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word nerd

By RYAN HUME

Cascadia

[kæs•ked•di•ə]

noun

1. a bioregion that stretches from Northern California through the Pacific Northwest and across British Columbia into southeast Alaska. Including the entire Columbia River basin as well as the nearby Pacific Ocean ecosystem, the boundaries of the bioregion are based on distinct vegetation, climate and other environmental similarities as opposed to man-made borders

2. a proposed independent nation state and social, political and environmental movement that encompasses all of the bioregion, reaching across Idaho and into western Montana as well. The movement's philosophy purports that the various peoples of the region have more in common socially, economically and environmentally than they do with the eastern governments of the United States and Canada. Some supporters stop short of calling for secession and merely aim to strengthen a sense of common regional identity and create transnational cooperation as it relates to transportation, economics and the environment. Critics maintain that the formation of an independent state is unlikely for a number of reasons, including the fact that no state or territory has ever successfully seceded from the U.S. or Canada

3. *Cascadia Subduction Zone*: Also known as



AP PHOTO/RICK BOWMER, FILE

The word "cascadia" means "land of falling waters." Multnomah Falls, located in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, is the United States' second-tallest year-round waterfall.



WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

This flag, designed by Alexander Baretich during the academic year of 1994-1995, represents the bioregion of Cascadia.

the Cascadia fault, this 600-plus-mile "megathrust" fault line runs from Vancouver Island, B.C., down through Cape Mendocino, California, and is the combustible site of where the oceanic Juan de Fuca plate is lodged beneath the continental North American Plate

Origin:

The first known use of the term *cascade* in the Pacific Northwest is around 1811 and attributed to the Astor expedition, which mapped a narrow, dangerous set of rapids on the Columbia River near the mountain range and noted the passage as Cascade Rapids. It is widely believed that botanist David Douglas

was the first to refer to the range itself as the Cascades in 1825. He would go on to name a tree after himself about a year later.

A small unincorporated community in central Oregon is credited with first attaching the suffix to create Cascadia, Oregon in 1892. By 1898, the community had a post office and hotel, but the property was sold to the state in 1940 and is currently Cascadia State Park in Linn County. The term *Cascadia* fell dormant for a number of years before being revived in the 1970s by natural scientists aiming to describe the geographical region. In the late 1970s, the term began to gather political implications, most notably when a Seattle University sociology profes-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

As the Juan de Fuca, Gorda and Explorer plates are pushed eastward, they are forced to subduct beneath the North American Plate. Strain builds up where they have become stuck (locked) and will be released one day in a great earthquake, which will also cause a tsunami.

sor, David McCloskey, began teaching a course entitled "Cascadia: Sociology of the Pacific Northwest." McCloskey, who has drawn the first as well as the most current maps of the proposed independent state, summarizes the meaning of the term as "land of falling waters."

Cascade enters English less than 200 years before it was applied to the Columbia River's rapids, borrowed from the French of the same spelling in 1641 and is

linked to the Italian cognate *cascata*, meaning waterfall, which can be traced back to the Latin *cāsum*, the past participle of *cadere*, to fall.

"Using data with an unprecedented level of detail, a team of international researchers, including some from Oregon State University, have found that a major earthquake along the Cascadia Subduction Zone is more likely than previously thought."

—Kale Williams, "Odds of Big One revised upward," *The Daily Astorian*, Aug. 11, 2016



ZACH URNESS

STATESMAN-JOURNAL VIA AP

This photo taken Sept. 8, 2015, shows an island and the blue expanse of Summit Lake with Diamond Peak in the background, in the Deschutes National Forest near Oakridge. Summit Lake is one of the great secret places in the Cascade Mountains not just because of its islands, but also because of the clear water and views of Diamond Peak.

"Further, Cascadia is a word euphonious and round with a sound-ending 'ia'—meaning 'land of...'; a pleasing parallel to California, Columbia, and so on."

—David McCloskey, "Name," Cascadia Institute, <http://cascadia-institute.org/name.html>, 2010



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