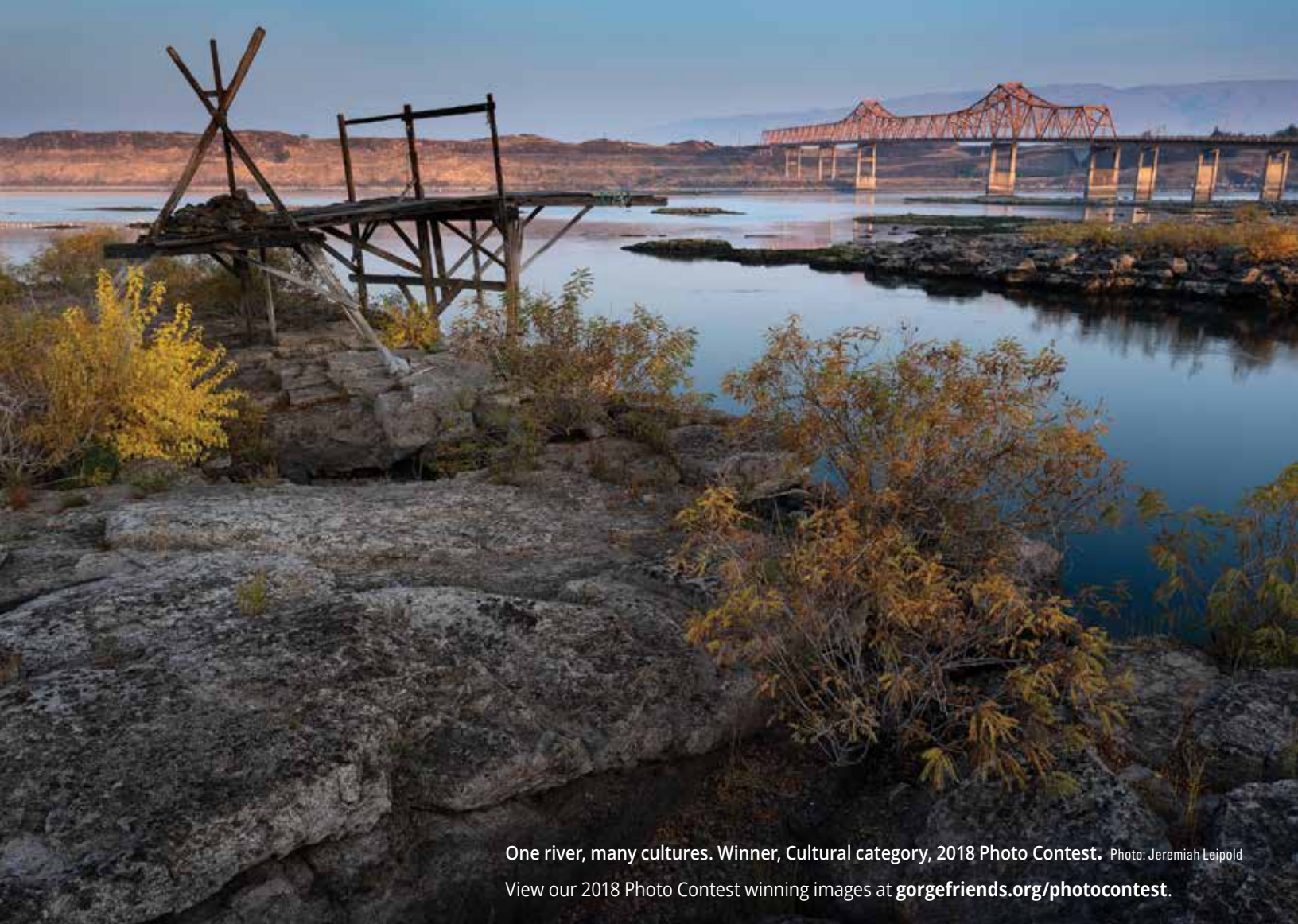
His biggest concerns for the future are climate change, population growth, and special places like the Gorge becoming overcrowded or loved to death. Bob says he is including Friends in his estate plans because he knows he can trust Friends to understand these threats and to do the necessary work to keep them at bay.

Thank you, Bob! ■



Afternoon light on Crown Point, 2018 Photo Contest submission.

Photo: Soenke Hollstein



One river, many cultures. Winner, Cultural category, 2018 Photo Contest. Photo: Jeremiah Leibold

View our 2018 Photo Contest winning images at gorgefriends.org/photocontest.

