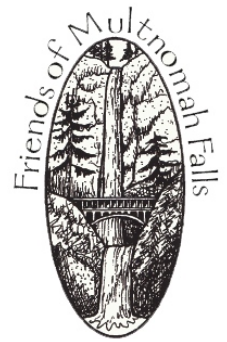


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# Focus on the Falls

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Springtime

## SPRING 2023

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### INTERPRETIVE VOLUNTEER TRAINING WORKSHOP

Saturday March 25<sup>th</sup> starting at 9:30am USFS presentations and updates on the Historic Highway, permits, Visitor Center, displays and door prizes.

Corbett Fire Hall  
36930 East Historic Columbia River Highway

December 2022



### FOMF President's Message – by Steve Vanier

On Ground Hog Day Punxsutawney Phil predicted 6 more weeks of winter and the Big Freeze along the Columbia River Gorge came at Christmas time. Our visitors were treated to that rare view of Multnomah Falls, still flowing but also coating the cliff face with a beautiful icicles from the top of the cliff all the way down to the upper pool, and again on the margins of the lower falls – wonders of nature to behold.

We are planning our annual spring training session. As in recent years we will hold the training at the Corbett Fire Hall on Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup>. Please come at 9:30AM sharp, grab a cup of coffee and some snacks so we can begin the training at 10AM. We should be done in a couple of hours but the Corbett Fire Department has reserved the room for us until 2PM if needed. Dave Mysinger will lead, with collaboration from key USFS people, and *possibly* a special guest speaker from ODOT on the upcoming timed reservation season, and what it might look like. As the time for the training gets nearer, more details will be made available. Please keep that date available, and to repeat: **Yes, all of us are encouraged to attend.** Old dogs can learn new tricks.

**A few words on adding new volunteers:** In part due to the passage of time and closures following the 2017 Labor Day fire, and the multi-year COVID-19 shutdown we have lost members and volunteers. We need to add new energy and new faces to our volunteer ranks, so bring someone to our training session, if only to visit and see what we are all about.

Thanks to Membership Chair Jerry King, our latest membership drive was successful in reaching several of our members who had allowed their memberships to lapse. But we continue to need volunteers and members. You can help. Even if it is not in your nature, invite someone else by reaching out to visitors, friends and neighbors. Share the joy it has brought in your life. Please ask 10 people you know to attend our training session as a visitor - an interested party without a commitment to join anything, to see what we are all about. Drive them yourself to the training to make sure they get there. Do not get discouraged with the first 4 or 5 polite turn downs. If you ask 10, you will get 1. I believe that is so. It's for a great cause.



One of the first wildflowers to bloom at the western end of the Gorge is the trillium (*Trillium ovatum*). It is often first seen along the Historic Highway just east of Bridal Veil by early March. In the succeeding months it becomes more widespread and by July is found at the top of Larch Mountain.

Friends of Multnomah  
Falls  
PO Box 426 Troutdale OR  
97060

friendsofmultnomahfalls.org

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### Board of Directors 2023

President  
Steve Vanier

Vice President  
Dave Mysinger

Secretary  
Russ Williams

Treasurer  
Jim Geisler

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Jim Geisler  
Katie Goodwin  
Flora Huber  
Jerry King  
Dave Mysinger  
Karen Stefonek  
Russ Williams

Ex Officio USFS Josh Daker

Multnomah Falls Lodge Co.  
Jill Willis (Ex Officio)

Newsletter editor  
Ron Goodwin

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Our Mission Statement  
*"The Friends of Multnomah  
Falls are dedicated to  
preserving and enhancing  
the unique natural, scenic  
and historic qualities of  
Multnomah Falls while  
providing a memorable  
experience for our visitors."*

## CRGNSA NATURAL RESOURCES INTERPRETIVE SPECIALIST REPORT by Beth Kennedy

Multnomah Falls permit systems from 2022 – The overall consensus from the partners is that the two permit systems over all accomplished what we set out to do, reduce congestion and increase safety. We also acknowledge that both systems are not sustainable for all the partners, so many discussions are ongoing to reformulate for 2023. We will have a permit system but it will look a bit different for this coming season.

We are having regular meetings with Sea Reach about the design plan for the Visitor Center's interpretive displays and hope to come to more tangible details soon! At this point we are helping them understand the audience we serve and how to best work in our small but mighty Visitor Center. You will also see other work happening at the site with upgrading the garbage enclosures and restrooms.

Josh and team have been working hard to recruit 3 seasonal employees for the 2023 season. Many challenges, but we are hopeful to fill those spots. You may also have the opportunity to meet with Anne Vassar, the new permanent Field Ranger based out of Hood River and she will help with staffing at Multnomah Falls.

Our Forest Service office in the CRGNSA is having an unprecedented change of staff in all departments...some retirements, some new positions to fill and some moving to other opportunities. You may have heard that Stan Hinatsu, our long term recreation guru, retired at the end of December. We welcome Stephan Elgart to the team in Stan's place. Lots of folks to learn.

All of our most recent videos (with subtitles) created through our Virtual Ranger program are available for everyone on Vimeo  
<https://vimeo.com/showcase/6251256>. Just look for the ones that have the Title slide to the right. All of Region 6 Virtual Ranger videos are at this link.

