

PRESERVING A SPECTACULAR VIEW

Cape Horn Waterfall Overlook set in stone

By DAN TRUJILLO

Camas-Washougal Post-Record

Hikers are in for a treat once they approach the Cape Horn Waterfall Overlook.

Falcons, hawks, eagles, ospreys and seals have already been spotted from this spectacular, and now safer, panoramic viewpoint along the 7.7-mile trail in the Washougal-to-Stevenson corridor of the Columbia River Gorge.

The landscape is so transcending, it might take visitors a minute or two to register the sound of water cascading down the cliffs to the left.

"This is truly an example of what dedicated partners, incredible volunteers and financial supporters can accomplish by working together," said Cape Horn Conservancy President Teresa Robbins.

"Viewpoints like this one serve a broad spectrum of emotions. We are interested in stewarding a spectacular trail, not a mediocre one. This is an example of spectacular."

Robbins and her husband,

Keith Brown, began laying the groundwork for the new overlook in January.

"We talked to the forest service about keeping these viewpoints intact. They were concerned about safety issues," Brown said. "This project is an example of multiple partnerships stepping up to make sure these views are safe and protected for hikers and families to enjoy."

After the U.S. Forest Service surveyed the land and developed a design, Cape Horn Conservancy and Friends of the Columbia Gorge members got to work with volunteers in March hauling 10 tons of stone down a quarter mile path. Michael Byrne, a mason from Portland, rounded and carved all of the rocks into place.

"I wanted to honor the Columbia River Gorge, and its spectacular beauty," Byrne said. "I also wanted to honor all of the masons who have done work throughout the Gorge. It was done with hammers and chisels, and feathers

and wedges."

Byrne thanked Robbins and Brown for giving him an opportunity to display his work in the Gorge. They are already collaborating on another overlook nearby with the five tons of remaining stone.

"Keith and Teresa have a vision and a passion. This overlook is just a small part of that," Byrne said. "Without those two, and all of the volunteers, it wouldn't have happened."

"A mason's name is never on the work. I'm a big believer in that," he added. "The river and the view speak for themselves. I don't want people to even notice the stone work."

Avid Cape Horn Trail hikers Sarah Lord and Barb Beach are blown away by the new waterfall overlook. Lord was one of the many volunteers involved in this project.

"It makes a heart-altering view possible for people who wouldn't have the courage to access it," Lord said. "This place is so accessible and so

stunningly beautiful. Those two things make this my go-to trail. This trail keeps me alive."

Beach said she won't forget stepping out to the edge for the first time, without fear of falling.

"This view takes my breath away, it absolutely takes my breath away," she said. "And, it feels so secure. The whole picture is just surreal."

The lower section of the Cape Horn Trail opens July 16. Robbins, Brown and volunteers constructed an informational kiosk and bus shelter at the Skamania County Transit Station. The main trail head is located across Salmon Falls Road from the parking lot.

Brown said Washougal High School student Tim Seaman helped build the kiosk and shelter for his senior project.

Robbins said she hopes to have an official dedication for the kiosk and the waterfall overlook in September.

No matter how many times they walk the access route,



Photo by Dan Trujillo, Post-Record

THE CAPE HORN Waterfall Overlook provides hikers with a spectacular, and now safer, view of the Columbia River Gorge. Members of the Cape Horn Conservancy and Friends of the Columbia Gorge worked with volunteers to haul 10 tons of rock down a quarter mile path.

Brown and Robbins approach the Cape Horn Waterfall Overlook in awe.

"What feels good about this is working on something that you know is going to last for generations," Brown said.

"This is some place I want my kids, grandkids and their grandchildren to have around, so they too can have these incredible views and landscapes to feed their souls," Robbins added.

Groups clash in court over Columbia River Basin salmon plan

By GOSIA WOZNIACKA

The World

PORTLAND (AP) — Federal authorities defended their latest plan for mitigating damage to salmon and steelhead imperiled by hydroelectric dams in the Columbia River Basin.

In oral arguments in U.S. District Court on Tuesday, the government argued its approach is resulting in more salmon surviving at dams, juvenile fish migrating faster to the ocean and record numbers of fish returning to restored habitat.

But conservation and fishing groups, Oregon and the Nez Perce tribe, which challenged the plan in court, said it's deeply flawed. They said it won't lead to the recovery of wild fish populations, because many have not achieved the promised benefits and are barely hanging on. Most of the returning fish were artificially bred in hatcheries.

