

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA



DEAR SCENIC AREA FRIENDS, VISITORS, AND NEIGHBORS,

On November 6, 1986, President Ronald Regan created the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA) by signing the Scenic Area Act passed by Congress. Since then, we have been working to fulfill the two purposes of the act in conjunction with our partners. The 25th Anniversary of the act is just around the corner and I marvel at all that has been accomplished since then. We hope that you will join us in 2011 in celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the act at one of the planned events.

In 2010, the CRGNSA met numerous goals in fire management, restoration, wildlife projects, and recreation. We also partnered with numerous outstanding organizations to manage and improve the National Scenic Area. These partnerships evolved because surrounding community members and organizations have a broad and deep interest in the management of the National Scenic Area, and we welcome these partnerships.

We will continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders, provide outstanding recreation opportunities, utilize the best available science, and improve the health of the forest by restoration projects.

As you read the rest of our newsletter, we think you will find a deep connection between the management of the National Scenic Area and the communities and stakeholders associated with it. It is a long and important connection, one that we look forward to continuing in new and meaningful ways into the next 25 years.

DAN HARKENRIDER, AREA MANAGER



Upcoming Planning Projects

BZ Portage Trail

This project will construct a portage trail around BZ Falls in order to protect riparian vegetation and springs.

Collins Slide Forest Restoration

This restoration project will restore the area to a fire resilient landscape and protect oak woodland habitat.

Port of Cascade Locks Land Exchange

This land exchange will transfer 10 acres of National Forest System Lands to the city of Cascade Locks.

Outfitter and Guide Permit Reissuance

The Forest Service proposes to re-issue priority use permits for the Klickitat and White Salmon Rivers.

**All of these projects and more can be found on the SOPA at our website:
www.fs.fed.us/r6/columbia**

KIDS IN THE WOODS



ON JULY 22, 2010 THE URBAN NATURE OVERNIGHT PROGRAM (UNO) WAS IN ACTION AT EAGLE CREEK IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA (CRGNSA). CHILDREN FROM THE FOREST GROVE AND HILLSBORO BOYS, AND GIRLS CLUBS LEARNED ABOUT A MYRIAD OF THINGS FROM MACRO INVERTEBRATES TO HOW A FIRE ENGINE WORKS FROM FOREST SERVICE STAFF. THE NIGHT BEFORE, THE THIRTY-TWO CHILDREN PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM CAMPED AT THE EAGLE CREEK OVERLOOK. FOR OVER HALF OF THE CHILDREN, THIS WAS THEIR FIRST TIME CAMPING IN THE WOODS.

THE OREGON ZOO'S UNO PROGRAM IS CELEBRATING ITS TENTH ANNIVERSARY BRINGING URBAN YOUTH INTO THE WOODS. FOR THE PAST TEN YEARS, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE OREGON ZOO, THE FOREST SERVICE, THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, AND REI HAS FUELED THIS PROGRAM. CHILDREN ENTERING GRADES 3-5 WHO HAVE NOT TRADITIONALLY HAD ACCESS TO OUTDOOR EXPERIENCES LEARN RECREATION SKILLS AND BASIC ENVIRONMENTAL CONCEPTS THROUGH CAMPING. PRIOR TO CAMPING OVERNIGHT AT EAGLE CREEK, CHILDREN ATTENDED TWO ORIENTATION CLASSES TO LEARN TRACKING, WILD-LIFE OBSERVATION SKILLS AND THE "LEAVE NO TRACE" CAMPING PHILOSOPHY, WHICH ARE USED DURING THEIR CAMPING EXPERIENCE. THEY ALSO LEARNED HOW TO SET UP TENTS AND BUILD A CAMPSITE. IN THE EVENING, OVER S'MORES, THEY WERE VISITED BY SMOKEY BEAR AND A FOREST SERVICE RANGER THAT PROVIDED A CAMPFIRE TALK. IN THE MORNING, THEY PREPARED BREAKFAST ON CAMP STOVES, AND THEN MET THE FOREST SERVICE STAFF AT EAGLE CREEK.

ON THE SCENE WAS A WILDLAND FIRE ENGINE AND CREW TO TEACH THE CHILDREN ABOUT FIGHTING FIRE. ALL SORTS OF THINGS WERE STORED ON THE ENGINE LIKE CHAINSAWS AND WATER TANKS, BUT THE MOST EXCITING PART OF THIS STATION WAS THE FIRE HOSE. EACH CHILD TOOK THEIR TURN STARTING THE FIRE HOSE ON THE ENGINE WITH THE HELP OF THE ENGINE CREW. THE NEXT STATION TAUGHT THE CHILDREN HOW TO BE ANIMAL DETECTIVES. ROBYN BECK ASKED THEM, "HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT ANIMALS LIVE IN THE FOREST IF YOU NEVER SEE THEM?" "YOU LOOK FOR SIGNS OF ANIMALS." THEY RESPONDED. WHILE WALKING ALONG THE SHADY GLEN TRAIL, CHILDREN SPOTTED TRACKS AND SIGNS OF MANY DIFFERENT ANIMALS. THE HIGHLIGHT OF THIS WALK IN THE WOODS WAS THE BEAR SCAT THAT THEY ENCOUNTERED ON THE TRAIL. UPON SEEING THE SCAT, THE CHILDREN BURST INTO A SONG ABOUT SCAT THAT THEY HAD LEARNED FROM THE UNO PROGRAM.



SALMON WATCH

The Salmon Watch program was another smashing success this year. Fifth grade kids from The Dalles to Gresham, OR came to Eagle Creek to see the salmon running and learn about their lifecycle. These are a few of the candid moments we caught on camera.



