

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

Protecting the Gorge Since 1980

Winter 2012 Newsletter



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Spring/Summer
Hiking Brochure

Friends of the Columbia Gorge

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Link to us on Twitter and Facebook
from our website: www.gorgefriends.org



Coal industry proposals would mean up to 1,000 additional open-car coal trains through the Columbia Gorge annually, discharging emissions, soot, and coal dust. Photo: Dan Dancer / artforthesky.com

Stop Coal Trains in the Gorge

Right on the heels of Friends' incredible victory setting the Boardman coal-fired power plant on a path to closure, the Gorge faces a major new threat from the coal industry.

Proposed coal export facilities in Bellingham and Longview, Washington, would be fed by an additional 20 to 30 coal trains thundering through the Gorge every day, each 1½ miles long, carrying coal in open cars. BNSF Railway estimates that *each*

car would lose 500 to 2,000 pounds of coal during transport. Locomotive diesel emissions and coal dust would significantly increase air pollution problems in the Gorge, and exporting millions of tons of coal would worsen climate change worldwide.

Help protect our national scenic treasure! Visit www.gorgefriends.org and click "Protect the Gorge," then "Current Actions," to write a letter to decision makers opposing coal export trains in the Columbia Gorge. ■

Citizen Action Makes the Difference!

Your action to protect Gorge air quality is crucial to our success. Visit our website today to oppose this coal export plan. Follow the "Take Action" link to write a letter to stop coal trains in the Gorge!

www.gorgefriends.org

Oregon

Sen. Ron Wyden, (202) 224-5244
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Sen. Jeff Merkley, (202) 224-3753
senator@merkley.senate.gov
Rep. Earl Blumenauer, (202) 225-4811
Rep. Greg Walden, (202) 225-6730
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<http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm>
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Rep. Jamie Herrera Beutler, (202) 225-3536
Rep. Norm Dicks, (202) 225-5916
Rep. Doc Hastings, (202) 225-5816
Rep. Jay Inslee (202) 225-6311
Email your **Congressional Representative** by logging on to www.house.gov/writerep/

Cover photo: Spring on the Mosier Plateau. Photo: Jozsef Urmos / panojoe.ursos.net

Director's Letter

This past November 18, I would have given anything to be in two places at once. That's when Friends celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area with two birthday events – with more than 375 people in Portland and 100 more in Hood River.

The two events were a grand finale to an amazing anniversary year. We launched our *25 Trails, 25 Years* challenge in spring, and by November more than 60 people had hiked all 25 trails. We worked with Oregon Public Broadcasting on their 60-minute special about the National Scenic Area. We dedicated the Nancy Russell Overlook at Cape Horn with Senators Wyden and Merkley and the U.S. Forest Service. And through a settlement with PGE, we ensured a 2020 closure of the Boardman coal-fired power plant and secured \$1 million for Gorge land acquisition and enhancements.

We wanted to celebrate this milestone anniversary for the Gorge *in* the Gorge – home to many of our most passionate and effective members. But we also wanted to celebrate with our avid Portland members and supporters. So we did both, holding two events simultaneously.

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.

Development Director Sandy Wright (right) and member Pam Davee lit 25 candles on the anniversary cake in Portland.

Photo: Michael Horodyski / mjhpdx.com


To bring everyone together, we telecast my remarks in Portland out to the Gorge. It was symbolic of Friends' future: embracing the Gorge from within and without.

As I said that evening:

Gorge protection starts with individuals. The National Scenic Area Act was created by individuals. It is individuals – activists, hikers, business owners, conservation buyers – who will protect the Gorge. It is individuals – elected officials willing to stand up, government employees willing to speak up – who will protect the Gorge.

I'm not saying it's easy. The tide that presses up against protection, the tide that encourages mediocrity and stagnancy, is strong and prevalent. But it is a tide that will eventually roll out to sea, as it cannot stand up in the long run to passionate, committed individuals. History bears that out.

So as we join together, I call on you to renew your commitment to the place unlike any other place on the planet. Renew your commitment to speaking out, writing letters, giving generously, and basically making a nuisance of yourself as it relates to protecting the Columbia Gorge. Those who worked their tails off to get us here expect nothing less.



