

# Friends of the Columbia Gorge

*Protecting the Gorge Since 1980*

*Winter 2011 Newsletter*



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Turns 25!

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# Friends of the Columbia Gorge

FOUNDER NANCY RUSSELL, 1932-2008

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Link to us on Twitter and Facebook  
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The view from Columbia Hills State Park.

Photo: Victor von Salza



# Take Action Today!

## Public Lands Funding

Since passage of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act in 1986, Friends of the Columbia Gorge has helped secure more than \$50 million in federal funding to support public acquisition of more than 40,000 acres of Gorge lands, nearly fifteen percent of the entire National Scenic Area!

Each year, the president makes recommendations to Congress regarding specific conservation projects. These projects then go through a rigorous review process with input from members of Congress representing project areas. Due to intense competition for appropriations, only those projects with strong public support generally receive funding.

In honor of the 25th anniversary of the National Scenic Area Act, we hope to secure \$1.5 million in federal funding for 2012 public land acquisitions. These purchases would protect key Gorge properties that are beneficial for habitat or suitable for recreation, but are threatened by development.

Please contact Oregon and Washington House members and Senators (see contact info below) and urge their strong support of the Forest Service land acquisition program in the Columbia Gorge in 2011. Remind them that their leadership is critical to helping the Forest Service expand our public land legacy in the Columbia River Gorge.

*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](http://www.senate.gov) or [www.house.gov](http://www.house.gov) for other offices.*

### Oregon

**Sen. Ron Wyden**, (202) 224-5244

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

**Sen. Jeff Merkley**, (202) 224-3753

[senator@merkley.senate.gov](mailto:senator@merkley.senate.gov)

**Rep. David Wu**, (202) 225-0855

**Rep. Earl Blumenauer**, (202) 225-4811

**Rep. Greg Walden**, (202) 225-6730

**Rep. Peter DeFazio**, (202) 225-6416

**Rep. Kurt Schrader**, (202) 225-5711

### 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. Jamie Herrera Beutler**, (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/](http://www.house.gov/writerep/)

Cover photo: An early spring view from Catherine Creek. Photo: © Chris Carvalho / LensJoy.com

# Director's Letter

In May 2011 Beautiful America will publish *Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area* in honor of the Scenic Area's 25th anniversary. The publishers are dedicating the book to Friends founder Nancy Russell and asked me to write a page on my feelings regarding the anniversary. Here is what will be published:

*When I turned 25 years old, I was at a crossroads. I was clearly tied to my youth and the good and bad that went with it, yet I was no longer that kid. Instead I was faced with the responsibilities, challenges, and opportunities of adulthood. I began taking the steps that would answer the question, "What will I make of myself?"*

*Our 25-year-old Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is at the same crossroads. Its formative years have been impressive: lands preserved, new recreation developed, fierce acrimony subsiding, and businesses moving into the Gorge because of its quality of life. The Gorge's beauty and its land protection programs have led to accolades from across the country and around the world.*

*The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area has indeed come far and its accomplishment are worthy of celebration. But not too much celebration. As with any 25-year-old, things are starting to get more complex. Increasing complexity is the cross to bear for preserving a spectacularly beautiful place so close to a major metropolitan area. Development pressures will grow, and in some cases, in ways we can't fathom today. People will love this place, but sometimes love is blind, and our dear Gorge could indeed be loved to death.*

*By the 50th anniversary, the world will likely know what the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area has made of itself. Will it continue to be a model respected and admired around the world? Or will it be a case study for a good idea that simply couldn't overcome the pressures of overdevelopment and commercialization it faces everyday?*