Special Gifts

January 22, 2019 – April 30, 2019

IN HONOR

In Honor of Nathan Baker
Steve Baker

In Honor of Jim Chase
Christoph Stauder

In Honor of Margo Earley
2019 Lincoln Constitution Team

In Honor of Ellen Friedman and Andrew Zapata
Evan Green

In Honor of John and Dawn Harrison
Jerry and Lisa Eckstein

In Honor of Lief
Corinna Parish

In Honor of Kate Lindberg
Christine Enberg

In Honor of the Marriage of Sara Reed and Chip Rosenfeld
Sandy Gooch

In Honor of Jana Rekosh and Richard Struve
Robin Kessler
Shane Ristine
Christine and Robert Warner

IN MEMORY

In Memory of Caroline Bailey
Leslie and Robert Peltz
Charlie Rosenblum

In Memory of Bill and Sylvia Bieber
Laura Bieber

In Memory of Calvin Lindsay Boone
Laura Bitterman

In Memory of Chloe
Annette McDermott

In Memory of Ron C. Cummings
Dixie Elliott

In Memory of Katherine Diack
Anne and Gary Olson

In Memory of David Dent
Rose Bond and Carolyn Wood
Carol Crowe
Sean Dunnahoo
Susan Fisher
Sharon and Bruce Hansen
George Joseph and Lita Doran
Ruth Menicosy
John and Linda Murdoch
Doug Parks
Donna Parsons
Susan Saul
Carl and Terry Strand

In Memory of Bill and Sadie Duerden
Barbara Duerden

In Memory of Dan Eggleston
Mary Humiecki
Susan Jackman
Mary and Ron Nelson

In Memory of Mary Farnham
Gwen Farnham

In Memory of Neil Farnham
Gwen Farnham

In Memory of Diane Gadway
Charles Gadway

In Memory of Laura Green
Jeanette Fentie

In Memory of Joan Heins
The Anawalt Family
Cathleen Doyle

In Memory of Russ Jolley
Matthew Mindolovich

In Memory of Piper Jones
Rick and Michelle Petersen

In Memory of Walter B. Knapp
Shelley Knapp

In Memory of Jim Leeman
Carol Nieman

In Memory of Ed McAninch
Barbara and Ronald Baldus

In Memory of Mark and Katie McManus
Richard and Marjorie McManus

In Memory of James Richard Piland
Donald and Shirley Clark

In Memory of Marilyn Walker Portwood
Marie Hall

In Memory of Joel Price
Randi Adleberg

In Memory of Mary Taylor
Carmen Wilcox

In Memory of Robert G. White
Kristin White

In Memory of Jack Wills
Jon and Merrie Ziady


In Memory of Matthew Winthrop
John Manross
Richard Lira and Gretchen Taylor
Loring and Margaret Winthrop

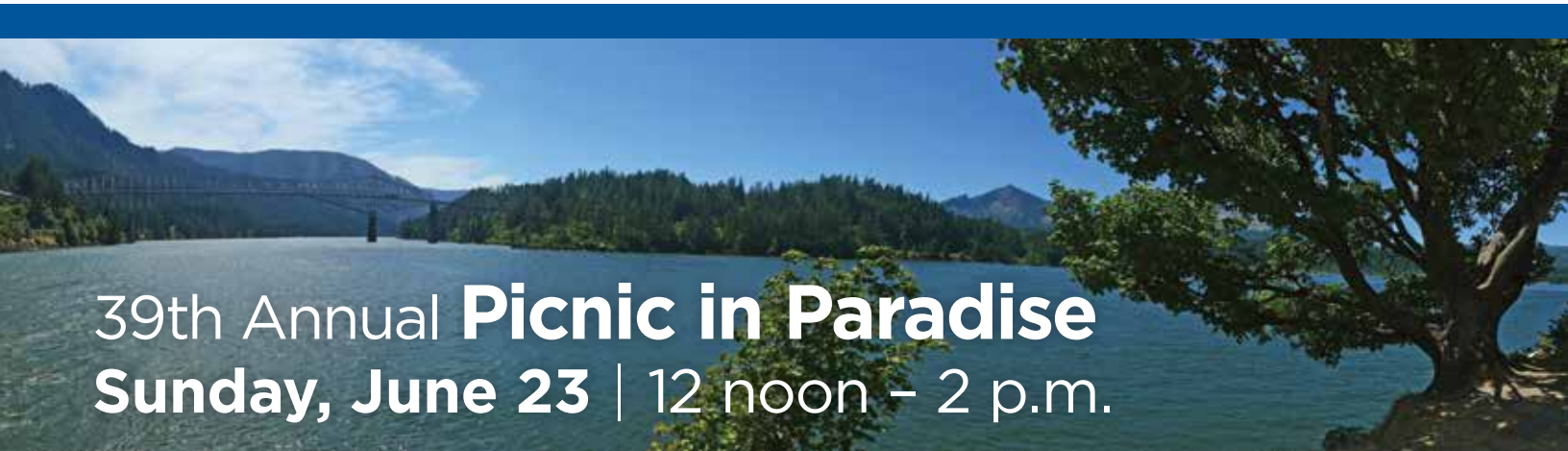


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Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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39th Annual **Picnic in Paradise** Sunday, June 23 | 12 noon – 2 p.m.

On Thunder Island in the Heart of the Gorge!

Join us for this free, annual event. Bring your own picnic lunch for your family, and Friends will provide live music, desserts, and family-friendly activities.

For details, visit gorgefriends.org/picnic

Summer picnic on Thunder Island. Photo: Micheal Drewry

Bridge of the Gods (above) and the Columbia Gorge sternwheeler, seen from Thunder Island. Photos: Kathy Fors

