



# COWICHE CANYON COLUMNS

## Winter 2009

"The mission of CCC is to promote a healthy future for our community by conserving our heritage of open space, scenic vistas, and riparian corridors from Yakima to the Cascade foothills with connected recreational trails and natural landscapes."



### TRAIL SIGNS

On September 9, Becky Lang-Boyd and David Hagen, with the help of the Backcountry Horsemen and three college students put in most of the trail signs and trail junction markers at Snow Mountain Ranch. The assistance of the Backcountry Horsemen was essential to get the heavy equipment and signs up the steep slope where motorized vehicles are not allowed. David and Becky, along with some of Becky's family members, subsequently worked on improving the small foot bridge on the Riparian Trail.

Thanks to Becky and David for their work on the new trail signs. Thanks to the Back Country Horsemen volunteers, Faye Bradford, Robin Faulk and Gary Brownell. The muscle power of the '09 college graduates, Christopher Willet, Robbie Barany and Chris Ramirez was also much appreciated.

A Celebration of Autumn Color at Snow Mountain Ranch on October 31 brought out over 50 hikers, with about 30 going on guided hikes. This event was an introduction to the trail signs. The trail system was well received. The largest group was led to the top of Cowiche Mountain by Ray Paoella. There was also an article by Ron Graham about the trails in the November 10 Yakima-Herald Republic.

The dedication of the trail system next October will be part of our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration.

Thanks to all the CCC volunteers who helped put on this event: Becky Lang-Boyd, David Hagen, Ray Paoella, Phil Hoge, Sara Cate, Barb Smith Gilbert, Cec Vogt, Leslie Wahl, and Bob Wahl.

**CCC Membership Party on Tuesday, Dec. 8, 5-7 p.m. at Gilbert Cellars - Underground**

**RSVP [info@cowichecanyon.org](mailto:info@cowichecanyon.org) or 248-5065.**

Come enjoy a complimentary glass of wine with cheese, join CCC, or renew membership for 2010... visit with other CCC members, see David Hagen's latest beautiful photos, enjoy music and **CELEBRATE!**

**Sponsored by Gilbert Cellars.**

### 25TH ANNIVERSARY 2010

The Cowiche Canyon Conservancy was established in 1985 initially to preserve a unique landscape and to provide public use of a trail along the abandoned rail line through the Canyon. The Conservancy has grown in the past 25 years to preserve a much larger area of the Naches River and Cowiche Creek watershed. - 2000+ acres!

Help us celebrate our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary next year in 2010 with the following events:

Feb 17	Annual Meeting 7:00-8:30 pm at Allied Arts Gallery
April 16	Opening Reception of Photographic Exhibit Canyon & Ranch by David Hagen 5:30-800 pm at The Tasting Room Yakima/Wilridge
April 18	Earth Day Guided Walks in Cowiche Canyon followed by a Special Event at The Tasting Room Yakima/Wilridge (RSVP)
Sept. 9	Allied Arts CCC-inspired Gallery Exhibit Opening 5:30 pm
Oct 23	Snow Mountain Ranch Fall Color Celebration and Trail System Dedication
Dec 10	3rd Annual Membership Party (to be announced)

## Message from the President

By Curtis Sundquist

Busy, busy, busy. That's the way 2009 has been for the dedicated Cowiche Canyon Conservancy volunteers and staff. This year has seen the hiring of Cec Vogt to join Barb Smith Gilbert on our professional staff and major growth in the use of our downtown office; the nearly complete restoration of the former orchard to riparian habitat at the lower end of Cowiche Canyon; and the development of new trails, along with signs and a greeting kiosk – an Eagle Scout project – at Snow Mountain Ranch; to name just a few of the many improvements.

In April, an email was received from a WSU entomology professor informing CCC of the presence of the Lucia Azure Butterfly (*Celastrina lucia*) in the Canyon. He stated the butterfly "is common in the canyon during April/May in most years, the only locality for it in the Yakima area and one of the very few localities in WA that you can find this species. The population at Cowiche can be quite large in some years with many of the small blue butterflies seen flying around red osier dogwood, the larval host. It is the only locality in WA that I know of that the species can be found reliably and in good numbers". The need to protect butterfly habitat was included in our application to the Yakima Valley Community Foundation for a capacity building grant to help fund permanent staff. Although no grant was awarded this year, CCC is "on their radar" for the future.

As always, the best part of working behind the scenes at CCC is having an excuse to spend extra time in the field. The geology is ancient, but it always seems there is something different to see. Flora and fauna are constantly going through seasonal changes. New segments of trail are opening for everyone's enjoyment. So come on out to Cowiche Creek to see something old, something new ..... and something blue.



## Message from the Development Director

By Barb Smith Gilbert

### Cowiche Canyon Rocks (And Roles)

Just in time to begin celebrating CCC's 25 years, Betsy Bloomfield, along with Colleda Dolinski, will become a permanent 'staff team' (mid-December)—helping lead this organization into an exciting new phase of development. They will soon realize CCC's 'secret of success' --- the incredibly dedicated members, volunteers and partners who share a deep passion for the mission of CCC.

As I once again switch CCC "hats" -- from *strategic-planning-interim-staff* back to *CCC-volunteer* --, I will continue to assist on 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary events, regional trail connections and environmental education networking that will further CCC's mission to promote a healthy future for our community.