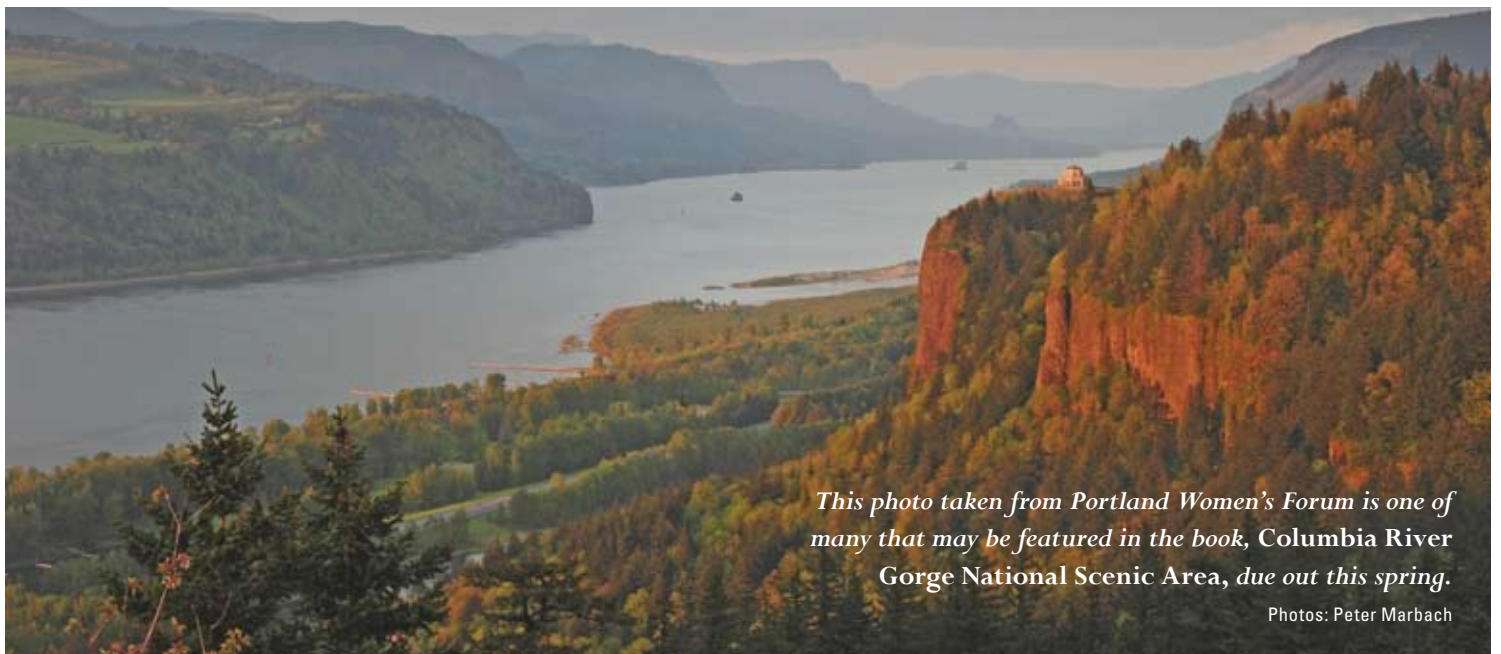
*The answer of course lies with you – the people who care enough about the Gorge to read this book. Though mere mortals could never create something as majestic and awe-inspiring as the Columbia River Gorge, it is indeed up to us and, as Abraham Lincoln would say, to "the better angels of our nature" to preserve this place for those who follow in our paths.*



Kevin Gorman  
Executive Director  
kevin@gorgefriends.org



*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.*



*This photo taken from Portland Women's Forum is one of many that may be featured in the book, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, due out this spring.*

Photos: Peter Marbach



# Celebrating a 25-year Milestone

## Landmark Legislation to Protect the Columbia River Gorge

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, [michael@gorgefriends.org](mailto:michael@gorgefriends.org)

**O**n November 17, 1986, President Ronald Reagan signed into law the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act, the only stand-alone environmental legislation passed during Reagan's eight-year presidency. With passage of the Act, the Columbia Gorge became the first landscape to be specifically designated as a National Scenic Area by Congress.

For Friends of the Columbia Gorge, which had been founded in 1980 to push for federal Gorge protection, passage of the Scenic Area Act was a monumental achievement,

especially given the Reagan Administration's reputation for opposing environmental protection. In just six years, Friends and its allies achieved a goal that had eluded Gorge lovers since 1937, when federal protection was first proposed.

A year after the Scenic Area Act was passed, the states of Oregon and Washington adopted the Columbia River Gorge Compact, an interstate law that created the Columbia River Gorge Commission. With passage of the Act and Compact, the federal government and the states of Oregon and

Washington entered into a binding agreement that recognized the Columbia River Gorge as a place apart from all others and committed them to protecting its outstanding resources for generations to come.

