

THE SCENE



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NEWS & UPDATES FROM COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

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www.fs.usda.gov/crgnsa

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UPDATES FROM THE FIELD

In the past few weeks, we have begun the strange new world of **onboarding seasonal employees** using a mix of **self-quarantine, virtual onboarding, and social distancing protocols** to keep everyone safe and healthy. Fire crews will start reporting next week, perfect timing for Wildfire Prevention Month!

Status of COVID-19 Closures

Even as state parks in Oregon and Washington have begun to partially reopen, there has been a consistent interagency approach to **maintaining closures at sites in the Columbia River Gorge that are too crowded** to comply with guidelines from health authorities. Conversations are underway among federal, state, local, and tribal governments about aligning with state and local orders and keeping each other informed of their frameworks for phasing in access to public lands and waterways. To reduce confusion, we published an **interagency news release** on recreation sites in the Gorge this week on our website at:

fs.usda.gov/crgnsa

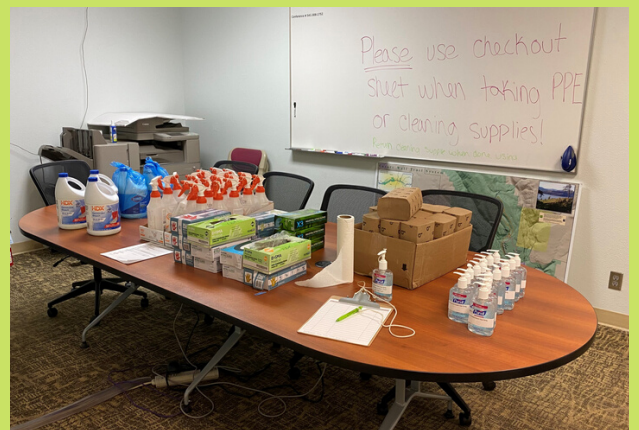
Keep on Doing

.....
THAT PARTNER THING YOU DO SO WELL

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The USDA Forest Service recognizes that many of our **partners have been significantly and adversely affected** by COVID-19. So, we're positioning itself to support partners and volunteers as they plan and prepare the steps needed to resume activities safely.

As we consider a phased approach to renewing access in the Columbia River Gorge, we want to give **special consideration to how we can support partners that work with volunteers**. We will send more information to partners soon about how the USFS is adjusting its operations following CDC, state, and local guidance so we can have conversations about how to prepare get volunteers back onto National Forest System lands as safely as possible.



Sign of the times: a meeting room transformed into a COVID safety supply cache

Trail Tales

UPDATES & ANECDOTES



Our seasonal trail workers have arrived! They've been hard at work behind the scenes repairing and maintaining National Scenic Area trails behind the closure: using chainsaws and crosscuts to clear **windfallen trees**, repairing blown-out **retaining walls**, installing **gabion boxes to support slopes**, and clearing the trail tread of **rockslides** and **debris flows**.



Never fear, the trail crew is here!

The crew has also been fanning out across the Columbia River Gorge assessing Forest Service trails for work to be undertaken this summer -- from mountain bike trails in the **Coyote Wall** system to wilderness work in the **Larch Mountain Caldera** system of trails.

Installing a stone retaining wall on Eagle Creek Trail

EAGLE CREEK BRIDGE CONTRACT AWARDED

The construction contract has been awarded for a new bridge to replace the suspension footbridge over Eagle Creek, which was twisted when a cable snapped due to the heat of Eagle Creek Fire in 2017. R.L. Reimers Company will replace it with a **150 foot span H-Style weathering steel truss bridge**, with new abutments of reinforced concrete in a dark, earth-toned color.

Construction is scheduled to begin in **June 2020** and should be completed by **early September 2020**. During the construction of the new bridge, **public access to the Eagle Creek Trail will remain closed** to keep workers and the public safe in the narrow spaces where the bridge abutments will be constructed. The new bridge structure will include a **ramp**, faced with **basalt stone fascia** to match the surrounding stone work of the Eagle Creek area, to increase accessibility.

Once constructed, the footbridge will renew access to the **Gorge 400 Trail**, **Shady Glen Trail #402A** and **Wauna Viewpoint Trail #402**, which have all been closed since the 2017 fire.

A related upgrading project will include laying waterlines across the new bridge to benefit the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife Cascade Salmon hatchery located directly adjacent to the Eagle Creek Recreation Site.



The Eagle Creek suspension bridge after Eagle Creek Fire. It was removed in late 2017 to avoid the risk of causing more damage during a flash flood event.

