

## Friends of the Columbia Gorge 2012 Spring Hikes Whet Appetite for Waterfalls

*Celebrate the wonders of waterfalls in the Gorge this spring.*

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Friends of the Columbia Gorge's 2012 Spring Hiking Program offers 59 educational outings for hikers of all levels. The hiking season kicks off on March 15<sup>th</sup> offering a multitude of hikes, stewardship work parties, tours and one bike ride spread over four months. Offered on weekends and weekdays, these hikes follow the wildflower blooms from the eastern end of the Gorge westward.

In addition, Friends is launching a hiking challenge on March 1<sup>st</sup> titled *Waterfall Wanderlust*. A list of 25 beautiful, semi-obscured waterfalls has been compiled to celebrate that the Gorge is home to more waterfalls than anywhere else in North America. Hikers that visit all the waterfalls receive an entry into the grand prize drawing of a full-day raft trip for six on the White Salmon River in Washington. To view the list of waterfalls and to register visit [www.gorgefriends.org/waterfalls](http://www.gorgefriends.org/waterfalls). Hikers can join Friends on 12 guided hikes to visit these waterfalls or head out on their own.

"Putting together this waterfall list was so much fun," said Maegan Jossy, Outdoor Programs Coordinator for Friends of the Columbia Gorge. "There's something magical about watching water cascade off a cliff and the spray dance around you. There is so much to think about...the epic Ice Age Floods that carved out this dramatic landscape to create the plethora of waterfalls, the allure of waterfalls, and the conservation of water. I look forward to seeing how this challenge speaks to others."

There are several new outings planned for Friends' hiking program. A few to highlight are:

- Waterfall Photography Outing on April 12 led by acclaimed photographer Peter Marbach who will share the art and challenge of waterfall photography.
- Wildflower and Wine Hike on April 28 includes a 5-mile hike at Tom McCall Nature Preserve with Development Director Sandy Wright. Enjoy wine tasting at Dry Hollow Vineyards in The Dalles afterwards.
- Gorge *Towns to Trails* Tour on April 26 with Executive Director Kevin Gorman and Gorge *Towns to Trails* Project Manager Renee Tkach will share Friends' vision of this project as you walk on properties included in the vision and visit several Gorge businesses.
- Secrets of the Gorge Tour on April 29 with Scott Cook, author of *Curious Gorge*, will point out hidden history, hidden geology, and hidden beauties on this all-day tour.

All outings are free and open to the public however, some are members-only. The full hike schedule and registration can be found online at: [www.gorgefriends.org/hikes](http://www.gorgefriends.org/hikes), starting February 20<sup>th</sup>. Friends' basic membership is \$35 annually. One can join when

signing up for a hike, either online or by calling the Friends of the Columbia Gorge office at 503-241-3762 x103.

Friends' Hiking Program is a long-lasting northwest tradition. Since 1980, Friends volunteers and staff have been leading hikes to the public to inspire and educate them about the beloved Columbia Gorge. Offering nearly 100 outings annually, over 1,000 people join us on the trail. The organization was founded over 30 years ago and works to vigorously protect the scenic, natural, cultural and recreational resources within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area. It is supported by more than 5,000 members in Oregon and Washington.