As the only sea-level passage through the Cascade Mountains, the Columbia Gorge is truly unique. In its 85-mile course, the Gorge contains five distinct ecosystems, 800 species of flowering plants, and sixteen species of wildflowers found nowhere else in the world. It boasts the largest concentration of waterfalls in North America. The primary purpose of



*Looking west from Munra Point above Tanner Creek.*

Photo: Greg Lief / Liefphotos.com



*A view from Memaloose Hills.*

Photo: Angie Moore



*The Columbia Gorge became the first landscape to be specifically designated as a National Scenic Area by Congress.*

the Scenic Area Act is to protect and enhance this natural scenic treasure for our children and future generations to experience.

The urgency to pass the Scenic Area Act in the early 1980s was accentuated by the completion of the I-205 bridge across the Columbia River and the recognition that urban sprawl could quickly overtake the western Gorge within a decade. Today, the success of the Scenic Area Act is strikingly evident as one drives east from Portland or Vancouver toward the Columbia Gorge. Passing through miles of subdivisions and strip development, one crosses the National Scenic Area Boundary and is awestruck by the instantaneous transition from urban development to a rural setting with vast tracts of open spaces protected from development.

Encompassing more than 292,000 acres, the Scenic Area includes a mix of private, state, and federal land, plus thirteen designated urban areas. Since the passage of the Act, the Forest Service and other state and federal agencies have purchased over 40,000 acres of land within the Gorge, protecting scenic vistas, rare plant and animal habitat, and important cultural resources, and expanding public recreation opportunities. Urban sprawl stalled at the gates of the National Scenic Area and the thirteen designated urban areas within the Scenic Area have experienced sustainable

economic growth. Federal economic development funds that were authorized through the Scenic Area Act created Skamania Lodge and the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center and pumped millions of dollars in economic development grants and loans into the communities of the Gorge.



*Friends founder Nancy Russell at the White House in 1986 with then-Vice President George Bush. Photo: Friends of the Columbia Gorge Archives*

As we celebrate this 25th anniversary, there is still much work to be done. The National Scenic Area Act has been successful, but due to loopholes in the federal law and continued efforts to erode protections, the Gorge continues to be threatened by urban sprawl and irresponsible development. To ensure protection of the Gorge in perpetuity,

improvements in the Act are needed, as is a renewed commitment by both Oregon and Washington. Continually changing state legislatures must be educated about the importance of the Gorge Compact and reminded of their commitments to provide adequate funding for the Gorge Commission. This year, Friends of the Columbia Gorge will ask our Northwest Congressional delegation and the states of Oregon and Washington to renew their commitment to the Scenic Area Act, including funding for resource protection, public land acquisition, sustainable economic development, and recreation enhancement.

Our upcoming newsletters this year will highlight specific successes of the Scenic Area Act and current obstacles to Gorge protection. We also will roll out a roadmap to the future, a multi-year plan that will help protect habitat, create new recreation opportunities, and support the local economies of Gorge communities.

Whether you live in the Gorge or visit occasionally to enjoy its beauty and recreation opportunities, we hope you'll take a moment to recognize what the past 25 years of protection have meant for this special place. Appreciating the unique beauty and character of the Columbia River Gorge, we invite you to join us in ensuring that in 2036, a new generation of Gorge lovers will be celebrating 50 years of Gorge protection. ■

# Above Celilo Falls

Kate McBride, Land Trust Manager  
kate@gorgefriends.org



The Land Trust's Celilo property. Photo: Andrew Abernathy / andrewabernathy.com

Of the more than 900 acres owned by Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust, no property is more steeped in Native American history and culture than our 13-acre Celilo property. The dramatic parcel climbs to a wide plateau above Celilo Village, overlooking the river where Celilo Falls once thundered.

Friends founder Nancy Russell purchased the Celilo land in late 2005. Nancy loved the rugged beauty of the eastern Gorge and was determined to protect this landscape from development near the river and up on the bluff. Nancy's estate donated the land to Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust in 2009.

Nearby Celilo Village has been inhabited by Native Americans for centuries. A new longhouse was completed in 2005, just one of the recent improvements made to benefit the local community. Modern housing for tribal members was recently constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers. The Vancouver-based Confluence Project, with nationally acclaimed artist Maya Lin, is developing an art installation for the park in Celilo Village to commemorate Celilo Falls and the Native American culture so intimately linked to the falls, the river, and the salmon. ■



The Celilo property marked here in red is now protected.

