

# Conservation Watch

A Publication of the Garden Club of America

## Special Edition!

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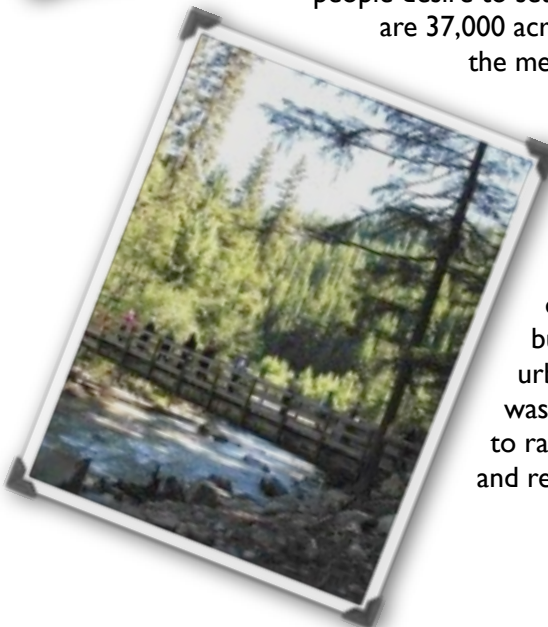
October, 2009

### The Oregon Way Lessons for All of America

Members of the Garden Club of America's Conservation and National Affairs and Legislation (NAL) Committees had long awaited our 2009 field trip to Oregon, from September 16<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup>. Why had we so eagerly anticipated this trip? What did we hope to learn there? We came to experience the majesty of the Columbia River Gorge and to help influence the current threat to the Columbia National Scenic Area. We went to learn as well about the forward-thinking way of life in Portland, where people live with the beauty of 11,249' Mt. Hood visible from their city. We wanted to understand more about the entire state of Oregon, where its citizens embrace the idea of sustainability.

And Oregon, now celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Statehood, met our expectations. We came to understand the benefits of modern forestry practices in a place where half the state is forestland, and to find out how the fish, animals, and plants of this beautiful place are surviving the effects of living man and the problems of climate change.

We explored Portland, judged by many to be America's greenest city. Clean, green, and outdoorsy, Portland embodies a place where people desire to settle and thrive. There are 37,000 acres of green space in the metro area. The birthplace of "car sharing," Portland boasts a modern public transportation system as well. It leads the country in environmentally conscious construction and has developed eco-friendly buildings in successful urban renewal areas. It was the first city in the U.S. to raise an existing freeway and replace it with a park! This





city, where it is “cool” not to water your lawn in summer, letting it go dormant, is hard at work on a Climate Action Plan. Even our group’s lodging was at a Green Seal-certified hotel. This city figured out its “carbon footprint” back in 1993 and continues to work to improve it.

Our trip whisked us past all that is Oregon. In Beaverton, we visited the renowned headquarters of the Nike Corporation, known for its landscaping vision and toured many innovative parks and public buildings. From there, we ventured out to various

types of forests seeing Douglas fir and Ponderosa pines, the impressive trees of Oregon, as well as clear mountain streams, fish ladders,

and fish hatcheries. We traveled eighty miles along the spectacular Columbia River

Gorge. We enjoyed beautiful fall weather on an overnight stay at historic Timberline Lodge on the slopes of Mt. Hood. Our early morning trip up the chairlift gave us views of the ever-diminishing glaciers on the angled peak of the mountain. We then headed west to the magnificent Pacific coastline to learn about this area, capped by a visit to a farm producing the wonderful local food we would dine on that very evening.

But, most impressive of all, was the mindset of Oregonians, the **“The Oregon Way.”** It is best illustrated by a quote by former Oregon Governor Tom McCall (1967-1975):

*“Heroes are not giant statues framed against a red sky. They are people who say:  
This is my community, and it’s my responsibility to make it better.”*

The people of Oregon truly are making their home better all the time. The goal to not be a promised land that becomes an environmental disaster causes them to plan realistically for their future. They are determined to maintain their magnificent environment. In this special issue of *Conservation Watch* we share with you our adventures there.

*Editor*

## **Portland, Oregon – a Leader in Green Technology**

Visiting Portland, Oregon was indeed a treat! We were greeted with green trees and flowers along the streets, a light rail system accessing all parts of the urban area, numerous large and small parks, and people walking or biking to work – all the result of far reaching goals for the development, livability, and sustainability of this city.

In 1973 Oregon’s citizens passed revolutionary planning regulations by designating urban growth boundaries to limit sprawl and save open space. The farmlands, natural areas and forests were in danger of being consumed by development as the population grew. These boundaries affect all municipalities in the state.

What have been the consequences? In the urban areas, it has resulted in a greater awareness of the importance of nature in their daily lives and a determination to maximize that effect. It has resulted in denser development of the available land – both for housing and commercial uses, and has encouraged the creation of natural areas within the city itself. The residents have stepped up to pay for these objectives. They have funded urban renewal, resulting in entirely new neighborhoods, and protected historic ones. The compact development enables residents to live close to their areas of work and play.

Portland, however, has gone far beyond these initial efforts. Susan Anderson, Director of the newly formed Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability, shared their successes and their long-term goals with us. These include a reduction in energy use, affordable housing, transportation options, and industries that create 'green jobs.' She spoke about the "20 minute neighborhood," a concept whereby all needed services are within a 20-minute walk or bike ride.

Consideration of the natural environment is a part of all decisions and is key to their commitment to quality of life. In 2006 voters passed a \$227.4 million bond issue to acquire natural areas, improve parks, and provide grants for bringing nature to the neighborhoods, resulting in 64% of the residents living within ¼ mile of a park or green space. There are 30 community gardens and 1300 vegetable plots - even one at City Hall that supplies the food banks. Farmers provide food for the numerous farmers' markets, and supply school lunchrooms with locally grown food.

The city has embraced the idea of sustainability, and their progress is noteworthy. They are raising funds to construct an Oregon Sustainability Center that will produce 100% of its energy needs on site, and capture all rainwater, gray-water and wastewater for reuse. Already 150 commercial buildings in Portland are LEED eligible. The example set by this city has Portland's architects being called upon to advise cities all over the world.