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### USFS SITE MANAGER REPORT by Josh Daker

Winter season has come and will soon be gone. It brought us good winter storms of rain, snow and ice. The Falls sees great changes in winter with these events and puts on a show that draws visitors from all over for these events. While it was slower than the summer for visitation, we still had many busy days to keep us on our toes. Busy being relative, sometimes highs last year hovered around 1,000 visitors in the center per day. Wintertime high was hovering around 400 visits in the center per day. We'll take the down time to recover our vocal cords for what will likely be another good season of helping our trusty first time and seasoned visitors.

The Larch Mountain Trail saw some changes this winter. Half of the trail tread fell off near switchback 5-6 during the winter storm and it will take some time to fix due to the sheer size of the hole. The hardy trail staff is working to fix it. We have two year round trail crew members and they are supplemented with other staff including myself as they are available.

Thank you all for serving our visitors and keeping the center in tip top shape.

Trail work continued p. 3





Slide area switch back 5-6



New Corona rock drill



Josh breaking rock

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## CRGNSA COORDINATOR AT ODOT by Terra Lingley

ODOT produced a 33 page Evaluation Study that can be found online at ([www.oregon.gov](http://www.oregon.gov)). Because of the 35% increased visitation in the last decade resulting in congestion, safety issues and diminished user experience, the land use partners put in place a pilot plan for 2022. The permit (only available at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov) for \$2 per vehicle) system was to spread out visitation, expand transportation options and reduce emergency response times. People riding public transit, riding bike or in tours had free access to Multnomah Falls.

The Waterfall Corridor 9am - 6pm permits between Bridal Veil and Ainsworth were checked by Oregon Parks Recreation Department, contract floggers and USFS employees each day between Memorial Day and Labor Day. There were 49,633 timed permits issued for the corridor and it did allow driving through without stopping or having a permit. The numbers of permits slowed after 3pm to only a few at 5pm. There were also 30 timed permits available free at Troutdale and 20 at Cascade Locks

The pedestrian tunnel off the I-84 parking lot was checked by the Columbia Area Transit (CAT) staff with 79,670 timed use permits issued (no shows were not counted) with 910 per day and 140 per hour available. 10am -3pm had the most permits issued.

A user congestion survey found that 41% was about the same, 21% better and 7% it was worse while the rest were neutral. About the parking one third said it was very crowded or no available spots, confused about 2 parking lots. Some said they were driving through but stayed longer by stopping at different sites.

The CAT had an increase in ridership while the trolley and Sasquatch had fewer than anticipated and were able to keep more on schedule because of the flagger at Multnomah Falls. There were more bikes on the Historic Highway The pedestrian crosswalk is the highest use one in Oregon with 1,600 an hour at its peak.

Most of the negative (45% out of 1,900) comments dealt with being unaware of permit need, difficult to access the online system, a specific time, not able to pay at the check in site and the lack of parking after arriving. After the permit system was off ODOT and USFS received many complaints about continued backups at Multnomah Falls, especially over the Thanksgiving Holiday.

At the end of many discussions the final conclusion was that the system as last year for the Waterfall Corridor permit requirement does not have the dedicated funds to have it continue. Present plans are to have a vehicle permit required to enter the tunnel as in the past and a flagger at the crosswalk to keep traffic moving.

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## NEW BOARD MEMBER

Jim Geisler I was born in Oregon and enjoyed trips to the Falls as a kid. Retired after 40 years in the insurance field and now enjoy travel, golf and 3 grandchildren. I enjoy volunteering for the chance to meet folks from around the world and helping them get more out of their travels in the Gorge and beyond, and I enjoy being in the Gorge and experiencing its uniqueness and beauty.

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## VOLUNTEER COMMENTS

A German tourist came in and said "How do you do it? If this was Germany, this would be filled with homes for the wealthy." FH

## ANNUAL MEETING

The Friends had a very well attended Annual Meeting at Heidi's in Gresham led by Steve Vanier and Beth Kennedy. Steve was recognized as our volunteer of the year for 2022.

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## WEB SITE AND FACEBOOK

We have new **web site** at *friendsofmultnomahfalls.org* with Karen Stefonek (stefonek@comcast.net) the contact for placing items on the **Group Facebook** page and Billie Anger (b.anger@comcast.net) for placing items on our website.

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## NEW VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS WELCOME

The Friends of Multnomah Falls organization is always looking for new volunteers who love The Gorge and enjoy meeting people. We offer our volunteers a flexible schedule and supportive training opportunities. This is a good place to interact with young people and others who are happy to be at Multnomah Falls. You can earn a NW Forest Pass after volunteering 16 hours.

If you would like to become a volunteer or want more information about the FOMF program, please contact FOMF Volunteer Recruiter, Chris Meinicke (chris.meinicke@frontier.com or 503-645-3124), for more details.

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## FRIENDS of MULTNOMAH FALLS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Renewing Member FOMF is a 100% volunteer, private, non-profit, 501-c-3 tax-exempt organization.

\_\_\_ \$20 Individual    \_\_\_ \$35 Family    \_\_\_ \$50 Contributing    \_\_\_ \$100 Supporting  
\_\_\_ \$250 Sustaining    \_\_\_ \$500 Benefactor    \_\_\_ \$1000 Lifetime

Make checks payable to: Friends of Multnomah Falls, and fill out the information below.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send this form to: The Friends of Multnomah Falls, PO Box 426, Troutdale, Oregon 97060

Friends of Multnomah Falls  
PO Box 426  
Troutdale, OR 97060