ARC GIS aerial image: Kate McBride

## Land Trust's 2010 Successes

Despite difficult economic conditions, Friends of the Columbia Gorge Land Trust had a very productive 2010 that included several acquisitions. Our purchases included 80 acres of forestland near Aldrich Butte and 54 acres of farmland at Mount Pleasant across from the Vista House. A conservation buyer purchased sixteen additional acres of farmland adjacent to our 54-acre acquisition, further expanding our success.

The property near Aldrich Butte features a stunning waterfall and could become a key link in the proposed Washougal-to-Stevenson trail. The Mount Pleasant purchases prevented development of large-scale homes and accessory buildings on scenic pastoral lands viewed by millions of visitors every year. Over \$1 million was raised to secure these properties and ensure their protection. ■



## Linda Rouches: Casino Opponent, Former Mayor, Successful Business Woman

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, [peter@gorgefriends.org](mailto:peter@gorgefriends.org)

In fall 2010, a Columbia Gorge business owner took time from her busy schedule to travel to Washington D.C. to lobby against a Gorge casino. Entrepreneur and past Hood River mayor Linda Rouches understands the ramifications of a Gorge casino. As mayor, Linda testified at a public hearing that “a casino in the Columbia River Gorge would be a tragedy for all time.”

Linda’s opposition to the casino is just one example of her commitment to Gorge protection. “We are so gifted to be living here; to take it for granted would be a travesty,” she said. As Hood River’s first female mayor, she led efforts to create a vital downtown. “We did good things in Hood River, one of the shining pearls in the string of pearls that is the Columbia Gorge.” She also helped chair the Hood River Library Foundation to update and build a library addition and founded a benefit golf tournament named for her late husband George Rouches.

*“We are so gifted to be living here...”*

Linda Rouches.

Photo: Warren Morgan



Today Linda Rouches’s business, PBS Inc., is an AT&T cellphone retailer that has served the Gorge for more than two decades. She recognizes that economic development cannot occur in a vacuum. Linda believes everything we do must be thoughtful and appropriate, from how we use resources to how growth happens. As a mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, former mayor and business owner, Linda’s efforts continue to make the Columbia Gorge a better place to live, work and play. ■

## Board Updates: Hello and Goodbye

Last autumn three new members joined Friends’ Board of Directors. We’re happy to welcome Keith Brown of Washougal, Erik Lichtenthaler of Corbett, and Rob Matteri of Portland and their enthusiasm, talent, and commitment to protecting the Columbia Gorge.

In December, 2010, a stalwart former board member, Jeanne Norton,

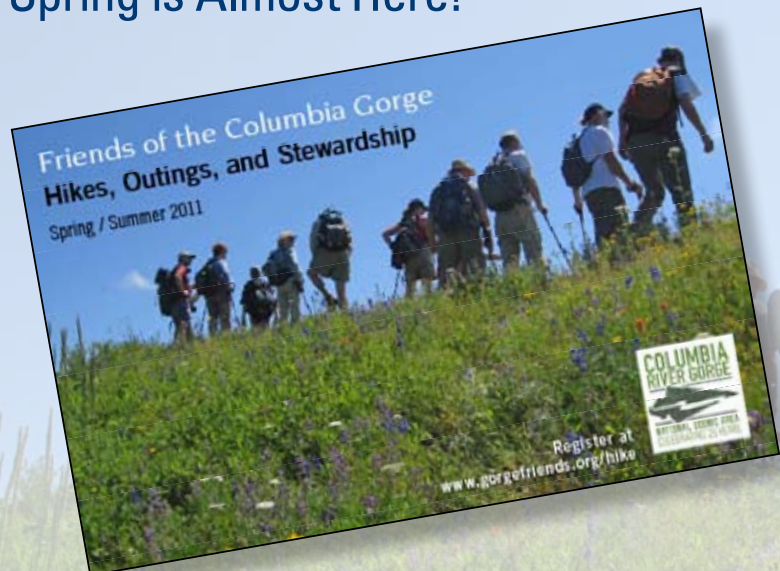


passed away at age 85. A passionate Gorge advocate, Jeanne served on our board from 1984-2002, and was a dedicated

volunteer. Our condolences go out to her family.

Photo: Friends of the Columbia Gorge Archives

## Spring is Almost Here!



Our Spring/Summer Hiking Brochure is included in this newsletter. This full brochure with hike descriptions and event details is only available to members of Friends of the Columbia Gorge. For non-members, we’re distributing a postcard-size announcement that will be available in the usual public places. If you see the new card, you’ll know it’s us!