Future Sustainability Center

Conservation is the mindset in Portland, and so far 64% of the citizens are recycling. They have reduced energy and water use by 25%. Electrical power sources must provide 25% of power from renewable sources such as solar, wind, and sewer gas. Embracing new technologies, they hope that 50-60% of cars in the city will be electric by 2030, and efforts are in place to reduce vehicle emissions by 10% by 2010. Already, the city government has reduced its own energy consumption, saving \$3.5 million annually. Low interest loans for citizen energy improvements provide incentives for builders and residents alike to encourage green roofs and other low impact solutions. They are working on a Climate Action Plan with the goal of decreasing the city's carbon footprint by 80% by 2050.

Like any city, Portland still has challenges. A growing population, freeway congestion, aging roads and bridges, and infrastructure maintenance are the most pressing. However, it has set ambitious goals. The city believes in thinking ahead and working collaboratively with its citizens and through public-private partnerships.

Susan Anderson said, "We feel we can have economic development, an aesthetically pleasing community, and do the right thing for the environment." It was fascinating to hear about Portland's plans and the commitment of the entire community to conservation and sustainability.

*Joan Murphy, Columbine G.C. (AZ) – Zone XII  
GCA Conservation/NAL Resource Committee*

### **Land Use in Portland, the Poster Child for Anti-Sprawl**

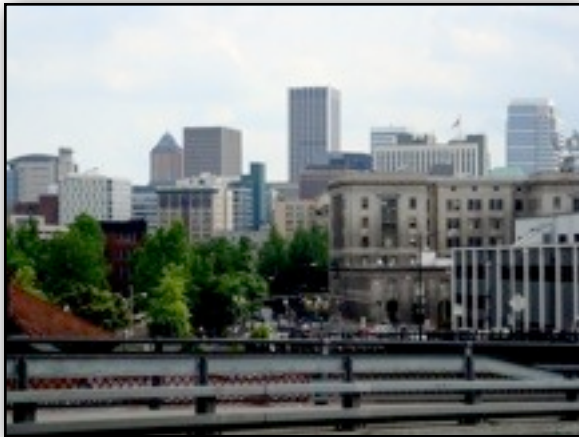
No other urban area in the U.S. has received more attention than Portland in its efforts to contain the ravages of sprawl, preserving the natural beauty, quality of life, and unbroken vistas of Pacific Northwest

landscapes. Portland is a model for other cities to follow. Robert Bruegmann, in his book, *Sprawl: A Compact History*, states, “The longest-running, most extensive, best documented, and most controversial assault on sprawl in this country has been the one launched by the State of Oregon and the Portland urban area.”

This began in 1973 with the passage of the act that defined the landmark urban growth area. Each municipality was then required to draw a line in the sand beyond which urbanization could not march. Portland’s urban growth boundary (UGB) was established in 1979. The boundary can only expand if a certain density is reached within its limits. Even then, it can only be expanded minimally. Greater Portland has remained aesthetically pleasing and it has met the smart growth goal of greatly increased density. In the decade before the imposition of the UGB, new population in Portland was growing at the rate of about 2500 people per square mile. In the decade since the UGB was established, population grew at the density rate of over 3700 people per square mile, a 53% increase.

The motivation for this anti-sprawl campaign resulted because of the migration of people from California and other states coming to Oregon. They wanted to escape traffic, poor air quality, and some social issues in their previous locations. Gov. Tom McCall led the effort at the time to create the anti-sprawl, smart growth legislation. At one point he declared, “Come visit us again and again. This is a state of excitement. But for heaven’s sake, don’t come here to live. We aren’t being hostile or provincial. We are being prudent. We are being realistic. We know we cannot support a human tidal wave of migration. We haven’t the jobs for that kind of onrush. We haven’t the facilities. And we are determined to maintain our magnificent environment.”

What are the consequences of this program? On the positive side, development within the UGB has been smart. Builders have to fill vacant lots in the city first before expanding outward. Urban areas have seen resurgence. Roads don’t have to be extended into sprawling suburbs. Mass transit has flourished. And the farming industry outside the boundary has continued to thrive.



What are the problems of increased population density? Single-family homes are giving way to multi-family housing. Portland’s population has surged 25% in two decades while the developed land has expanded by only 2%. The result is skyrocketing housing prices, based on supply and demand. Housing is becoming too expensive for policemen, firefighters, and health care workers who are needed in the city. Taxes have escalated to pay for increased demands on urban infrastructure. Portland is attempting to address some of these issues in its future planning.

In spite of these obstacles, however, Portland has shown that anti-sprawl can and must work for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Diamond and Noonan, in their book, *Land Use in America*, praise Portland for its community-based planning. This planning, which integrates land use, transportation, neighborhood revitalization, and economic growth, has proven that a city can come together and manage its growth and mold its own future.

Jane Whitaker, Cherokee G.C. (GA) – Zone VIII  
GCA Conservation Committee - Vice-Chair, *Land Use*

[Sources:

Bruegmann, Robert, *Sprawl: A Compact History*.

PBS Broadcast with Lee Hochberg, June, 2000, “Drawing the Line on Urban Sprawl.”

Diamond, Henry L. and Noonan, Patrick F., *Land Use in America*.

Websites: [www.sprawlcity.org/portland.html](http://www.sprawlcity.org/portland.html) and [www.kgw.com](http://www.kgw.com).

## Portland's Amazing Transportation System

I first met "MAX" at the Portland Oregon airport. MAX was right there at the airport to meet me and take me downtown, within a block of my hotel, for only 95 cents.

Sleek and attractive, MAX stands for the Metropolitan Area Express, an amenity that provided a great introduction to Portland for the GCA committee members. It was just the beginning of the story of a forward-thinking, community and environmentally-oriented city that for decades has been reaping billions of dollars in economic development as a result of its green attitude.

MAX is just one of Portland's four light rail lines, part of the TriMet public transit system of light rail, streetcars, and buses. There are 44 miles of MAX with 64 stations, an 8-mile streetcar line along narrower downtown streets, and 16 "frequent service" bus lines (a bus every 15 minutes or less), plus additional bus routes and commuter rail lines. There are easy connections to the Amtrak train system and the airport.



Portland has a long history of public transportation. As early as 1872 there were horse and mule-drawn streetcars. Changes occurred with the increasing use of the automobile, building of highways, population growth, and the development of suburbs. By 1966, The Columbia River Region Association, a new regional planning agency, was created to address transportation issues, particularly the traffic congestion created by cars. In January of 1969, a Mass Transit Advisory Commission was appointed. Portland's City Council created the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet) to take over local bus systems and provide regional transit service. Within months, Oregon's legislature passed a bill to create transit districts. The districts could raise revenue through a payroll tax, which began by the end of 1969.