Kevin Gorman, Executive Director
kevin@gorgefriends.org



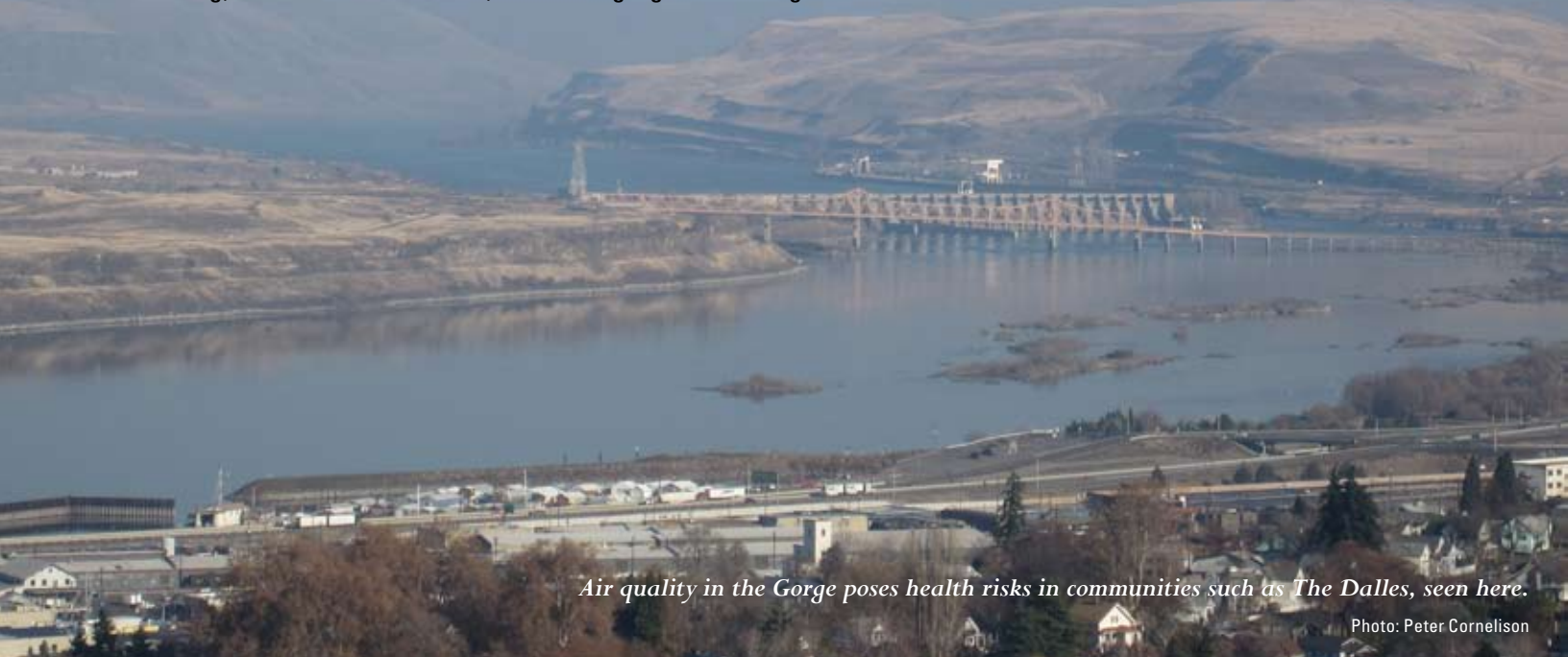
Photo: Ann Campbell



Protecting Columbia Gorge Air Quality

Gorge Commission's Unlawful Strategy Lacks Mandatory Measures

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org



Air quality in the Gorge poses health risks in communities such as The Dalles, seen here.

Photo: Peter Cornelison

Friends of the Columbia Gorge recently filed a legal appeal asking the Oregon Court of Appeals to require the Columbia River Gorge Commission and state agencies to better protect the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area from air pollution.

The complaint asks the court to reject the Commission's recent approval of an air quality strategy that fails to "protect and enhance" air quality consistent with federal and interstate laws that protect the National Scenic Area. This lawsuit comes as Gorge air quality faces serious new threats from new power plants on the western boundary of the Scenic Area and from proposed coal transport by rail through the Columbia Gorge.

Current conditions

Significant pollution levels already compromise the air in the Gorge, despite the Scenic Area's protected status as a national scenic treasure. U.S. Forest Service studies confirm that visibility in the Gorge is impaired at least 95% of the time. Acid

rain and fog events have reached the acidity of vinegar. Harms to ecosystems are well documented, and Native American cultural resources, including ancient petroglyphs, are at risk.

Due to its location, the Gorge is like the endpoint of two exhaust pipes, drawing in pollution generated at either end of the Gorge, from the Portland/Vancouver metro area to the west and the Columbia Basin to the east. Sources to the west are largely responsible for air pollution in summer, while sources further east generate most of the air pollution in winter. Still more sources within the Gorge inflict damage year-round.

Laws adopted in 2000 to protect the Columbia Gorge require state agencies to work with the Gorge Commission to implement an air quality strategy to clean up air pollution affecting the Gorge. Despite these laws, after 11 years of prolonged delay, state air quality agencies and the Gorge Commission recently adopted a do-nothing strategy that fails to

require any specific mandatory measures to reduce air pollution affecting the Columbia Gorge and its communities.

Unfortunately, this is not a new pattern. Years of inaction by various agencies responsible for cleaning up air pollution in the Gorge have forced conservation groups to turn to the court of public opinion and to the judiciary in order to clean up or shut down major sources of air pollution that are affecting the region.

Boardman victory

In 2008, Friends and its allies filed suit against Portland General Electric for ongoing violations of the Clean Air Act at PGE's Boardman coal-fired power plant – violations stretching back 30 years. Shortly after the groups filed the lawsuit, the federal Environmental Protection Agency initiated an enforcement action against PGE, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality asked PGE to comply with Clean Air Act requirements to reduce its emissions of haze-causing pollution.

Visibility in the Gorge is compromised at least 95% of the time.

Last summer, Friends and our allies reached a court-enforceable agreement with PGE. The agreement requires pollution reductions at the Boardman plant, independent monitoring, plant closure by 2020, and creation of a fund for environmental restoration and clean energy.

New threats

Now, new threats to air quality loom on the horizon. Coal industry interests hope to export millions of tons of coal annually via the ports of Longview, Bellingham, Coos Bay, and St. Helens, which means transporting coal through the Columbia Gorge from points east. In addition, two gas-fueled power plants are proposed just west of the Scenic Area boundary. Yet the recently adopted air quality strategy fails to require these new sources of pollution to protect air quality within the Scenic Area.

This coal export proposal would mean thousands of open-car coal trains passing through the Gorge annually, and could include construction of new railroad tracks and sidings within the Scenic Area. Diesel emissions from locomotives and fugitive coal dust from millions of uncovered cars would significantly degrade air quality in the Gorge. Yet nothing in the recently adopted air quality strategy would require these activities to ensure protection of Gorge air quality.

Near Portland, two new natural gas power plants are proposed in Troutdale, just 500 feet from the Scenic Area boundary. Under the new air quality strategy, it is unclear whether these plants face emission control requirements to protect Gorge air. The approved strategy lacks mandatory measures to ensure that proposed pollution sources limit or eliminate toxic emissions in order to protect the Columbia River Gorge.