Thirteen species of salmon and steelhead are listed as endangered or

threatened under the Endangered Species Act in the Columbia River Basin.

The plan's various iterations have been litigated in court for more than two decades. The most recent plan — known as the biological opinion — was issued in 2008 to cover a 10-year period through 2018, and a supplemental plan was added in 2010. It was struck down in court in 2011 for depending too much on habitat improvements whose benefits are unknown. The plan's latest version was issued in January 2014.

The groups in court clashed over which standard of recovery should be used to measure success. The federal government argued it can't cause additional risks or harm to the fish, and it has met that standard.

The plan, said federal attorney Michael Eitel, isn't a plan for recovery. Rather, it asks whether fish will be "trending toward recovery." This means one year's re-

turns must outnumber the previous year's, regardless of whether that eventually leads to recovery or when.

But the plaintiffs argued the government has set the bar too low. They said because energy-producing dams are the main cause of fish mortality, the plan must do more to protect and recover them.

"A growing species is not the same as a recovered species," said Todd True, an attorney with Earthjustice who represents environmental groups in the court case.

What's missing from the plan, said True, is a definition of what constitutes recovery and when approximately it will be achieved.

True criticized the uncertainty of habitat restoration, which is the plan's main tool to improve fish survival; other plan components include reducing the effects of hatcheries on wild fish and keeping predators at bay, as well as improving fish passage at

the dams.

Plaintiffs said habitat can't compensate for harm done in the "migratory corridor" where dams harm fish. Even where habitat has been restored, many fish populations don't replace themselves, said Stephanie Parent, the lawyer representing Oregon.

Plaintiffs also said the government has not analyzed the effects of climate change and isn't taking any actions to mitigate for them. As a result, said Earthjustice attorney Steve Mashuda, it's hard to know how much climate change's effect could "erode or negate the predicted benefits" of government's actions to help salmon.

Eitel, the government lawyer, said the magnitude and timing of climate change are poorly understood and its effects on species vary, so additional actions were not planned to offset its effect.

Critics also said the current plan rolls back some of

the spill ordered by U.S. District Judge James Redden 10 years ago. In 2011, Redden, who has since retired and stepped off the case, asked the government to consider whether removal of the four lower Snake River dams might be necessary — an action environmentalists have long called for, in addition to increased spill.

The government says breaching dams isn't needed. Lorri Bodi, the Bonneville Power Administration's vice president of fish and wildlife, said it has not

ignored the hydro system's effects — it has invested over \$1 billion in improvements such as weirs and other types of fish passage, improving survival.

Judge Michael Simon, who took over the case from Redden, did not indicate when he would rule.

No matter what Simon decides, the current management plan will be in place just for another three years. Soon, the government will need to start discussing another biological opinion that would be put in place in 2018.

Gorge Days in North Bonneville

Gorge Day celebrations are taking over North Bonneville on Friday and Saturday, July 10-11. All events take place in the North Bonneville City Park area.

The weekend celebration, sponsored by the City of North Bonneville and organized by the Skamania County Chamber of Commerce, kicks off Friday morning with citywide garage sales that continue all day Saturday. Get your maps at Chevron gas station or City Hall. Beacon Rock Golf Course is offering a Gorge Days Box Lunch Special on Friday from 11:30 am until 2:30 pm in case you need sustenance to keep shopping throughout the day.

On Friday evening, dinner and music will be provided at the basketball court in the middle of City Park. Skamania School PTO is cooking up a barbecue dinner at 5 p.m. Bonneville Hot Springs Resort & Spa will open their beer and wine garden as well. Stringed Migration, a four-piece Celtic and inter-

national roots band, will provide music at 5 p.m. Then, magician Jeff McMahon will take over at 6 p.m. At 8 p.m. is an Open Mic night.

Saturday highlights include is the Gorge Days Car Show from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. — with 300 to 400 hot rods, classic cars and vehicles of every vintage expected — and a concert by Hit Machine at 4 p.m.

Also happening Saturday are a fundraising pancake breakfast, Volkswalk, quilt display at Bonneville Event Center, bake sale, food vendors, a beer and wine garden plus a variety of arts and crafts and informational booths. North Bonneville

Community Library presents family entertainment with Habiba Addo, West African music and dance. Returning to the park is the Kids Zone with an inflatable obstacle course and slide. New is 2015 is a free Saturday shuttle service, providing transportation around town to the garage sales and other activities. Park for the shuttle near the tennis courts.

For more information and the full schedule of activities, visit www.gorgedays.net or call 800-989-9178.

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