In 1973, the newly passed Federal Aid Highway Act allowed states to transfer funds from the Interstate budget to fund alternative road or transit projects. Local jurisdictions rejected the \$400 million Mt. Hood Freeway project in response to citizen opposition. The region then sought to transfer some of the federal funds to local transit projects. The Oregon Public Utility Commission proposed a regional light rail system (generally along existing railroad right of ways). And, the Oregon legislature passed a bill establishing land use laws to protect livability and prevent sprawl. As Oregon Congressman Earl

Blumenauer told the GCA attendees during our visit, “If you build roads, the cars will come. We don’t need a *Highway Commission*; we need a *Transportation Commission!*”

TriMet and Portland have moved forward relentlessly since then, starting with the Transit Mall, and a “fareless square” within the downtown area in 1975. The Transit Mall is a set of public transit corridors through the center of downtown. More specifically, it is a pair of one-way streets - one for northbound traffic, the other for southbound - along which two of the three lanes are restricted to transit vehicles only. It is an integral part of the TriMet strategy to increase transit use and to reduce air pollution by eliminating short auto trips. It triggered millions of dollars in new downtown construction and solidified downtown as a retailing center.

In 1978, Metro was created, an elected *regional* government with responsibility to plan the region’s future. The “urban growth boundary” (UGB) was determined, to control urban sprawl and preserve farms and forests. The first light rail line opened in 1980. The Regional Transportation Plan was formed to focus growth within the UGB and around the light rail system. Continuing even today, there has been growth and expansion of light rail and streetcars; each expansion has advanced development in the area. The 2040 Growth Concept, a long-range plan, was adopted as early as 1995 to increase density along major transportation and light rail corridors and avoid sprawl into farmlands. Support for downtown streetcar lines grew as western Portland neighborhoods felt the strain of growth and urban revival.

This integrated transportation system provides service for the city and its suburbs. It is both wheelchair and bicycle-friendly, runs on a reliable schedule, preserves communities and neighborhoods, promotes economic development, reduces congestion and air pollution, encourages public art, uses green construction practices, and saves millions in construction costs. This is accomplished through reuse and recycling of materials, storm water management, and lower energy/emissions vehicles. Metro received \$53.3 million in federal stimulus funds, targeted for TIP, the Transit Investment Plan for maintenance and infrastructure, including improved rider amenities, such as the “transit tracker.” A traveler can enter a stop ID number into his I-pod or computer to find out where his train is!

Decades of committed, forward-thinking citizens have created an economical, easy-to-use transit system in Portland, enjoyed by the GCA visitors in September. After a fascinating walk along River Place, guided by a well-informed Portland Garden Club member, we boarded a streetcar to travel to the Nob Hill/NW neighborhood for our meeting in the lovely PGC clubhouse. Imagine my delight in learning that my community, Providence, Rhode Island, is planning development of cross-town streetcars to link academic, medical and business communities! A proponent of the plan cited Portland as one of the first American cities to establish a major modern streetcar system. Along with parks, riverwalks, bicycle lanes, vital business and residential communities, and green buildings, the Portland transit system is an integral part of the success of this wonderful city. Nice to meet you, MAX!

*Frances Trafton, Perennial Planters G.C. (RI)  
Zone II Conservation/NAL Representative*

### **Portland Biking Fast Facts**

16,000 daily bike riders in downtown Portland.

270 miles of on-street biking lanes, biking boulevards and paved trails in metro area.

Biking is a \$100 million a year business in Portland.

There is a bike event in Portland every 27 minutes.

20% less driving in Portland than in the average American community.

## **Portland Farmers Markets – Bringing the Best of the Country to the Heart of the City**

What better way to spend an early Saturday morning in Portland than to visit one of their famous Farmers Markets? Members of the committees had a chance to stroll around one of the vibrant markets held from March through December at five locations throughout the Portland metropolitan area. We arrived before the opening bell so that we could meet with the Director of the markets. We watched while the final stages of the beautiful market offerings – vegetables, fruits, flowers, cheeses, breads - were arranged and ready for the first customers. Garden club members learned that over 250 vendors sell their products at the markets where over half a million dollars changes hands each year. Much of this revenue supports family farms from all over Oregon and serves as a small business incubator. Features of the Portland markets are the chef cooking demonstrations, the Taste the Place recipe station, kid's market tours and cooking classes, and consultations with gardening specialists. Unique to the Portland Farmers Market is the ability to use tokens purchased at the Volunteers Table to use for purchases, rather than always having to have cash at each booth. In addition, the market offers valet parking when shopping is done to conveniently pick up one's yummy purchases. The only disappointing thing about our tour of the market was that we could not buy any of the tempting fresh produce for our own kitchens!



*Elva Busch, Santa Fe G.C. - Zone XII  
GCA Conservation Watch Editor*

## **No Place on Earth Like the Columbia Gorge!**

The Columbia River cuts a sea level passage through the Cascade Mountains, creating a magnificent channel, called the Columbia Gorge. Its origin sixteen million years ago, before the mountains rose, involves volcanoes, ice and water. In eastern Washington, Oregon, and western Idaho, cracks in the earth's surface opened up and from deep below the earth's crust, lava erupted. The lava was viscous and voluminous and as it erupted it flowed along the slopes of the Columbia River to the Pacific Ocean. As it cooled it became basalt, which can be seen in the gorge. Most came from the Grand Ronde Basalt flow, which originated near Joseph, Oregon. It contained enough basalt to build a 7-foot deep by 100 feet wide basalt freeway to the moon!

About 700,000 years ago three processes occurred that continued to form the Columbia Gorge as we know it today. The first process was a period of volcano building when Mt. Defiance and Larch Mountain were formed. The second was the up arching of the Cascade Mountains, which created a bow that was about 4000 feet high. Mt. Defiance and Larch Mt. sit on top of that arch, each adding about 1000 feet in height. (Mt. Defiance at a height of 4980 feet is the highest point in the Gorge.) The third process was erosion, which was aided by the last Ice Age. The ability of the river to erode was enhanced by the Ice Age in two ways. During glacial advance the earth's water was captured in ice, lowering the sea level by

as much as 300 feet. This meant that the slope to the ocean was increased, steepening the gradient of the water through the gorge, which increased the rate of flow. During glacial retreats, spring weather was characterized by heavy rain and floods, which increased the volume of water through the Gorge. Both of these actions - the velocity of the water and the volume - carved a deep v-shaped gorge.

