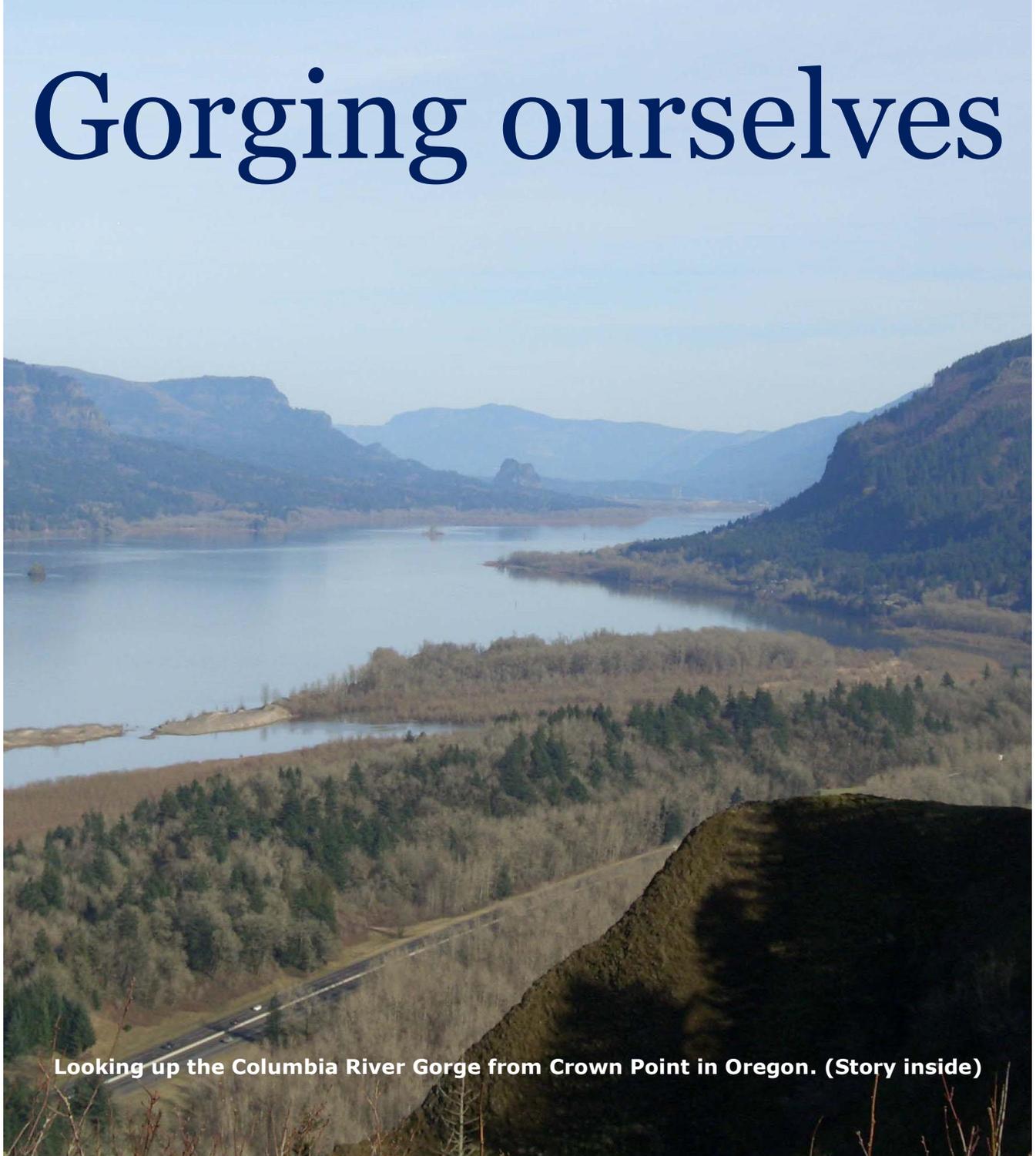


The Gorge Gazette

Saturday-Monday, 22-24 January 2011

Columbia River Gorge, Washington and Oregon

Gorging ourselves



Looking up the Columbia River Gorge from Crown Point in Oregon. (Story inside)



The Columbia River from the front lawn of our lodge on the north bank in Stevenson, Wash.

What happens when a glacier melts in Canada

Draped like a white blanket over the Continental Divide high in the Canadian Rockies, the Columbia Icefield covers more than 125 square miles of high country with ice 1,000 feet deep.

At its edges, the melt water spawns rivers

– *Continued overleaf*



The Columbia River drains an area the size of France.

What happens when a glacier melts in Canada

– **From previous page**

that flow into three oceans, the Athabasca River to the Arctic Ocean, the Saskatchewan to the Atlantic via Hudson Bay, and the Columbia, which reaches the Pacific near Portland, Ore.