WHAT'S BEEN GOING ON AT CATHERINE CREEK?



RESTORATION

The risk of catastrophic fire is always present in the Gorge. Therefore, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area is focusing on many fuels and restoration projects. One project is at Catherine Creek. Restoration activities taking place at Catherine Creek are to address heavy fuel loadings while restoring the natural landscape of oak woodlands and pine forests. A restoration plan was developed with interested members of the public who agreed to assist the Forest Service in a collaborative planning effort.

The result of this effort was an Environmental Assessment and decision, completed in 2007, to implement the Catherine Creek Restoration project. Implementation of the project is in its third year, and the Forest Service has thinned the oak, pine oak, and conifer forest landscapes. Having met most of the objectives and goals for thinning in the area, the Forest Service will reintroduce fire back into the landscape during the fall of 2011 using prescribed fire.

On October 9, 2009, old and new members of the public collaborative group went on a field trip to see the treatments to date in the Catherine Restoration project. Despite the rainy weather, the group listened as Forest Service staff presented the results of the restoration project. Roland Rose, Fuels Specialist, shared the lessons learned and the results of the project.

Connie Harrington, a Forest Service researcher with the Pacific Northwest Research Center, who has a breadth of experience working with Oak Ecosystems, completed a project review at Catherine Creek. Connie was thrilled that the National Scenic Area was completing restoration activities on a landscape scale. As Connie so aptly stated, "Today we have inherited a legacy left from the removal of natural occurring fire, past logging practices, and grazing activities. Today's threats range from invasive weeds to global warming. Our challenge as stewards of Catherine Creek is to determine what legacy we will leave the future generations who live and visit Catherine Creek."

Next fall, using prescribed fire, the Forest Service will complete the restoration project. We hope you will follow us in this journey to restore the lands in the CRGNSA.

RECREATION

Since the formation of the CRGNSA, participation in recreational activities has grown. With the exception of the Catherine Creek Universal Access Trail, no formal trail system or facilities were developed in the Catherine Creek area. Over the years, user made trails have formed a well-developed network of hiking and mountain bike trails, which intertwine across private and National Forest System lands acquired after the National Scenic Area designation in 1986.

The Catherine Creek area contains a large number of rare plants, unique occurrences of listed wildlife species, oak woodlands and shallow soil habitats. The area supports many rare or isolated populations of flora and fauna, which require appropriate measures to protect their viability. To protect these valuable resources, a recreation plan for the Catherine Creek and Coyote Wall area was in need.

In 2007, the Forest Service started a collaborative effort to develop a recreation plan for the Catherine Creek area. Three public meetings were held between November 2007 and April 2008, and a working group was developed that helped inform the Catherine Creek and Coyote Wall Environmental Assessment. In 2009, the Environmental Assessment was completed and a Decision Notice was issued. Subsequently appealed, the decision was withdrawn.

In order to address the appellants concerns, further analysis started in the spring of 2009. The Forest Service conducted field trips, informal meetings, a public meeting, and written public input through scoping for the Catherine Creek Recreation Plan Environmental Assessment that was released on June 23, 2010.

This has been one of the largest planning efforts on the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and a tremendous amount of effort put in by everyone involved. Our goal is to have a multi-use non-motorized trail system and associated support facilities that are compatible with environmental, tribal and private property concerns. Stay tuned for the Decision Notice that will be issued before the calendar year is over.



For more information on the 25th Anniversary of the Scenic Act visit

www.gorge25.com

PLEASE JOIN US IN OUR YEAR-LONG CELEBRATION OF THE COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA ACT!

25TH ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

- April 2011 - Release of Beautiful America's Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area 25th Anniversary book by renowned photographer, Peter Marbach.
- May through August 2011 - Gorge Art Tour. Tour exhibits and studios dedicated to celebrating the beauty of the gorge and gorge artists.
- August 13th, 2011 - Dedication of the US Forest Service overlook on the Cape Horn Trail, Followed by a celebratory reception at the Skamania Lodge with special guests and elected officials. Lastly, a community event concert on the river! Join us at the Cascade Locks Marine Park for a concert on the lawn overlooking the heart of the Columbia River Gorge.
- October or November 2011 - Closing dedication event for the 25th Anniversary at the Columbia River Gorge Discovery Center.
- Other events in the works include a gorge-wide student art contest, a time capsule event and several commemorative works of art.

RECOVERY ACT FUNDS HELP TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS ON THE PACIFIC CREST NATIONAL SCENIC TRAIL (PCT)

Economic Recovery funds enabled the CRGNSA to address needed repairs on the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT). Working with the Pacific Crest Trail Association (PCTA), a trail crew from the Student Conservation Association (SCA) was chosen to perform the work. SCA provides college and high school-aged members with hands-on conservation service opportunities in virtually every field imaginable in natural resources.

Working near Cedar Creek below Table Mt on the trail, the crew installed a gabion to enforce a stream bank that washes out every year. A gabion is a wire basket filled with rocks to provide stability as seen in the photo. They also rebuilt eroded trail segments to make it safe for visitors. The crew completed the trail work with members of the PCTA in late September.

Hailing from all over the country, the SCA crew was a diverse mix of college students with a range of experience. Many of them had never hiked on the Pacific Crest Trail until this summer. Before working on the CRGNSA, the crew had completed work on the Inyo, Willamette, and Gifford Pinchot National Forests all on the Pacific Crest Trail. The crew had a great time and completed much needed work on the PCT. This was a great example of a Recovery Project in action.



SCA Trail Crew with Dana Berthold of the PCTA

For more stories on Recovery Projects go to <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/ssrs/>