Toward the end of the last Ice Age, about 12,000 years ago, the ice sheet from Canada advanced, blocking the Clark Fork River and creating a 2000-foot ice dam. Over time, water accumulated behind the dam forming a body of water half the size of Lake Michigan - Glacial Lake Missoula. Eventually the dam burst in an explosive event, much like a champagne cork bursting from a bottle. This released a 2000-foot wave traveling at 65 miles an hour that swept across eastern Washington where it found the drainage of the Columbia. This wall of water containing ice and rocks from Montana, was around 900 feet deep by the time it reached The Dalles area, and 400 feet by the time it reached today's Portland area. It is believed such glacial floods happened many times over a period of a million years. The water broadened the Columbia channel and, especially on the Oregon side, this widening suspended streams hundreds of feet up, creating waterfalls. When the floods ended, the Columbia Gorge was no longer v-shaped, but the u-shape we see today.



The Cascade Mountain range creates a barrier between east and west Oregon and Washington. The 80-mile drive through the Gorge offers a real-life 3-D science display illustrating the effect of a rain shadow. At the point where the river crosses through the Cascades, the annual rainfall is over 76 inches. As you drive east from that point the annual rainfall drops off at a rate of 2.5 inches per mile. In just 20 miles annual rainfall is at 31 inches. The eastern end of the Gorge only receives about 11 inches of rain a year. It is the wide range of rainfall and the change from river level, less than 100 feet above sea level, to almost 5000 feet at the top of Mt. Defiance that gives rise to an enormous diversity of habitats and makes the Columbia Gorge home to over 800 species of native wildflowers, 15 of which are endemic.

In 1986, as a result of work driven by Portland Garden Club member Nancy Russell, with the support of the Conservation Committee of Garden Club of America, the first ever National Scenic Area Act was passed to protect this unique area. It has been an ongoing battle to see that the Management Plan



providing guidelines for this area was followed. Nancy Russell passed away in 2008, but many of the people she inspired continue her work to protect and preserve the Columbia Gorge.

Written in the flagstones of an overlook on the Historic Columbia River Highway are the words, “*The Columbia Gorge, a work of art, worthy of a lifetime of protection.*” Our national treasure needs the vigilant protection of not one person, not one lifetime, but the loving care of many.

*Angie Moore, Portland (OR) Garden Club Member – Zone XII  
Board Member, Friends of the Columbia Gorge*

[The vision of the Friends of the Columbia Gorge is to ensure that the beautiful and wild Columbia Gorge remains a place apart, an unspoiled treasure for generations to come.]

## **Casino Still Threatens Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area** ***ACTION NEEDED NOW***

The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs in north central Oregon plan to build the Bridge of the Gods Resort and Casino within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. The Department of the Interior has not yet reached its decision to approve this proposed “*off reservation*” casino.

At issue is the fact that the casino would be a 109-mile one-way commute from the reservation's main city of Warm Springs. Currently, the decision to approve development of the resort and casino is tied to consideration by the Bureau of Indian Affairs of a new off-reservation gaming policy that could make it easier for Indian tribes to put into trust land remote from their reservations. It is anticipated that decisions on pending proposals for such casinos will be made quickly once the broad policy decision is reached. In addition, the final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the fee-to-trust transfer of approximately 25 acres of land within the city of Cascade Locks, Oregon has not yet been submitted.

After a strong grass roots movement spearheaded by Portland Garden Club member Nancy Russell, to preserve the integrity of the gorge, the federal government recognized the rare beauty of the Gorge in 1986 by designating it as our country's first National Scenic Area. The Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act of 1986 acknowledged the need to safeguard the natural beauty of the Gorge and “*to protect and provide for the enhancement of the scenic, cultural, recreational, and natural resources of the Columbia River Gorge.*”

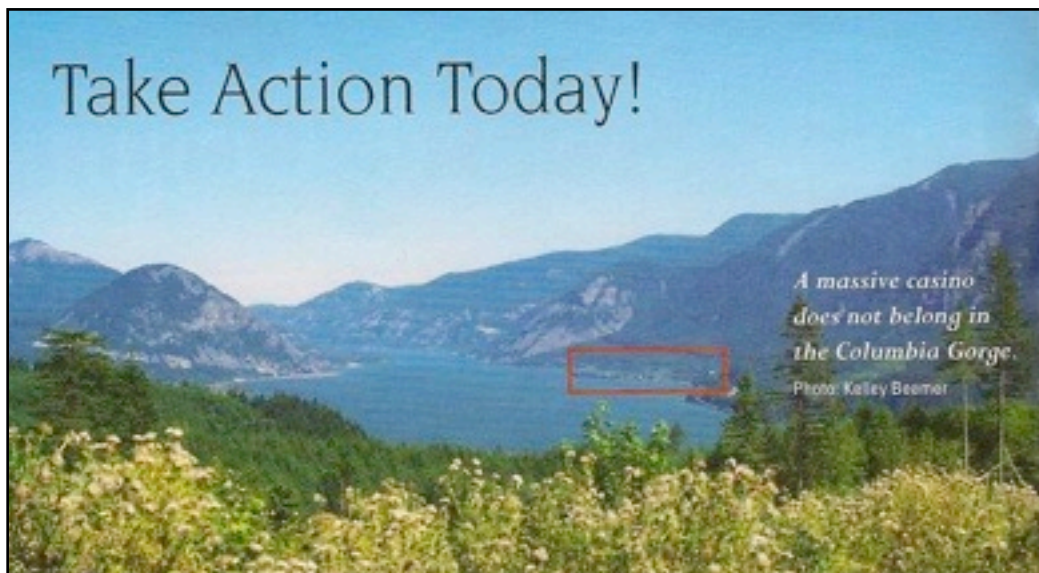


Photo Credit: Friends of the Columbia Gorge.

The construction and placement of the gambling casino, hotel facility, accompanying parking lot, and new highway interchange needed to access the new development would degrade rather than enhance the Gorge's natural and historic environment. The casino and hotel alone would cover nearly 600,000 square feet. The facilities would require one million sq. ft. of parking (over 22 acres) to accommodate an estimated 1 – 2 million cars yearly. In addition, the influx of traffic on the nearby Interstate would necessitate the rebuilding of a highway interchange and further damage the environment.