# Cascade Locks Casino Proposal Indefinitely Stalled

Kevin Gorman, Executive Director, [kevin@gorgefriends.org](mailto:kevin@gorgefriends.org)

Friends of the Columbia Gorge is hopeful that the inauguration of Governor Kitzhaber will finally put an end to the ill-fated proposal to build a massive off-reservation casino in the heart of the Columbia Gorge.

In 1999 and again in 2001, then-Governor Kitzhaber rejected proposals for casinos in Cascade Locks, and also rejected the empty threat of a casino on lands east of Hood River. In 2003, Ted Kulongoski became governor and promptly switched his declared position, changing from casino opposition to firm support of a 60-acre casino resort development in Cascade Locks. Friends of the Columbia Gorge then spent the next seven years fighting the proposal through two Presidential administrations.

Now that John Kitzhaber is back in office as Oregon's governor, the Cascade Locks proposal once again faces a likely veto by the governor. The federal Indian Gaming Regulatory Act requires the governor's approval in addition to approval

by the Secretary of Interior before an off-reservation casino can be constructed. During the 2010 electoral campaign, candidate Kitzhaber strongly asserted his opposition to casinos in the Gorge, reaffirming the position that he has held consistently since 1998.

Even with Governor Kitzhaber's opposition, the Department of Interior is likely to continue its review of the Gorge casino application. Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Larry Echohawk is undertaking a comprehensive review of the agency's off-reservation gaming policies. Interior Department spokeswoman Kendra Barkoff released a statement in early January that, "The department will not make a final decision on any of the nine pending applications, including the Warm Springs Tribes' application, until Echohawk has completed this process later this spring."

Also in early January, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar took no action on a new gaming compact for the proposed casino in the Columbia River Gorge that was

*For more than a decade, polling has consistently shown that two-thirds of all Oregonians are opposed to the Gorge casino proposal.*

submitted by the Warm Springs Tribe and then-Governor Kulongoski in November 2010. By taking no action within 45 days, the compact is deemed approved, though it is meaningless unless three further obstacles are cleared: federal approval of the transfer of the Cascade Locks land into tribal trust status, approval of the casino itself, and concurrence by Oregon's governor of any casino approval. Moreover, Salazar's inaction on the compact violates federal gaming policy established in 2005, when then-Secretary Gale Norton denied a prior Gorge casino compact because the land was not held in trust and the casino had not been approved under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act. Friends of the Columbia Gorge is currently reviewing whether federal laws were violated by Secretary Salazar's failure to deny the compact.

The gaming compact in question does not authorize a casino in the Columbia River Gorge, and it does not affect the governor's veto authority over off-reservation casino proposals in the state. The compact could only affect how gaming might occur if a Gorge casino were to be approved some time in the future.

*The river shoreline and Mark O. Hatfield Wilderness Area, adjacent to the proposed casino site.*

Photo: Michael Lang







*Water quality and in-stream flows in the White Salmon River may be threatened by development.*

Photo: Courtesy of Wetplanetwhitewater.com

## White Salmon River Faces New Challenges

Rick Till, Conservation Legal Advocate  
rick@gorgefriends.org

**T**he prospects for return of salmon and steelhead to the White Salmon River were buoyed by recent decisions that will allow

the removal of Condit Dam. Unfortunately the White Salmon River Valley faces new threats from residential sprawl.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge recently appealed a proposal by Klickitat County to rezone hundreds of acres along the White Salmon River. The proposal would convert the land from forest and agricultural uses to rural residential uses. The affected area includes land within the Lower White Salmon Wild and Scenic River Area, despite the fact that converting this land to residential uses poses a direct threat to water quality and in-stream flows that are critical for the survival of salmon and steelhead.

Removal of Condit Dam will be a major step forward for salmon and steelhead conservation, but Klickitat County's proposed zoning would pave the way for hundreds of steps back. The proposal would also endanger the river's capacity to support whitewater recreation, which is a strong economic engine for the White Salmon River Valley. The threat to the river is so severe that the U.S. Forest Service is actively opposing the rezone. The Yakama Nation has also filed an appeal.

Friends will continue to work with our ally organizations, including Friends of the White Salmon River, Citizens for Common Sense on the White Salmon River, and CRAG Law Center, to protect the Lower White Salmon Wild and Scenic River. ■

For more than a decade, polling has consistently shown that two-thirds of all Oregonians are opposed to a Gorge casino. The proposed development would be located within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area; adjacent to a federally designated wilderness area; and visible from the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail, and the Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail.

