

# THE SCENE



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A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER OF COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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It was a team effort to reopen Wahclella Falls Trail this week

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

### RECREATION UPDATES

Any week that you reopen a trail for the public is a good week, and it was all hands on deck to remove signs and fences, replace trailhead amenities, notify the public, and greet hikers when we reopened Wahclella Falls Trail this week.

With the two-year mark for Eagle Creek Fire coming up, it was good timing for a campground program at Eagle Creek Campground covering wildland fire ecology. The setting was not far from areas that burned in 2017, providing a great chance to gain a deeper understanding of the burn mosaic and see how the forest is regenerating.

Meanwhile, this is the season when winds shift and the dog days give us a last dose of hot, dry air in the Gorge. Remember that fire restrictions are still in place. Stay vigilant and help us prevent wildfires!

## REOPENING WAHCLELLA FALLS

723 Days the trail was closed

>600 Hours of labor to reopen

>300 Tons of rock removed

30 Downed trees removed

120 Hours spent on one gnarly tree

4 Organizations that helped



Field rangers host a program on wildland fire ecology at Eagle Creek Campground



# trail tales

UPDATES & ANECDOTES

**Wahclella Falls Trail reopened** Monday for the first time since Eagle Creek Fire. It was closed September 4, 2017, two days after the fire was started. Last year, our trail crew encountered large and frequent rocks falling from the slopes above, so plans were put on hold until this spring, when the weather calmed down. By then, **landslides, treefall, and rockfall** had covered parts of the trail, so more work was needed to **clear and stabilize** it. The **upper trail loop remains closed** due to a damaged bridge and washouts, but hikers can still reach the trail's main attraction - Wahclella Falls itself.

We also opened a section of **Gorge 400 Trail between Eagle Creek Recreation Area** and the town of **Cascade Locks**. Note, nearby Ruckel Creek Trail and Gorge 400 Trail Angels Rest and Eagle Creek Recreation Area remain closed. Hikers should **consider avoiding** burned areas during **high winds** and **heavy rains**, as these conditions can trigger tree fall and landslides.

Just after removing the fences and signs at Wahclella, our fire prevention tech snapped this photo of the first hikers hitting the trail!

## I'M LICHEN IT!

A CLOSER LOOK AT WHAT GROWS ON TREES

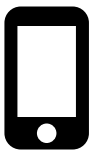
This week, we were visited by an air quality expert and film crew making a video about lichens and the helpful role they play as indicators of air quality.

Yep, those colorful growths on trees -- lichens -- are surprisingly good at pinpointing both local climate and air pollutants. That's why the Forest Service uses them to help measure forest health, supplementing air quality monitoring data collected at stations around the country.



## SHERIFF'S SAFETY TIPS

When we met last week with the Hood River County Sheriff's Office, they shared some tips for us to pass on to hikers - to avoid getting lost. Help us spread the word:



Cell phones are amazing, but they can't do it all. **Save your battery** for calling 911 in an emergency. You can try texting **911** if reception is poor.



Don't rely on your cell phone for navigation - bring a **real map** and **compass** or **proper GPS unit**. Also, check the length of the trail before setting out!



Many hikers get **lost at dusk** because they didn't bring a **headlamp** or **flashlight**. Cell phones just don't cut it!



Light **fades to dusk quickly** in the mountains. As days get shorter, **come prepared for nightfall** even on that "short" day hike.



## Plan Review Open House

The **Columbia River Gorge Commission** and **Forest Service** are hosting a public open house on **September 12, 2019** to review standards related to land uses and the development review process in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area.

The open house will allow local residents and the public to provide input on the proposed topics for revision as part of the **Gorge 2020 management plan review**. This is a follow-up meeting to the public workshop held on **August 14, 2019**.

For more information, visit <http://www.gorgecommission.org/management-plan/gorge2020/>