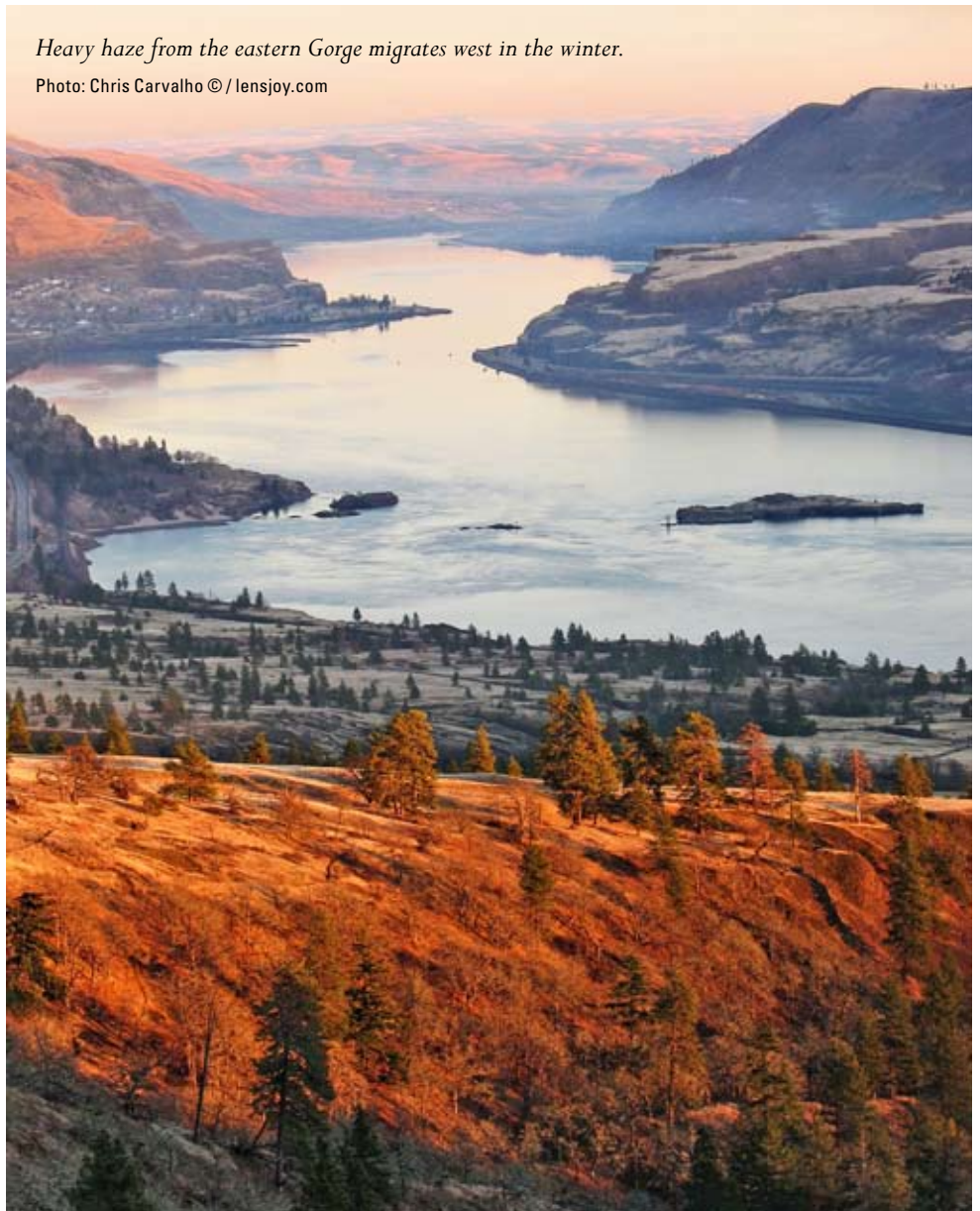
Looking ahead

Last November, along with countless Gorge lovers throughout the Northwest, Friends and our allies and supporters celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. Much has been accomplished in 25 years, but our work is not done. After

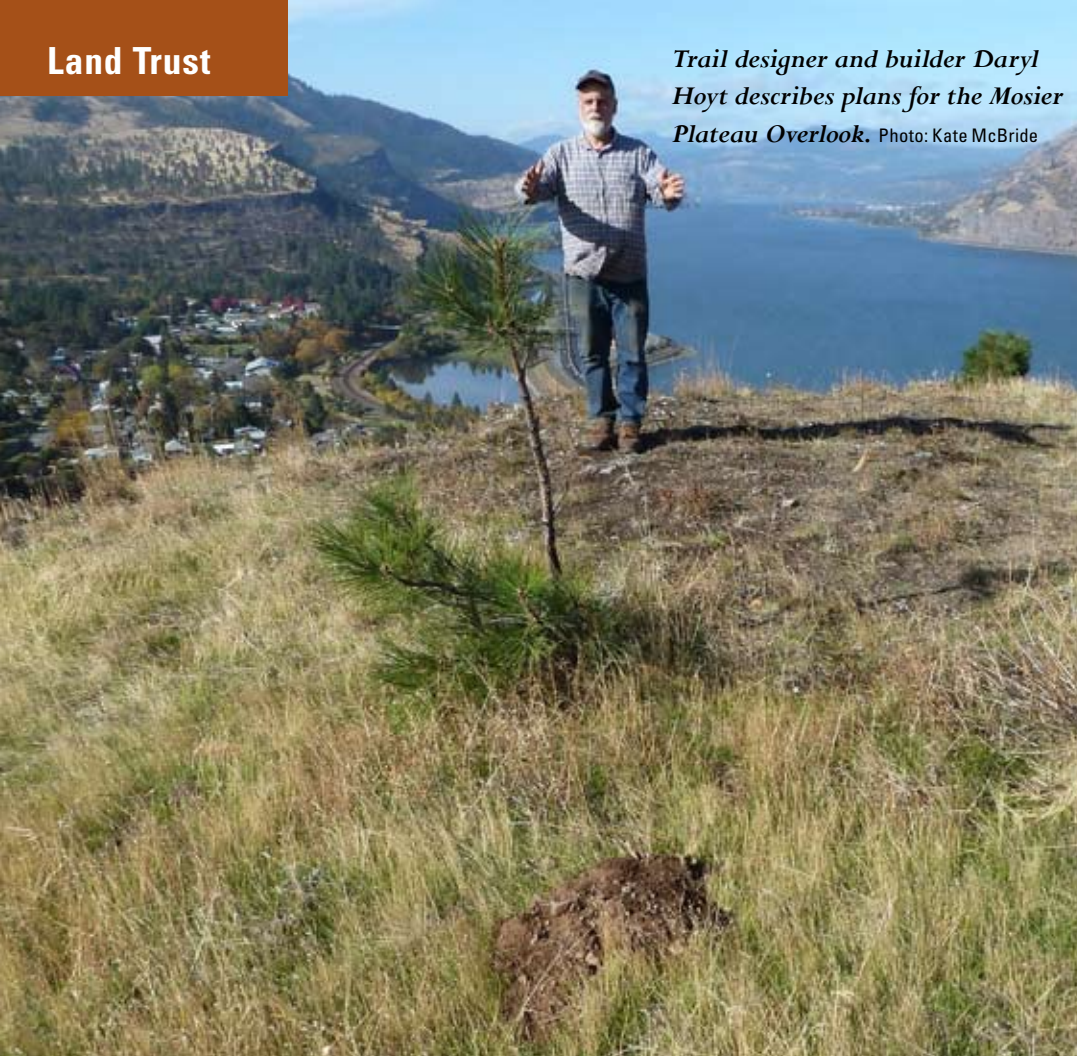
more than two decades of protection as a national scenic treasure, Columbia Gorge ecosystems and inhabitants should be able to enjoy clean, healthy air, but we aren't there yet. To make sure we reach that goal, Friends will continue our organizing and litigation work to ensure a legacy of clean air and blue skies for generations to come. ■

Heavy haze from the eastern Gorge migrates west in the winter.