Friends supports renewed efforts to identify a solution that would provide additional revenue and jobs for the Tribe, would be fair to other tribes in Oregon, and would protect the irreplaceable natural legacy of the Columbia Gorge. ■



Sandy Wright, Development Director  
sandy@gorgefriends.org

## Thanks for Stepping WAY UP!

In just five months, old and new supporters raised nearly \$280,000 in new support for Gorge protection.

It started in August when one generous donor challenged us with a \$50,000 matching gift if we could raise a matching \$50,000 in new membership and increased membership donations. We announced the challenge and our supporters stepped up. In just in three months we reached our \$50,000 goal. Inspired by the results,



our matching donor challenged us with an additional \$25,000 and again our supporters responded, topping the new goal in one month.

With matching funds fully claimed, the campaign was ending just as the year-end season of giving got underway. But then two additional matching donors stepped forward with another \$50,000 challenge to last through December or until the total goal of \$125,000 in matching funds was reached. On December 30th we hit the mark, but with supporters giving online right up until midnight on New Year's Eve, we exceeded the goal by nearly \$30,000!

In all, 567 members stepped up their giving and 518 new members joined! We had 31 new people join the Conservator Circle of members who give \$1,000 or more annually. And in the month of December, we received our largest number yet of online donations in a single month.

The \$155,000 raised by supporters, plus



Photo: Justin Carroll

Sandy Wright and Kevin Gorman kicked off the "Step Up" campaign at our annual picnic last summer.

the \$125,000 in matching funds, gives a fantastic boost to our work to protect the natural treasure of the Gorge. ■

### Save the Date!

Friends' 30th Annual Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, April 17. Announcements will be mailed in March. For information and details, see [www.gorgefriends.org](http://www.gorgefriends.org).

## Thank you, Dignity Memorial

Dignity Memorial made a \$5,000 gift to Friends of the Columbia Gorge during our "Step Up for the Gorge" campaign. To further support Friends they are offering customers a unique opportunity to establish an honorarium where family and friends can donate to our organization in honor of their loved one. Each donation made to Friends by Dignity Memorial clients will be matched up to another \$5,000.

In keeping with the growing sustainability movement Dignity Memorial offers green burial services in Oregon and SW Washington. All eleven of their funeral homes are members of the Green Burial Council and offer green burial products. For more information visit [dignitymemorial.com](http://dignitymemorial.com).

Photo: Calvin Sanders

## Special Gifts

October 20, 2010 – January 10, 2011

IN MEMORY OF LINCOLN ALGER  
JOHN AND TANJA ALGER

IN MEMORY OF LAIRD AND MARY BRODIE  
GERARD AND RITA VAN DEENE

IN MEMORY OF VIC CLAUSEN  
PHYLLIS CLAUSEN

IN MEMORY OF SANDRA COHEN  
ANN PREZYNA

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT DeTAR  
MARILYN AND GENNARO AVOLIO

IN MEMORY OF CARROLL DUBUAR  
DON AND PAT BURNET  
SUSAN CANTIN  
MAXINE L. CROOKHAM  
KAREN FERNS  
IVIS FUNDICHEL  
CHRISTINA ROSE AND GUY BURSTEIN  
RONNIE AND FRED ZUHLKE