Thanks to the Board of Directors for their solid leadership and support during the past year and a half of strategic planning & work, (& to Betsy Frank in particular, for all she did in fundraising & other arenas). Also, for bringing much-needed assistance seven months ago.... thus forming with me a fun "*trail-blazin'-part-time-interim-staff-team*" (TBPTIST), many thanks to Cecilia Vogt.

**Welcome Betsy and Colleda!**

## Message from the Executive Director

By Cecilia Vogt

The exciting transition of Cowiche Canyon Conservancy to a mature, staffed organization continues! The past 7 months have been a delight for Barbara Gilbert and me as we worked as a team to build capacity and stability for CCC. Now CCC is ready to leave the era of interim, temporary staff and enter the world of permanent staff.

Our first step was the hiring of our part time office assistant, Colleda Dolinski. Colleda is in the office five to seven hours each week taking care of important office tasks such as paying bills, updating the membership data base, keeping our web site up to date, sending out thank you letters and all office work needed. She has become a valued part of our team and a joy to work with. Read more about her in the piece she wrote on page 3.

The next step is a permanent executive director. Effective Dec. 14 our new (half-time) ED will step into this role and she will be fantastic! The board voted to hire Betsy Bloomfield, who is leaving The Nature Conservancy to work for CCC. We are fortunate to have a woman of her experience, knowledge and connections to keep CCC growing and blooming. I have known Betsy for many years and have the highest respect for her work and working style. She is perfect for this role and we are fortunate to have her. Read more about her on page 3.

It's been my honor and pleasure to work with the board and many other wonderful volunteers who make CCC the outstanding organization that it is. It's been so rewarding to do the kind of work I love and to make new friends. Working with Barb Gilbert as a team mate and now friend was the best and made the job even more meaningful.

## Meet Colleda Dolinski

My first experience with the Cowiche Canyon occurred about three years ago on an early spring day. I was in Yakima visiting my fiancé's family and it was arranged that we would set off mid morning to hike the canyon and check out the local flora. Being a naive "west-sider", I assumed that a light windbreaker would be sufficient for the "Palm Springs of Washington" and was quickly proven wrong when the strong winds whipped through the canyon that day and nearly bowled us over. The flowers were uncooperative and I remember turning back before getting too far. Although the experience was less than ideal, I was enraptured by the proximity of the trailhead to the town and immediately was aware of how lucky the community was to have this in their backyards.

When we put down roots here a year or so later, the Canyon became my sanctuary and favorite go to spot for a quick weekend hike. When our chocolate lab Rolli joined our family, it became a weekly must.

Today I've hiked the canyon in all seasons and have come to enjoy the blustery days as much as the calm. Most recently, I have begun exploring a new side of the conservancy as a part of the staff. As CCC grows, so do the responsibilities. I look forward to helping, serving and growing a new part of the conservancy for generations to come. See you on the trail!



*Colleda and Rolli in the Canyon*

## Thank you to volunteers

A great bunch of volunteers spent several hours on September 12 along the Cowiche Canyon Trail getting in the creek and removing lots of debris under four bridges. The volunteers are Sara Cate, Maria Jett, Vicki Wang Miller, Russell Maier, Curtis Sundquist, Reece Lolley and Karen Wayenberg.

Also thanks to the Davis High School Environmental Club who put in plants at the Canyon on November 11.

## Greetings from the new Executive Director

Hello everyone, I'm delighted to announce that I'll be joining your organization in December as the new Executive Director. My name is Betsy Bloomfield, and I have been working for the last ten years as the Eastern Washington Forests Director for the Nature Conservancy. I have been living, working and attending school in Central Washington since 1992, and have lived in Yakima since 2000.

I love what our community has to offer, and you should be very proud of the incredible value the Cowiche Canyon Conservancy brings to our quality of life. I'm thrilled to be part of this organization, and look forward to hearing from all of you.



With hope for our future---Betsy Bloomfield

## Geocaching and CCC

Recently a small group of CCC environmental education folks learned more about geocaching at Snow Mountain Ranch with leadership provided by Jessica Sutterli, Heritage University MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) coordinator.

There were lively discussions about ways to incorporate this fun game into CCC learning activities for all ages. You will hear more about this later! Meanwhile, if you like treasure hunts, you will probably enjoy geocaching. For more general geocaching information: [www.geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com).



Canyon Trail improvements by our busy president. The pea gravel is gone! Go check it out.



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*The word Cowiche, sometimes spelled Cowychee, is said to mean  
"footbridge between the valley and the mountains"*

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## **Cowiche Canyon Conservancy**

Mailing Address:

P.O. Box 877  
Yakima, WA 98907

(509) 248-5065

[www.cowihēcanyon.org](http://www.cowihēcanyon.org)

Office located at  
302 N 3rd Street, #201  
Yakima, WA

### **Newsletter going online**

This newsletter will be available to read on our website, [cowihēcanyon.org](http://cowihēcanyon.org). If you would like to have the newsletter emailed directly to you, please send your email address to [info@cowihēcanyon.org](mailto:info@cowihēcanyon.org). If you would prefer to continue to receive a printed copy of the newsletter, please send your request to the mailing address above, or call the office (509) 248-5065.

**We love dogs** and are happy that dogs and their owners enjoy the trails. But, please, dog owners, carry bags and pick up after your dog. Not only is dog waste unsightly and smelly, it is unsanitary. Be considerate of your fellow trail lovers and leave the trail clean for all!