Photo: Chris Carvalho © / lensjoy.com



Trail designer and builder Daryl Hoyt describes plans for the Mosier Plateau Overlook. Photo: Kate McBride



Gorge Towns to Trails: Making the Connection

Renee Tkach, GT2T Project Coordinator, renee@gorgefriends.org

Gorge Towns to Trails is a vision for a comprehensive trail system around the Columbia Gorge, linking communities with recreation, benefiting tourism, and highlighting and enhancing the beauty and wonder of the Columbia Gorge.

Our *Gorge Towns to Trails* (GT2T) goals:

- Create nearly 60 miles of trail connecting urban areas to National Scenic Area lands.
- Create new trails opening hidden beauty to Gorge recreation users;
- Benefit the Gorge economy by connecting trails to communities;
- Create contiguous protected lands that benefit wildlife.

Gorge Towns to Trails Begins!

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

Last October, our Land Trust’s Mosier Plateau property on the bluff directly east of the City of Mosier became the first active project in our ambitious *Gorge Towns to Trails* program. With help from Krista Thie and Daryl Hoyt of Twin Oaks Construction, more than two dozen volunteers began developing a trail that will link the Plateau to the trail below at Mosier Creek and to Pocket Park in the town itself.

With funding from REI and Oregon Parks Foundation, Twin Oaks laid out the route and did preliminary work on the three-foot-wide path. In just two days, our volunteer crew cleared more than a mile of the 1.4-mile trail. Volunteers raked,

shoveled, removed rocks, contoured banks, and manicured water runoff channels.

A generous gift of \$15,000 from long-time members in Richland, Washington, will allow for the construction of stairs on the steep slope down to Pocket Park later this year. The stairs will eliminate a series of switchbacks, keeping the trail’s impact on the land at a minimum. Additional funding is still being sought to complete the trail.

Mosier residents welcome this new trail, which will connect Pocket Park and Mosier Creek to the Plateau, with its Gorge panoramas and Mosier Valley views. The Mosier City Council endorses the new trail, and landowners David and LaVonne Povey, who donated much of the land for Mosier’s

Pocket Park, have generously agreed to donate a trail easement to connect Land Trust property and the city park.

Mosier Charter School is also helping with this project. Seventh grade science teacher Tracy Beach’s students are monitoring flora and fauna under the direction of the Columbia Gorge Ecology Institute. As the project progresses, the school may also assist with building benches, directional signs, and an overlook, as a community service project for students.

Join *Gorge Towns to Trails* Project Manager Renee Tkach at a hike on the property on April 21. See our spring hiking brochure or visit www.gorgefriends.org/hike for details. ■

Springhouse Cellar Winery

Peter Cornelison, Field Representative, peter@gorgefriends.org

James Matthisen began making wine 11 years ago on his beautiful 1875 farmstead near Rowena. The old rock springhouse on the property became the namesake of his business, Springhouse Cellar Winery, now located in Hood River’s historic cannery building near the Mount Hood Railroad Depot.

Springhouse Cellar Winery recently earned the title of “Sustainable Champion” from the Columbia Gorge Earth Center. In fact, James encourages customers to drink, rinse, and refill their wine bottles in the European tradition, thus keeping glass out of the landfill.

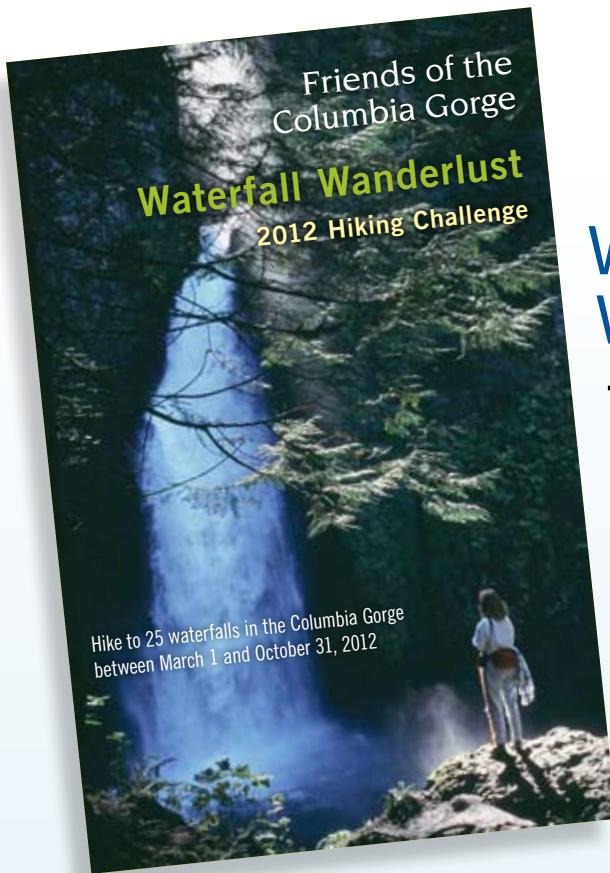
Supporting a “go local” ethic, the winery hosts local non-profit activities and community events, including Friends’ “Gorge on Tap” lecture series. James estimates that 95% of his wine is consumed in the Gorge, and most of his grapes are locally grown.

A Scenic Area fan, several years ago James worked with Friends’ staff and Barbara Robinson to put an easement on part of his Rowena property for a future trail. As James says, “It’s a blessing to live in the Columbia Gorge. It’s living in paradise!” ■



James Matthisen and Springhouse Cellar Winery are popular Hood River fixtures.

Photos: Peter Cornelison



Waterfall Wanderlust

This year’s hiking challenge, “Waterfall Wanderlust,” celebrates the countless cascading waterfalls in the Gorge. View our list of 25 beautiful falls in the hiking brochure, and join us on the trails. Details and registration at www.gorgefriends.org/waterfalls, or contact Maegan at maegan@gorgefriends.org or (503) 241-3762 x103. ■

Following the Music

In January, Friends of the Columbia Gorge said goodbye to Justin Carroll, our Grants and Content Specialist, as he moves on to pursue his musical career.