Though its 1,243-mile length makes it the 12th longest river in the country, only the Mississippi and Ohio carry a greater volume of water and none carries its water with so much force. The Columbia carries so much water and drops so fast that it possesses one third of all the hydroelectric power potential of the entire United States.

Since long before humans walked the face of the planet, the Columbia has been locked in a battle with the Cascade Range, which runs from Canada into Northern California. The volcanic Cascades have periodically risen to dam the Columbia, and then the Columbia has cut through to the ocean again.

In October 1805, 17 months after setting out from Illinois, Meriwether Lewis and William Clark reached Idaho's Clearwater River, a tributary of the Snake River, which flows into the Columbia, and floated to the mouth of the Columbia on the Oregon coast in three months.

The water at the Columbia's Canadian source today fell as snowflakes thousands of years ago, turned to ice under the



An aerial view from the internet looking upstream shows where the Columbia and the Cascades battle each other.

pressure of millions of other snowflakes that piled up over time, and flowed for centuries as solid ice down a mountainside until melting a few weeks before reaching the Gorge. It passed through 14 dams to reach the Pacific, carrying tugs and barges as far inland as Lewiston, Idaho and salmon, steelhead and sturgeon even farther. Forty percent of the wheat exported by the United States floats down the Columbia to Portland by barge.

For our weekend trip with David and Rodica Claudino, we stayed at the Skamania Lodge in the Columbia River Gorge 45 minutes east of Portland where the Columbia breaches the Cascades. It's just a couple of miles from the Bridge of the Gods – a highway bridge now but named for the point in the river where a succession of volcanic landslides from the Washington side have occasionally created a natural bridge across the Columbia.