The Gorge is home to a wide variety of native wildlife and plant species, including the bald eagle. There are more than 800 species of wildflowers (15 endemics); six endangered and threatened animal species; and more than 40 other sensitive species that are already diminishing rapidly. Further air pollution, particularly at the levels anticipated from a large influx of automobiles, would adversely affect the flora and fauna of the Gorge, as well as humans.

In addition, threatened native salmon runs would further diminish due to the adverse effects of storm water runoff pollutants. In a letter dated August 11, 2006, the National Marine Fisheries Service stated that the proposed gambling casino and its required facilities have the potential to adversely affect the already embattled and protected species of salmon and steelhead trout in the area.

The Columbia River Gorge is a spectacular and unique 80-mile long, 4,000 foot deep sea level cut through the Cascade Mountain Range. It is the crown jewel of Oregon. As the first ever National Scenic Area, the Columbia River Gorge belongs to all Oregonians and to all Americans. Prohibiting the development of a gambling casino will preserve the Columbia River Gorge's natural beauty for generations to come.

The Portland Garden Club hopes that GCA garden clubs and members across the United States will respond to our call for help by writing letters, sending faxes, emails and making calls to their national legislators and the Department of Interior (DOI) and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) stating their opposition.

**Your action is needed now!**

Here's the information you need:  
Fax letters to the Department of  
Interior:  
The Honorable Ken Salazar,  
Secretary  
1849 C St. N.W.  
Washington, DC 10120

Fax: 202-208-6956

Fax copies of your letter to the following  
individuals:

Paula Hart  
Acting Director  
Office of Indian Gaming

Fax: 202-219-3153

and to:  
Mr. Larry EchoHawk  
Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs

Telephone: 202-208-3710  
Fax: 201-510-1516

You can also call Secretary Salazar's office and express your opposition to a casino in the Gorge at:  
202-208-3100.

Also, go online and fill out a brief email message to the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Feedback Form at:  
[feedback@bia.gov](mailto:feedback@bia.gov) No email? Call the BIA at 202-208-7163 or fax a letter to 202-208-5320.

Thank you!

*Georgia Schell, Portland (OR) G.C. – Zone XII  
Conservation Committee Chair*

### **Portland Garden Club's Nancy Russell, the Modern Day John Muir**

Through the years the name Nancy Russell has become almost synonymous with the preservation of the Columbia River Gorge in Oregon. Nancy revered the Gorge, hiked it year round, and became one with its solitude, spectacular waterfalls, unique wildflowers and hidden spaces. Her personality suited the role that she would one day take as savior of this natural wonder.

Nancy was relentless in everything she did. When Nancy was in grade school she went with others to City Council and petitioned to close off 17<sup>th</sup> Street in the West Hills for sledding for the children in the neighborhood. It remains a safe sledding spot for neighborhood children today. She spent her summers in the Eastern Cascades, becoming a skilled outdoorswoman and developing a great appreciation for the Oregon wilderness. For years her early mornings started with a swim across Elk Lake. She was a self-taught tennis player who rarely lost a match. She often won on sheer determination. Her younger sister said that Nancy would simply never give up!

This determination colored everything she did. In the 1970's Nancy met the architect, John Yeon, son of the roadmaster of the Historic Columbia River Highway, and agreed to spearhead an effort to preserve the Gorge. Through her passion and persistence, vision and courage, Nancy became a tireless advocate for Gorge protection. She co-founded Friends of the Columbia Gorge, the only non-profit organization solely dedicated to protecting the Gorge. Nancy hiked, formed the Portland Garden Club Wildflower Hikers, lectured, lobbied, testified and fundraised. Because of her advocacy, she found herself involved in one of the northwest's most divisive, hostile and long-running land use wars. In 1986, through Nancy's tenacity, President Reagan signed the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Act to permanently protect the area, the jewel in



Oregon's crown, for the enjoyment of future generations.

Nancy became a "one woman land trust." Through land purchases and exchanges, Nancy bought lands from willing sellers, cleared them and returned them to their original form before opening them up to the public. She and her friend, Barbara Robinson, from The Native Plant Society replanted the Memaloose Whirligig Property which is now an amazing overlook blanketed with native lupine, balsam root and Columbia desert parsley. She advocated for the purchase of over 40,000 acres of public lands to protect them from development. She then either donated or sold the lands at her purchased value to the U.S. Forest Service or other agencies. At the present time the Cape Horn property overlooking the Gorge is being established as a trailhead in honor of Nancy and her husband Bruce Russell.

Nancy and Bruce made a major impact in the town of Mosier by donating \$500,000 to the State Parks to keep cars off the restored section of the historic Mosier Tunnel, which is now used only by hikers and bicyclists. The entire Gorge area now realizes that Nancy stopped urban sprawl here. Shortly after Nancy's death, Jonathan Nicholas said in *The Oregonian* newspaper, "Without Nancy Russell, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area would be a huge strip mall."

After a brave four-year battle with ALS/Lou Gehrig's Disease, Nancy died in September, 2008. Shortly before she died, Nancy stated that she was thankful that she "got something done in life." As an activist, philanthropist, historian and botanist, Nancy's lifetime commitment to protecting The Gorge as a national scenic treasure needs to be carried on.

Now there is the threat of a proposed mega-casino in the heart of The Gorge. Such a massive development would be larger than the town of Cascade Locks where it is to be built, changing the character of the town forever. We must all strive to protect and preserve this area. We can all make a difference, as we've learned from Nancy Russell. She truly was our modern day John Muir.

*Patricia Mead Wall, 12 Portland (OR) G.C. – Zone XII  
GCA Conservation/NAL Resource Committee*

### **Abundance of Fresh Water: An Illusion**

*Whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting over.* We have all heard Mark Twain's oft-quoted refrain. In the past we might have intellectualized this as a reality for the American West or Sub-Saharan Africa, but as Joe Whitworth, Executive Director of Oregon's Freshwater Trust, insisted, water issues of today, whether of water quality or water quantity, affect us all, only to be ignored at our increasing peril. Whitworth spoke to members of the Conservation and NAL Committees during the recent fall trip. While his organizational efforts are focused on Oregon, much of his message can be extrapolated to apply to the nation and to the world.