Justin began as a Friends volunteer in 2005, then became our executive assistant in 2006 before taking over grant writing and becoming our web and social media guru. We’ll miss Justin,



Photo: Courtesy of Justin Jude

and we wish him the best of luck. Visit www.justinjude.com to see where he is heading. We’ll be looking to fill this position by spring, so stay tuned. ■

Watch OPB’s documentary, “The Fight for Paradise,” about the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, online at watch.opb.org/video/2168433586.



Cascade Locks Casino Agreement Expires

Tribes' New Warm Springs Casino to Open in February

Michael Lang, Conservation Director, michael@gorgefriends.org

Just as the New Year began, the epic 12-year battle surrounding a proposal to build a massive casino in the heart of the Columbia Gorge apparently came to a quiet end. On January 5, the Port of Cascade Locks decided to allow its agreement with the Warm Springs Tribes to expire.

Since 2009, the Warm Springs Tribes and the Port of Cascade Locks have had a purchase and lease option agreement covering 60 acres owned by the Port. If exercised by the Tribes, the option agreement required the Port to sell 25

acres to the Tribes for the sole purpose of building an off-reservation casino, and to lease an additional 35 acres for ancillary development, including a hotel, restaurants, and parking facilities. The Tribes envisioned a massive casino and hotel complex that would have sprawled across 60 acres along the river in the heart of the Columbia Gorge.

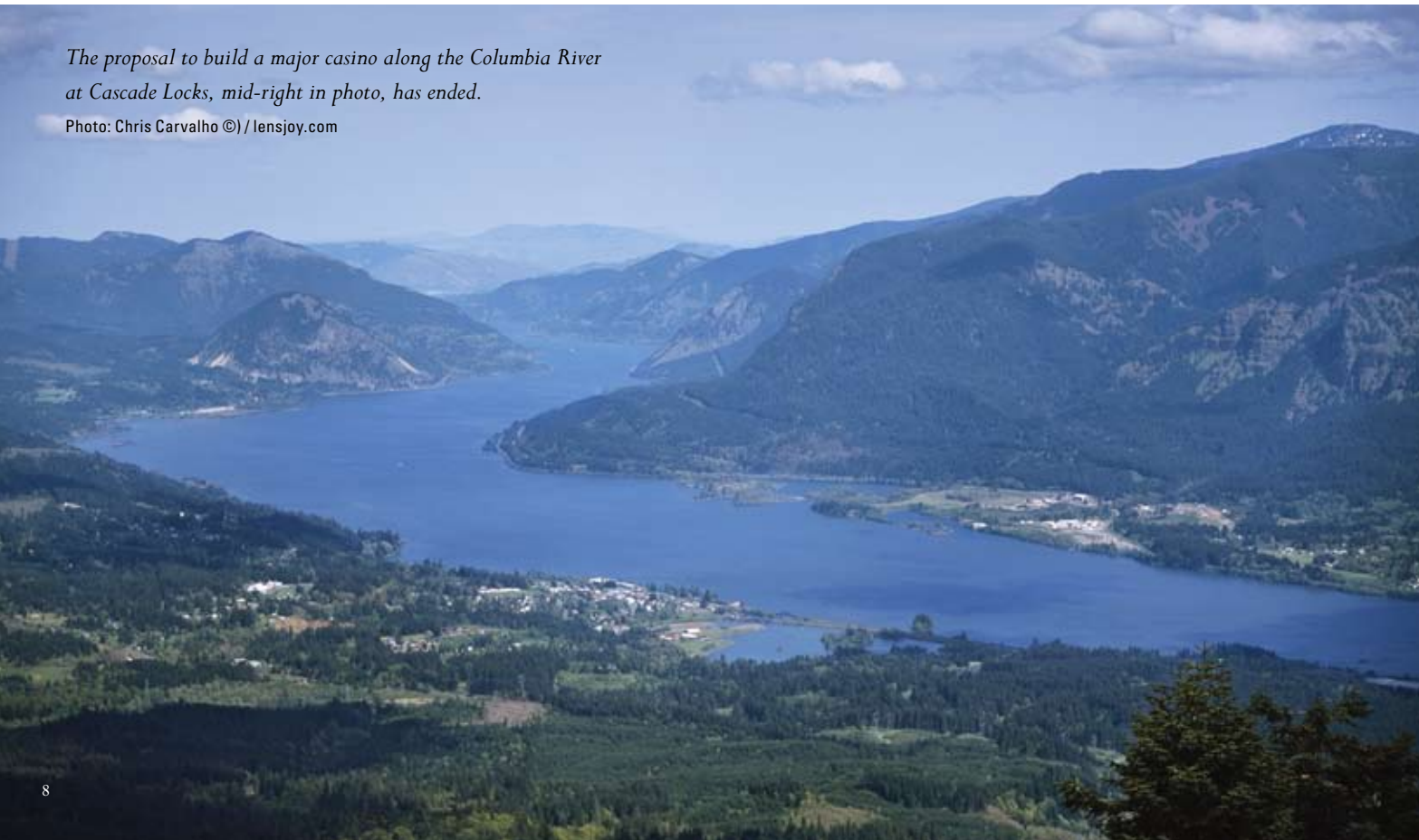
Expiration of the option agreement means the end of the pending casino application. Without having land in ownership or under option, the Tribes'

application for a trust land transfer and off-reservation casino is effectively incomplete and cannot be approved by the Department of Interior.

The Port's property has sat idle for 12 years while the Tribes and the Port pursued a long-shot proposition of gaining approval for the highly controversial project. Along the way, tribal lobbyists kept assuring the Port that the casino was a "done deal" in order to keep the Port in the game. In reality, it would have taken a perfect alignment of multiple factors for

The proposal to build a major casino along the Columbia River at Cascade Locks, mid-right in photo, has ended.

Photo: Chris Carvalho © / lensjoy.com



Urban Sprawl in The Dalles Threatens Scenic Area Land

Rick Till, Conservation Legal Advocate, rick@gorgefriends.org

The new on-reservation casino near Warm Springs is projected to boost business revenues, create jobs, and generate significant income for tribal members.

the casino to be approved. In 2011, Port Commissioners realized that the prospects for approval within the foreseeable future were infinitesimally small and decided to finally move on.

The prospect of a massive casino in Cascade Locks faced stiff obstacles and strong opposition from thousands of Oregonians across the political spectrum, including Friends of the Columbia Gorge. Opponents were concerned about the impact a sprawling casino complex would have on the Columbia Gorge and its rural communities.