IN MEMORY OF ANITA AND SVANTE EIKREM  
JAMES EIKREM AND ELIZABETH RICHARD

IN MEMORY OF MARK HAMILTON  
CERIS HAMILTON

IN MEMORY OF NED HAYES  
MARY AND F. TALMAGE EDMAN

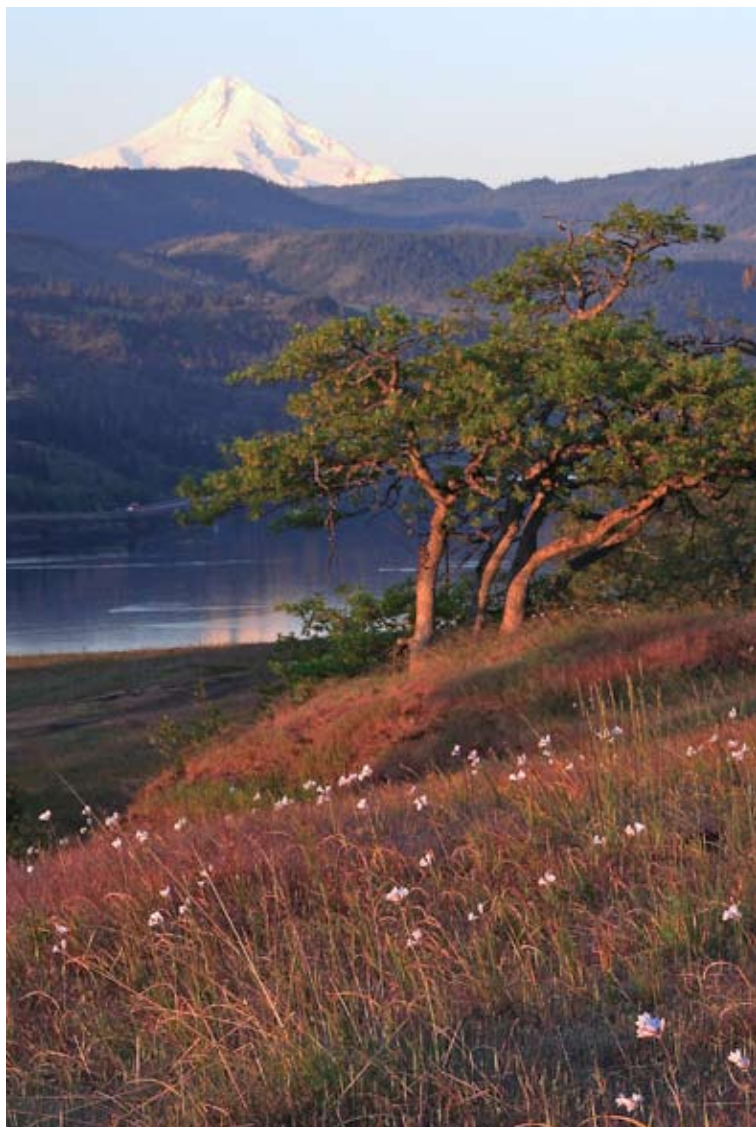
IN MEMORY OF HOLLY AND LOUISE HEBERT  
GRANT AND HOLLY HILDEN

IN MEMORY OF WILMER HILL  
JOAN HILL

IN MEMORY OF JOHN IRA IRWIN  
WILLIAM AND GAIL BONNIKSEN  
JOHN AND DOROTHY FENNER  
RONALD FREDRICKSON  
ANDREA GORDON

DWAYNE AND JOANNE HOFSTETTER  
CONNIE IRWIN  
GLORIA AND EDGAR MARTIN  
BETTY SCHMICH  
TERRELL AND HOWARD SOLAZZO  
DON AND DARLENE STEWARD  
THOMAS TUSHNER  
LORING AND MARGARET WINTHROP





Early morning at Catherine Creek.

Photo: Mark McConnell

## Featured Hike: Catherine Creek, WA

**Distance: 1.5 to 5.5 miles, 50- to 1,000-ft. elev. gain, depending which trail you choose**

Maegan Jossy, Outdoor Program Coordinator  
maegan@gorgefriends.org

Spring comes early to the eastern Gorge, and it's unbeatable at Catherine Creek, where colorful blooms splash across green hillsides and songbirds soar through bright blue skies. Catherine Creek offers gently rising terrain with open meadows, oak woodlands, and sweeping views of the river. The peak wildflower bloom is early to mid-April.

Visit [www.gorgefriends.org/hikes](http://www.gorgefriends.org/hikes) and click "Plan your own Gorge Hike." In the "Search Trails Database," enter "Catherine Creek." Four hike options will appear, from very easy to moderately strenuous. Take your pick, or join Friends at Catherine Creek on March 13 and June 4. See our hiking brochure for details. ■

**Directions:** Take I-84 to Hood River Exit 64. Cross the Hood River Bridge and turn right on WASR 14, heading east. Continue for 5.8 miles toward Rowland Lake, and turn left on Hwy 8. Drive 1.2 miles to the parking lot and trailhead on the left.