We, plants and animals, have a fresh water problem. Fresh water resources are vitally important for industry, agriculture, and recreation; they are essential to our economy and our quality of life. Improving the health of our rivers and streams is a vital social need facing everyone. It is not simply a matter of a 'green' or 'eco-friendly' lifestyle choice for some.

Surprisingly, the United States is the third largest exporter of water, mainly through the export of cereals. Cereals manufactured in our country take a great deal of water to produce. As a result of this exportation, diets are changing worldwide, and with that, an exponential increase in the amount of water is needed to support that diet.

We suffer from the illusion of abundance. Although 70% of the earth is covered in water, less than 3% is fresh water. Of that, less than 1% is readily available in streams, lakes and rivers. A finite amount of fresh

water on the earth must satisfy the demands and needs of an ever-growing population. What once serviced one billion people must now service 6 billion and counting. Meanwhile we misuse and/or abuse the fresh water we have. We simply cannot afford that luxury. Predictions of climate change impact paint an even darker picture, placing further stress on fresh water. There are hundreds of thousands of miles of degraded rivers and streams throughout the United States, all in need of repair. Even in Oregon, a state known for being a leader in environmental issues, a quarter of its stream miles are unable to fully support aquatic life, while another 44% are threatened.



GCA members rowing down the clean Rogue River of Oregon

Joe Whitworth offered us one paradigm for success. Integral to ensuring fresh water quality and quantity is the restoration of our rivers and streams, the focus of Whitworth's Freshwater Trust. A major problem in Oregon and the rest of the country lies in the permitting and funding process for stream restoration. It often becomes mired in bureaucratic red tape. Projects requiring only a few weeks of actual dirt work often take up to thirty months to fund, permit and complete. In the process neighbors become enemies, agencies sue, money is wasted. As a result, Freshwater Trust has developed a 'turbo tax' software program for stream restoration work, the first of its kind in the country. As Whitworth explained, *StreamBank* is an innovative, web-based tool that engages 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies to address a 21<sup>st</sup> century problem. Through the use of this program all the different players – landowners, government agencies, funders, contractors – are brought together through the software, various concerns addressed holistically, and the whole effort expedited. Freshwater Trust is engaging in its second year of successful projects that utilize *StreamBank*. (For more information, go to: [www.freshwatertrust.org](http://www.freshwatertrust.org)).

This program provides only one piece in the larger puzzle, however. We must learn to use our limited water supplies more responsibly, and we must commit to the restoration and preservation of what we have. In the thirty plus years following the Clean Water Act of 1973, great progress was made in addressing water pollution problems. Today however, there are signs we are backsliding. Today we can no longer afford just to fight **over** water while we drink our whiskey; we must fight **for** our waters.

Wendy Kelsey, G.C. of Houston (TX) – Zone IX  
Former 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chair, GCA NAL Committee 2007-09

[Sources: Joe Whitworth, Freshwater Trust.]

## The Three R's of Forestry: Replenish, Restore and Renew

Visits to three varied forest communities were a highlight of the last day of the Oregon conservation trip. The first stop was Stimson Lumber Company's private, commercial forest, one tract of a 500,000 acre, four-state timber domain. The forest was a patchwork of clear cuts and stands of Douglas firs of various ages to be cut on a 45 – 60 year rotation. Since Douglas firs require full sun, they are planted as a monoculture. As good stewards, the company has adopted Forest Stewardship Initiative (FSI) requirements and clear cuts only up to 80 acres, not the maximum allowed of 120 acres. They comply with federal and state regulations, leaving 2 snags (standing dead trees) per acre to serve as habitat for wildlife and tree buffers along streambeds, usually alder, which offer shade and coolness for the fish habitat.

In Oregon a clear cut must be reforested within six years. Seedlings are planted with *mycorrhiza*\* to encourage growth. The area surrounding the new seedlings is kept free of weeds for the first year or two with the use of herbicides. At harvest, some of the tree's biomass is exported and used for pulp, but enough residue, or "slash," is left to nourish the soil.



The patchwork of forestland where we were as seen on Google maps.

Next stop was the Ecola Creek Forest Reserve. Under the auspices of the North Coast Land Conservancy, it is an example of a flourishing, healthy forest sustainably managed to preserve old growth, protect the water supply and water quality of the area, enhance the salmon habitat, and encourage diversity of wildlife.

Western Hemlock and Sitka Spruce are the dominant trees here, thriving in the wet, moist environment of the Oregon coast. This forest has all the characteristics of an old growth forest: large trees, snags, a multilayered canopy and "nurse" logs. Nurse logs are trees that have fallen. As they decompose, they provide moisture and nutrients for a variety of insects and plants. This forest was testimony of a commitment to retain habitat and retain a healthy forest.

The final site was the Tillamook Forest Center in the middle of the Tillamook Burn Site. Beginning in 1933, this forest burned in six-year cycles through 1951. Completely denuded of its old growth, the opportunity arose to test new philosophies of forest management beyond revenue production. Since 1998, the Oregon Department of Forests has been committed to achieving the "greatest permanent value," defined as establishing "productive and sustainable forest ecosystems . . . providing a full range of social, economic, and environmental benefits to the people of Oregon." Seeking to combine needed revenue with habitat protection, structure based management has been adopted. This program seeks to balance moderate clear cutting with regenerated forest. It includes five different forest stand profiles:



replanted, closed canopy, thinned, two-layer canopy, and older growth.

Exposure to these three forests was an enlightening awakening to the complexities and possibilities of a variety of types of forest management. In each case, sustainability was the goal, although the treatments were diverse.

*Kathy Gillespie, Pasadena (CA) G.C. - Zone XII  
GCA Conservation Committee, Vice-Chair – Forests/Redwoods*

[\* *Mycorrhiza* is a class of different types of fungi that symbiotically feed off of plants. This symbiosis provides a jointly beneficial relationship between the fungus colony and its host plant.]

## Fire!

Fire brings to the forefront all the complexities of forest management. Seeking balance is the key to utilizing the natural occurrence of fire to nurture growth rather than to destroy resources. Poor management produces results like the disasters of the mid-century, the Tillamook fires – all caused by careless logging – which were instrumental in spurring the state of Oregon to strengthen its fire prevention regulations.

Historically, Oregon's forests were a mix of young growth and older stands, with change driven by water and natural disturbance cycles such as fires started by lightning or set intentionally by pre-settlement Native Americans. These frequent seasonal fires helped to remove fuels, such as dead trees, twigs and needles from the forest.