Today's picture pages

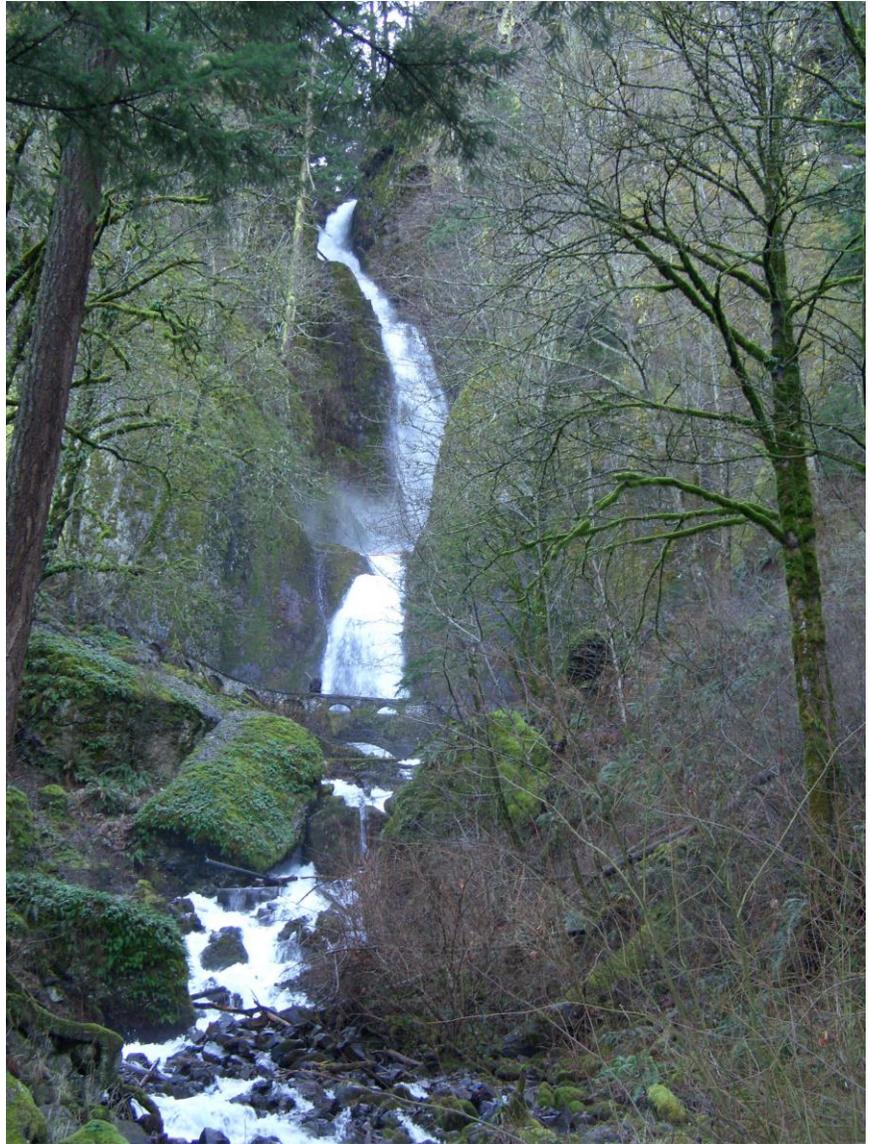


Inside the lobby of the Skamania Lodge

**View from the
Skamania lobby**

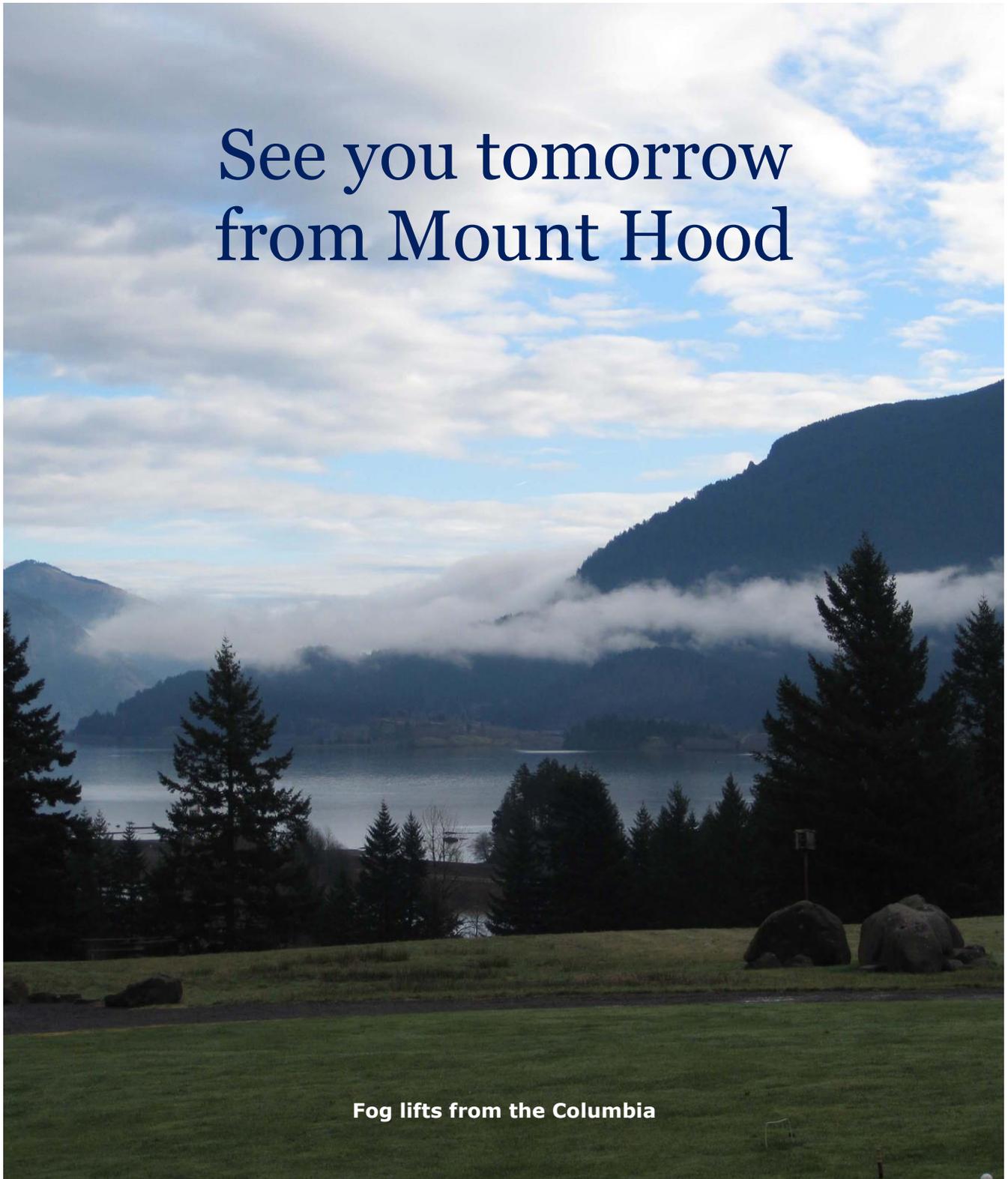


Both sides of the gorge are lined with waterfalls like this one on the Oregon side.



Bonneville Dam is the first dam upstream from the mouth of the Columbia, 146 miles from the Pacific Ocean.

See you tomorrow from Mount Hood



Fog lifts from the Columbia