IN MEMORY OF JEANNE NORTON  
SUSAN LANGE

IN MEMORY OF CATHY OSWALD  
MERLE R. CLIFTON

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD LEE PENNELL  
NANCY PENNELL  
NORMA WILLIAMS

IN MEMORY OF JIM AND HELEN RUNNING  
LEIF RUNNING

IN MEMORY OF NANCY RUSSELL  
PATRICK WIEBER  
WILLIAM AND BARBARA HUTCHISON  
JOHN HALL AND MARGARET CHULA

IN MEMORY OF RICHARD STRATTON  
JAMES STRATTON

IN MEMORY OF LARRY UPSON  
LELAND AND DEBORAH BOND-UPSON

IN MEMORY OF KLINDT VIELBIG  
SARA L. GABIN

IN MEMORY OF DENNIS WEST  
JACOB AND BETTY REISS

IN MEMORY OF MATT WINTHROP  
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STEVE WANG AND KATHRYN  
HAMILTON WANG

IN HONOR OF MARTIN WINCH  
VICTOR PLATT

IN HONOR OF PETER WOOD  
POLLY AND JOHN WOOD

IN HONOR OF SUZI AND BOB YONATT  
STEVE WANG AND KATHRYN  
HAMILTON WANG





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Portland, Oregon 97240-0820

# Know Your Gorge: *Then and Now*

**T**he Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, established by Congress in 1986, celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2011.

To commemorate the occasion, our quarterly newsletters are providing windows to the past, from the 1860s to the early 1980s, presented in tandem with recent images. The photos shown here highlight the restoration of the Historic Columbia River Highway.

The Columbia River Highway was completed in 1922 but was upstaged just thirty years later when Interstate 84 opened. The older road fell into disuse and by the time the Scenic Area Act was passed in 1986, the Historic Columbia River Highway had succumbed to neglect and disrepair. Tunnels had been closed, railings were crumbling, and parts of the road were no longer safe to drive.

With passage of the Scenic Area Act, funding was provided to repair and restore the beautiful old road. The Oregon Legislature directed the Oregon Department of Transportation to develop plans to reconnect the entire highway. Oregon Department of Transportation, the Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee, and the Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway have set a goal for completion of this restoration project by 2016.

Toward that end, modest yet important restoration efforts have already been completed, including careful repair of damaged columns along the beautiful bridges that grace the highway. To learn more about the Historic Highway restoration plan, see the June 3 driving tour with ODOT's Kristen Stallman, listed in our spring hiking brochure. ■



Photo: Courtesy Oregon Dept. of Transportation

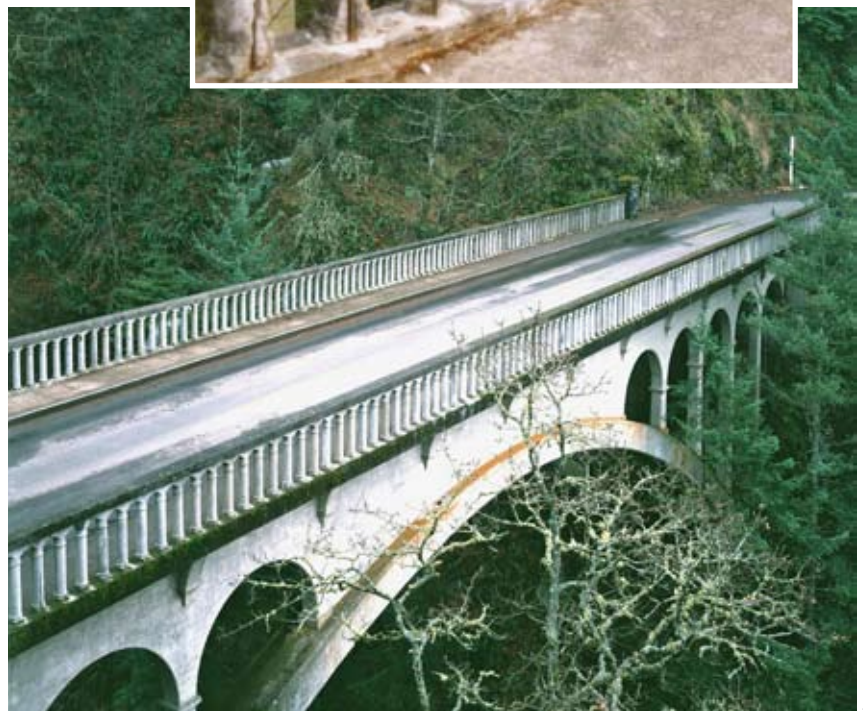


Photo: James Holloway

*The bridge at Shepherd's Dell.*