For the past 100 years, forest fires have been aggressively suppressed, resulting in an unnatural buildup of dead trees and brush. As a result, in recent years, fires have been larger and burned hotter than they did in earlier times, destroying vast ecosystems and threatening rural landscapes where people live.

It's a myth that if left alone all forests would be in old growth. Fire, wind or insects eventually destroy every forest stand, allowing the natural cycle of regeneration to begin anew. Oregon currently practices thinning and controlled burning based on historic fire patterns to restore forests to healthy conditions. This strategy reduces fuel in the forest, in turn reducing the risk of unnaturally severe, destructive fires while improving the overall health of the forest.

In 1971, Oregon was the first state to seek to protect its forestlands by passing its own Forest Protection Act. With new studies and scientific data, it remains a work in progress. More recently, Oregon has undertaken a massive evaluation of its forestlands. Approximately half



Oregon Fire Tower

of Oregon's land area is forestland - 28 million acres. Historic records of fire help forest managers determine the prescriptions required to address their overall management, including their fires. A primary hurdle has been determining who owns the forest: the federal government (60%), private landowners (36%), or state, local and tribal owners (4%). Each has different goals, making for a complex management situation.

The Cascade Crest is the chief geographic boundary between Oregon's forest types. The Cascades tend to trap the warm winds and moisture that come in from the Pacific, creating a west side climate that is temperate, wet and dominated much of the year by gray days and plenty of moisture. East of the Cascades there are a lot more sunny days, less moisture, and the more pronounced temperature variation between summer and winter. In drier forests east of the Cascades, fuel reduction results in fewer severe fires. Wetter forests to the west burn less frequently, but experience more fuel buildup and more brutal, high-intensity wildfires.

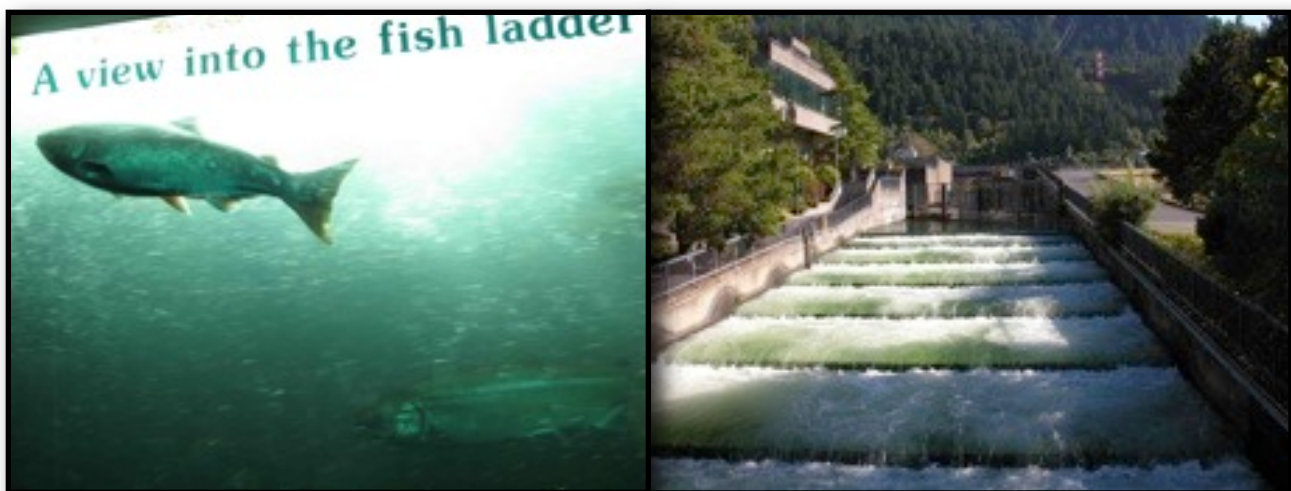
We learned about a common sense vision for forests in Oregon. The past legacy of unsustainable logging practices is giving way to a more comprehensive vision, which includes a broader design of forest stewardship. A responsible program of restoration thinning to return dense tree plantations of one type of tree to health, while protecting remaining older forests from further degradation is the plan for the future. The goal is to provide better habitats and to respond more effectively to natural disturbances and climate change.

*Nancy Howard, Essex County Adirondack G.C. (NY) - Zone III  
GCA NAL Committee, Vice-Chair – Forests/Redwoods*

### **Wins and Losses for Icon of the Pacific Northwest**

The story of salmon and steelhead trout in the Columbia-Snake River Basin is not only awe-inspiring, it is also complicated and frustrating. Born in fresh water creeks and streams, these anadromous\* fish migrate to the Pacific Ocean where they live for several years traveling hundreds of miles before returning to their birthplace to spawn. The salmon (but not the steelhead, an ocean traveling rainbow trout) die after spawning.

The Columbia-Snake Basin, once considered the most prolific salmon and steelhead river in the world, has seen plummeting numbers of fish. Other rivers like the Klamath in southern Oregon have a similar story. At every stage of their lives, these iconic fish serve as a valuable link in the food chain. Trouble in



Bonneville fish ladder - inside and outside.



these river basins spells trouble for the ecosystem of the region and beyond. Now thirteen species of salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River Basin are listed under the Endangered Species Act.

During our Oregon field trip, members learned much about why the fish are in trouble and what is being done to save them. Problems that include over-fishing, pollution, and agricultural diversions in the area began as early as 1900. Predation has always been a problem but now sea lions, which are protected, have learned to gather at the fish ladders to gorge on the fish moving upstream. A warming climate further threatens the habitat of these fish, which need cool water for survival. Logging, bark beetles and fire have compromised the forests of the watershed that feeds the Columbia River.

Obviously, dams impede the movement of fish to the ocean and back to the rivers and streams. On the main stem of the Columbia alone, 14 dams have been built to provide hydroelectric power and irrigation, leaving less than 70 miles free-flowing. In all of the U.S., there are over 75,000 dams.

Fishermen and conservationists are distraught by the plight of the salmon and have demanded mitigation efforts. For the first time in 160 years, salmon fishing was closed on the coast of the Pacific Northwest in 2008. Efforts to help fish make their journey have produced fish ladders (which the group viewed in Oregon), adjustable spillways, screens, trucking systems and even lifts to transport juvenile fish. Hatcheries, another stop on our field trip, have been built to increase numbers of young. There, eggs are fertilized with sperm from multiple males to ensure genetic diversity. After cutting the dorsal fin so that these fish can be differentiated from wild fish, thousands of smolts (young salmon making their first migration) are released into streams. Numbers of both wild and hatchery fish are closely monitored. We learned that hatchery fish are not “farmed” fish. Biologists tell us that by demanding wild-caught fish, consumers will help the plight of wild salmon and steelhead.