After more than a decade of fighting for a Gorge location, the Warm Springs Tribes began construction of a new casino on tribal land along Highway 26 last spring. Located some 80 miles south of the Columbia River, the new casino near Warm Springs is projected to boost business revenues, create jobs, and generate significant income for tribal members on the 640,000-acre reservation.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge welcomes the Port's decision to let the land agreement expire, and we wish the Warm Springs Tribes great success with their new casino on Highway 26. ■



Undeveloped urban land in Dallesport, at left, offers ready expansion opportunities for The Dalles. Photo: Sam Beebe / Creative Commons

The City of The Dalles is developing plans to expand its urban area boundary to allow sprawling urban development on hundreds of acres of land currently protected by the National Scenic Area Act. Urban area boundaries are legal boundaries established by the Scenic Act, separating Gorge cities from surrounding open spaces, farms, watersheds, and parks. Friends will work to ensure that Scenic Area lands are protected from inappropriate development.

The National Scenic Area Act allows only minor revisions to existing urban areas, and only if the revisions would protect and enhance scenic, natural, cultural, and recreation resources of the Scenic Area and protect farmland, forestland, and open spaces. Otherwise, they cannot be approved.

Undeterred by the Scenic Act protections, city officials in The Dalles are proposing a major expansion of the urban area. The Dalles would add more than 600 square acres of land to the urban area and convert it to residential, commercial, and industrial development. Officials have also proposed placing an additional 900 acres of rural lands in urban reserves for potential future expansion.

Friends of the Columbia Gorge supports economic development and wise planning in Gorge urban areas, but development must be sustainable and avoid harming natural,

scenic, cultural, and recreational resources in order to comply with the requirements of the National Scenic Area Act.

Friends is encouraging decision makers to concentrate resources on sustainable growth within the existing urban area. Sustainable growth within the existing boundary means more livable communities; saving tax dollars on infrastructure improvements; providing transportation choices for the community; reduced dependence of fossil fuels; a cleaner, safer environment; and better protection for farmland, forestland, and open spaces.

If necessary, future urban growth for The Dalles could be realized in the adjacent community of Dallesport, Washington. Thousands of acres in Dallesport zoned for residential, commercial, and industrial uses lie undeveloped, and The Dalles has already invested in infrastructure at the Columbia Gorge Regional Airport, so utilizing that land would make good sense.

Decision makers in The Dalles are spending the City's limited financial resources pursuing urban expansion that is clearly inconsistent with the requirements of the National Scenic Area Act. Friends will continue to advocate for enforcement of the Scenic Area Act and will work to find solutions that support thriving local communities. ■

Sandy Wright, Development Director
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“Give Guide” Inspires Gorge Supporters

At the end of 2011, Friends of the Columbia Gorge was included in *Willamette Week*'s holiday “Give Guide,” which promotes support for Portland's top non-profits.

To help motivate gifts, *Willamette Week* encouraged readers to donate through the “Give Guide” website with offers of wine, beer, coffee, and coupons. Our business partner REI offered free water bottles to Friends' donors, and the Columbia Gorge Environmental Foundation matched all gifts to Friends, up to \$15,000.

This was our first year in the Guide, and we came in first for donations in the environmental category and seventh among all 100 charities listed. Even before the campaign ended December 31, we exceeded the \$15,000 goal, raising \$22,000. With the matching gift, our total came to \$37,000, and we welcomed 161 new members. Thanks to all our supporters for this year-end boost. ■

Save the Date: Friends' Annual Meeting is Sunday, April 15.

For details see www.gorgefriends.org and click “Events.”



Members Lisa Young, Keith Brown, Teresa Robbins, and Tim Young at Friends' celebration in Hood River. Photo: Peter Cornelison

Happy 25th, Scenic Area!

Friends of the Columbia Gorge celebrated the 25th anniversary of the Columbia Gorge National Scenic Area with parties in Hood River and Portland. The twin celebrations were wonderful affirmations of our members' and supporters' passion for the Columbia Gorge.

In Portland, 375 Gorge lovers attended the festivities, and nearly

100 came to our Hood River party. At both events, tribute was paid to members of the 1970s' “Save the Gorge Committee” and other unsung heroes of early Gorge protection. The celebrations featured presentations, live music, OPB's 25th anniversary documentary, and gorgeous birthday cakes saluting 25 years of Gorge protection. ■

Board member Polly Wood baked a specially designed cake for the occasion. Photo: Bob Hansen



Special Gifts

OCTOBER 21, 2011 - JANUARY 20, 2012

IN HONOR OF GAIL ACHTERMAN
JOHN AND SHARON ENGLISH

IN HONOR OF KELLY
AND ELISE ANDERSON
SCOTT SHLAES

IN HONOR OF DEBBIE ASAKAWA
TRAIL MIX HIKING CLUB

IN HONOR OF DEBY BARNHART
REBECCA BELLINGHAM

IN HONOR OF MARIANNE BREVARD
MARY BREVARD

IN HONOR OF BETTY BONHAM
CAROL AND JON LESCH

IN HONOR OF KEITH BROWN
AND THERESA ROBBINS
KEVIN BROWN AND DIANNA LYNN

IN HONOR OF CAROL
AND CHARLES BRUNNER
MIYOKO BRUNNER

IN HONOR OF CAROL AND MARK CHACE
JULIE PERKINS-BLEW

IN HONOR OF DR. MICHAEL COPPOCK
JERRY AND ANNE SPARLING

IN HONOR OF CYNTHIA COX
GRACE KUHN

IN HONOR OF ANN DEHAVEN
JEFF AND MICHELLE BROWN

IN HONOR OF KATHARINE DIACK
FRANCES N.D. STEARNS

IN HONOR OF RITA GARVEY
BEN GARVEY

IN HONOR OF WENDY GERLACH
MICHAEL AND NANCY PHILLIPS

IN HONOR OF SHELLEY GIMBAL
SANDY AND JEREMY SOMMER

IN HONOR OF MARIE V. HALL
ANN JOHNSON

IN HONOR OF DAN HUNTINGTON
FRIENDS OF DAN HUNTINGTON

IN HONOR OF JERUSALEM PEACEMAKERS
ALAN WINTER AND JOAN LEVINE

IN HONOR OF CAROL AND JON LESCH
M. LYNDA WONACOTT

IN HONOR OF MARY LYNN
MIKE HENDRICKS

IN HONOR OF LETTY MAYHEW
MARYLYN MAYHEW

IN HONOR OF CHARLINE AND
ERNE McDONALD
COLEEN BAKER

IN HONOR OF DANA AND MIKE MILLS
NORMA AND ARNOLD ZACK

IN HONOR OF GIAN MORELLI
MARYKAY MORELLI

IN HONOR OF SHEILA PASTORE
SHLOMO WASER

IN HONOR OF ROSEMARY PENNELL
NANCY PENNELL

IN HONOR OF AUBREY RUSSELL
MICHAEL AND NANCY PHILLIPS

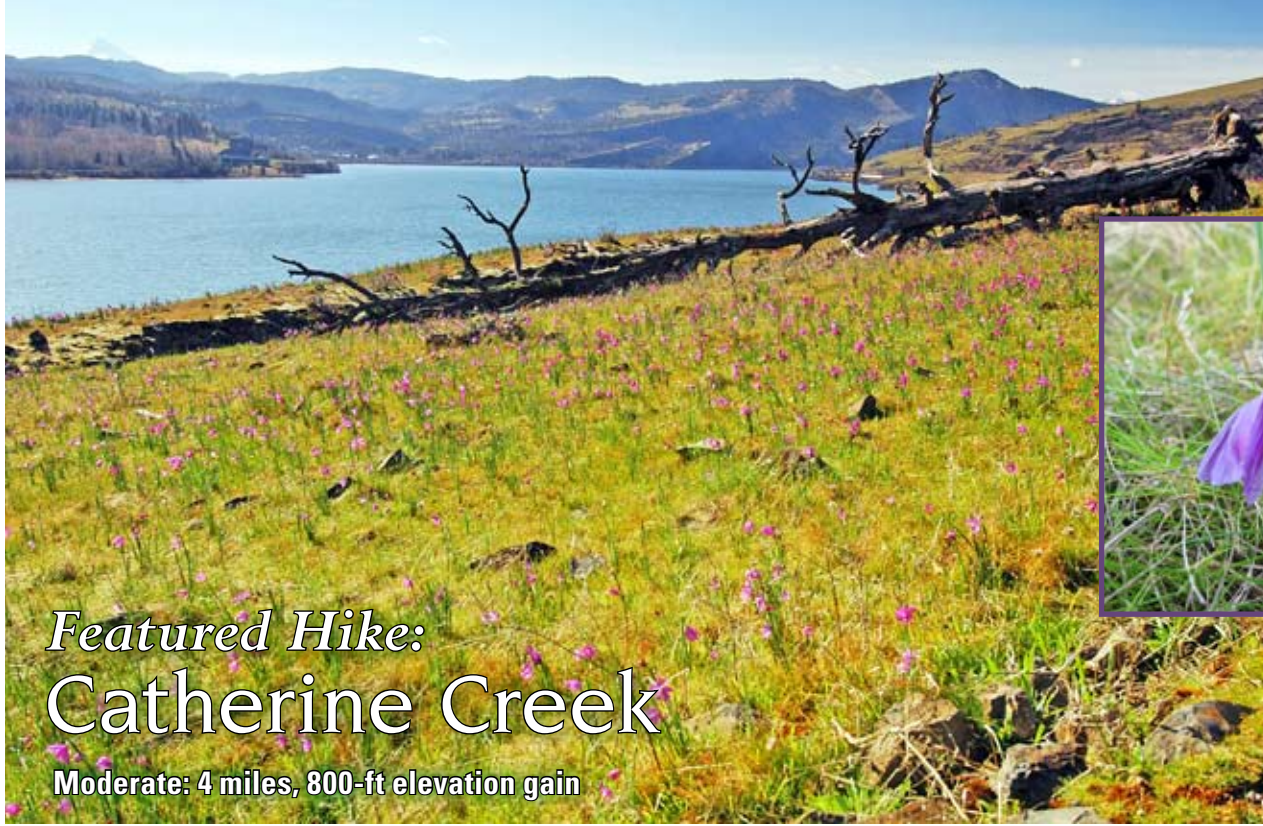
IN HONOR OF BEN SAVERY
NADIA WATTS

IN HONOR OF DOTTIE SCHOONMAKER
MARIE V. HALL

IN HONOR OF MAGDALENA SCHUSTER
GABRIELE SCHUSTER
AND ROBERT M. HAINES

IN HONOR OF NAOMI STOKES
MELINDA RICHARDS

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT AUTREY
EDWARD AND ROSALIE TANK
JOELLA WERLIN



Grass widow spotted on January 20.

Photo: Donna Enz



The lower slope at Catherine Creek.

Photo: Greg Lief / liefphoto.com

Featured Hike: Catherine Creek

Moderate: 4 miles, 800-ft elevation gain

Maegan Jossy, Outdoor Programs Coordinator
maegan@gorgefriends.org

Every spring, wildflower lovers flock to Catherine Creek for its sunny hillsides and kaleidoscope of bright-colored blooms. This January, hikers near Horsethief Butte spotted the very first wildflower of the year – a tiny salt-and-pepper lomatium – on New Year’s Day. A week later at Catherine Creek, a hiker saw a very early grass widow, popping up weeks ahead of schedule (see photo).

Starting in mid-February, flowers at Catherine Creek come on strong: yellow lomatiums, buttercups, and gold stars; saxifrages; prairie stars and oak’s toothwort; pink Columbia desert parsley and poet’s shooting stars. For the best wildflower viewing, hike the west loop trail on your own, or join us on Saturday, March 17. ■

Directions: From Bingen, travel east on WA Highway 14 for approximately 4.5 miles. Turn left on Old Highway 8 and follow it east for 1.5 miles to the trailhead. Trail maps at the trailhead show routes up the hillsides and an easy one-mile paved trail on the bluff above the river.