Many scientists, fishermen and conservationists are pushing for dam removal. In *A River Runs Against It: America's Evolving View of Dams*, Bruce Babbitt, former Secretary of the Interior, said, “We have reached the point where the arteries are so clogged that surgery to reduce the blockage may be the only hope...” Actions regarding dams vary across the country. With assurances that mercury contaminated sediment moving downstream would not be a long-term problem, the Condit Dam on the White Salmon River in Washington State was scheduled for removal in October 2010. Dam removal advocates were disappointed in September when the Obama administration issued a decision that dam removal on the Snake River, which has been proposed as a free-flowing “Wild and Scenic River,” was not necessary for fish recovery and was counter to the clean energy drive. On the other hand, advocates for the Klamath River in southern Oregon were told on September 30<sup>th</sup> that the federal government, three Indian tribes, 25 other parties and Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway, the owner of four dams, have reached a tentative agreement to remove them by 2020.

*Ruth Flournoy, River Oaks G.C. (TX) – Zone IX  
GCA Conservation Committee – Vice-Chair, Endangered Species/Ecological Restoration*

[\* anadromous (adj.) - Migrating up rivers from the sea to breed in fresh water.]

### **“Farm to Table” Dining in Oregon**

With the advent of Chez Panisse Restaurant in Berkeley, California, Alice Water's concept of eating locally grown food is spreading through farm and restaurant businesses. While in Oregon, the GCA committees had an opportunity to view the actual process. Skyline Ridge Farm, a five-acre garden just northwest of Portland, grows almost all the produce used at Meriwether's Restaurant ([www.meriwethersnw.com](http://www.meriwethersnw.com)) in Portland. Situated on the site of the 1905 World's Fair, the restaurant is a charming, casual eatery known for its beautiful, simply cooked fresh local produce - trucked from Skyline

Ridge Farm. Almost all their needs are grown there, from fruit and nuts, berries to vegetables. Along with the common items such as leeks, lettuces, and cabbage, there were black Tuscan kale (*cavalo nero*) and Treviso radicchio, both staples in the Northern Italian kitchen.

To date in 2009, 8000 pounds of produce has been grown for the restaurant. Under the creative hands of Chef Earl Hook and owners, the Orlando family, the restaurant and farm operate as a unit. Almost all of the produce is grown from seed (<http://www.johnnyseeds.com/>, Seed Savers Exchange and Seeds of Change, to name a few of their sources) and although not a certified organic farm, sustainable garden practices are used. There is an irrigated section and a dry section where nothing is watered. The chef feels that the tomatoes, for example, have more flavor when grown in a dry environment.

After an extensive tour of the garden with the chef and the head gardener Josh Volk, the group headed into Portland and dined at Meriwether's, where the menu is keyed to the garden's output. As expected, the food was bright, fresh and very satisfying. Chef Earl shares a recipe that follows from the evening's menu.

*Diane Stoner, Litchfield (CT) G.C. – Zone II  
GCA NAL Committee – Vice-Chair, Climate Change*

### **Meriwether's Caponata**

5 eggplant, peeled  
4 garlic cloves, minced  
2 onions  
3 stalks of celery  
4 red peppers  
½ cup gold raisins  
1 can tomatoes – chopped  
3 Tablespoons capers  
1/2 cup Sicilian olives, pitted

½ cup red wine vinegar  
½ cup sugar  
1 Tablespoon salt  
1 teaspoon pepper  
¼ cup pinenuts  
small bunch chopped fresh oregano  
small bunch chopped fresh parsley  
¼ cup canola oil

Heat the oil till very hot, but not burning. Add chopped eggplant and garlic and sauté briefly. Add other vegetables, then capers and olives. Stir in sugar, vinegar, salt and pepper. Add canned tomatoes and cook approx. 20 minutes. Check seasonings. Cool and then add pinenuts and herbs. Serve on bread toasts as an appetizer.



### **Concluding Thoughts**

The Portland area, as well as the magnificent mountain ranges and sublime coastline that surround it, left members of the Conservation and National Affairs and Legislation committees in awe. This conservation study trip, carefully orchestrated by Pat Wall, Diana Neely, and the members of The Portland Garden Club, highlighted the devastating effects of climate change while simultaneously mapping out the Portland metro region's reasoned, responsible, and effective strategy to mitigate it. The trip also illuminated water issues while demonstrating an effective means not only to preserve marine habitat but also to reduce

urban consumption. In fact, we learned that Portland's residents are now using 25% less water per capita. Perhaps most emphatically, it underscored both the imperative of careful land use policies and the power of The Garden Club of America to conserve vital public land for future generations.

The moving story of the Portland Garden Club's Nancy Russell and her determination to save the Columbia River Gorge's majestic National Scenic Area, currently imperiled by plans to erect a mega-casino in the heart of its stunning views, made us proud to be members of the GCA. Russell's horticultural knowledge, impressive coalition-building, and passion to preserve the area's flora and fauna demonstrated what each of us can, and must, do in our own areas of the country to protect our natural resources for future generations. If each of our members were simply to sign one letter to Interior Secretary Ken Salazar urging protection of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area and ask two friends to do the same, the GCA could send more than 51,000 letters seeking preservation of a shared national treasure, a powerful message to fight a well-financed lobby. Our group left both inspired by Portland's emphasis on sustainability and empowered to achieve similar goals in our own communities.

*Suzanne Booker-Canfield, Ph.D., Garden Guild of Winnetka (IL) - Zone XI  
GCA NAL Committee - Vice-Chair, Climate Change*





Diana and Pat

## Thank you!

The committees wish to thank **Patricia Wall** and **Diana Neely** for coordinating the entire conservation trip and taking such good care of the attendees. They provided the group with an amazing Oregon adventure!

Additional thanks go to Macy Wall, Pat and Macy's Portland friends, Portland Garden Club President Liza Lilley, PGC Conservation Chair Georgia Schell, PGC Member and Board Member, Friends of Columbia Gorge Angie Moore, members of The Portland Garden Club, and Oregon Congressmen Earl Blumenauer and David Wu.

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