IN MEMORY OF CATAPULT, OUR KITTY
DEBORAH REDMAN

IN MEMORY OF DORIS CLEARY
NANCY AND WILLIAM MEYER

IN MEMORY OF TED DAVENPORT
SHARON NESBIT

IN MEMORY OF KAY KASER DODGE
EDWIN AND CAROL CUSHMAN
STEVE KASER
KYRA M. MACILVEEN
RONALD AND LINDA REILLY
CAROL SANTESSON
WILLIAM AND MARGARET STEIN
CHARLES AND CLARA TRAINER

IN MEMORY OF LOLA AND KOLA FELLMAN
ROBERT S. STREBIN JR

IN MEMORY OF EDITH GOLIK
DENNIS M. GOLIK

IN MEMORY OF KAY GRASING
CANDACE D. MORGAN

IN MEMORY OF JEAN HAMMOND
MARIE V. HALL

IN MEMORY OF RUSS JOLLEY
SUSAN MEDAK
MARY M. NAREY
SUSAN SAUL
BETSY TOLL

IN MEMORY OF ALICE CHRISTENSEN LAFKY
SANDRA CARLSON

IN MEMORY OF JANICE HALL MERZ
PATRICIA AND JOE CAMPBELL

IN MEMORY OF JACK MILLS
PHYLLIS CLAUSEN
RUTH C. HINSON

IN MEMORY OF VELMA NORMAN
JACK AND JANET WALKER

IN MEMORY OF JEANNE NORTON
PHYLLIS CLAUSEN

IN MEMORY OF QUENTIN PICKERING
KAREN PICKERING

IN MEMORY OF DR. JOHN W. REYNOLDS
KAREN JOHNSON
AND CYNTHIA BARRETT

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Know Your Gorge: Where in Sam Hill is the Convict Road?

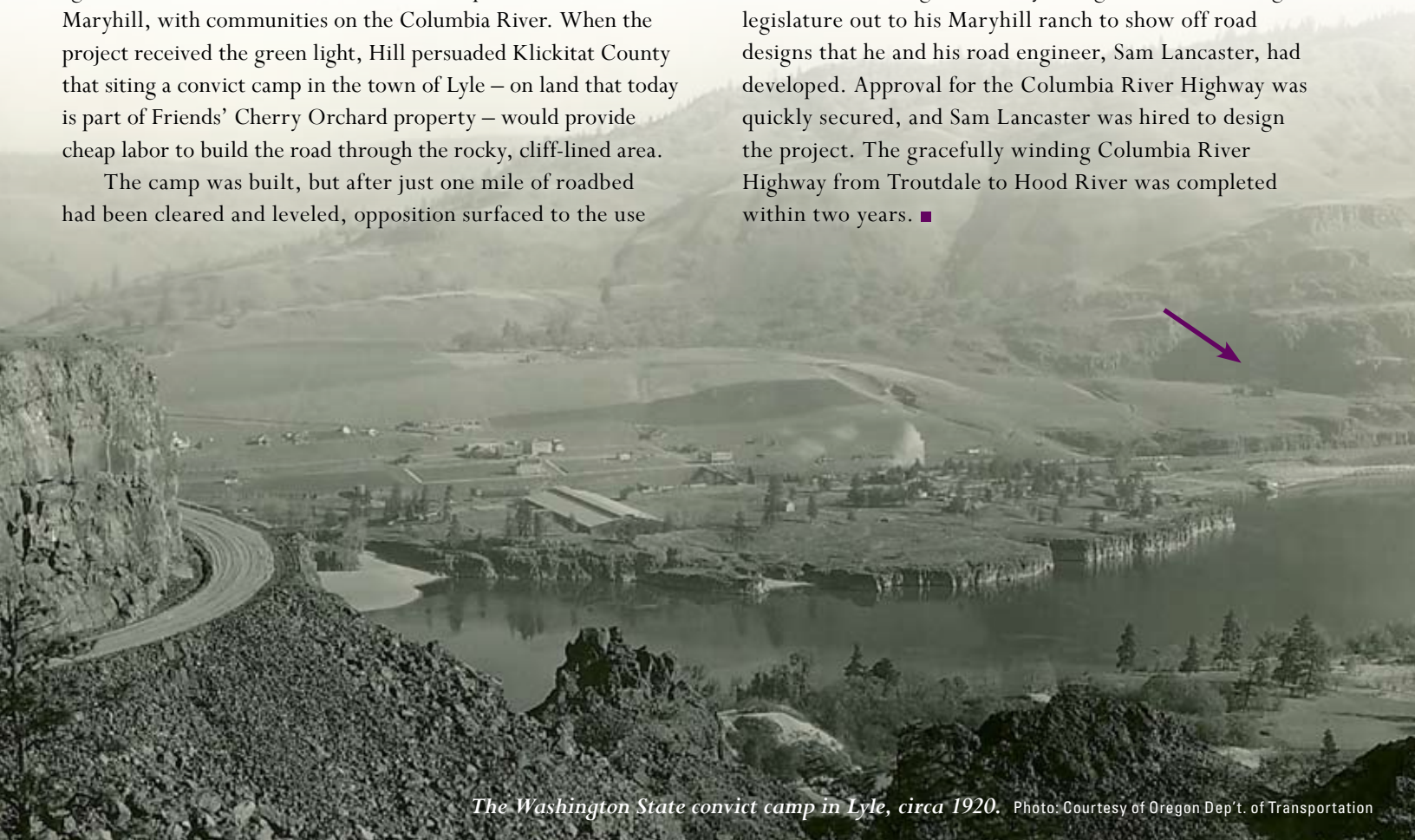
The Columbia River Gorge has been home to countless quirky characters with outsized ideas. One of the Gorge's most eccentric proponents of change and progress was Sam Hill, master road builder and business titan.

An energetic advocate for economic development and good roads, Sam Hill lobbied Washington State more than a century ago to build a road that would connect his upland townsite, called Maryhill, with communities on the Columbia River. When the project received the green light, Hill persuaded Klickitat County that siting a convict camp in the town of Lyle – on land that today is part of Friends' Cherry Orchard property – would provide cheap labor to build the road through the rocky, cliff-lined area.

The camp was built, but after just one mile of roadbed had been cleared and leveled, opposition surfaced to the use

of convict labor. With law-abiding workers driving the cost too high, the project was killed, much to Hill's dismay. Hardy hikers can still find remnants of the never-completed "convict road" above the Lyle tunnels.

Just as Hill's plans for a north bank highway were quashed, interest was growing in Oregon for a Gorge road. Sam Hill magnanimously brought the entire Oregon legislature out to his Maryhill ranch to show off road designs that he and his road engineer, Sam Lancaster, had developed. Approval for the Columbia River Highway was quickly secured, and Sam Lancaster was hired to design the project. The gracefully winding Columbia River Highway from Troutdale to Hood River was completed within two years. ■



The Washington State convict camp in Lyle, circa 1920. Photo: Courtesy of Oregon Dep't. of Transportation