



# VISTA HOUSE VIEWS

FRIENDS OF VISTA HOUSE NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2023

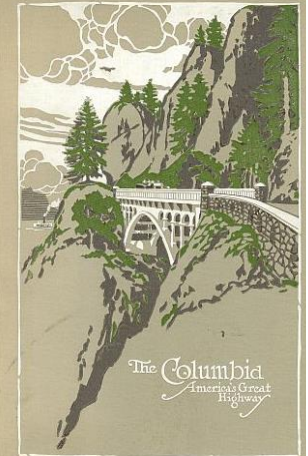
VISTA HOUSE, CROWN POINT,  
COLUMBIA RIVER HIGHWAY, OREGON—PS7



The Views will present articles on the Vista House (VH), Columbia Gorge, and surrounding scenic sites, with historical narratives and present-day events. This newsletter includes:

- Basket Weaving presentation
- Waterfall Photography – Part 2
- Mrs. M.E. Henderson history
- Historic Columbia River Highway
- Smokey Bear Birthday

**Basket Weaving presentation at Vista House:** In June and August of 2023, the Friends of Vista House and Oregon State Parks welcomed Stephanie Craig, ([Kalapuya Weaving and Consulting, LLC.](#)), a seventh generation traditional basket weaver, Chinook, Kalapuya, Rogue River, Umpqua and enrolled Grand Ronde Tribal member. Stephanie demonstrated traditional local and regional Native American basket weaving. She also had items on display from plant samples to foods and family belongings. We hope she will return again and share her heritage.



## VISTA HOUSE HOURS

Hours can be flexible depending on various factors

**For the most up-to-date information check:**

Our Website:  
[VistaHouse.com](http://VistaHouse.com)

Our Facebook Page  
[Friends of Vista House](#)

Gift Shop/Café have same hours as VH.

## Visitor Comments: From Next Door and Around the World

### VISTA HOUSE

From	COMMENTS
ISSAQUAH, WA	BEAUTIFUL - SIMPLY AMAZING
Shanghai, China	Amazing view, will come back
Pender, NE	Wonderful - Thank You!
Greeley CO 2003	amazing
Hawaii Big Island	
Lincoln, NE	
Irvine, CA	Beautiful
Charlotte, NC	friendly staff!
MOBILE AL	FANTASTIC!
Camas, Wa	Amazing - Mother Nature
San Francisco CA	♥
Mesa, AZ	Nice to be back in the NW
Vancouver, WA	Gorgeous (pardon the pun)
Östersund, Sweden	Very, very fantastic!
India, Coimbatore	Very nice and historic place, thank you
NAGOYA, JAPAN	★ 美しい景観! (Beautiful view!)
San Salvador CA	Breathtaking Views!

### VISTA HOUSE

From	COMMENTS
Barton, NJ	Sunday afternoon site seeing
Waynesburg Pa	Great view
Muskegon, NE	Amazing
OKLA   Washington (Seattle)	Beautiful view & history!
NOTTINGHAM, UK	HOT!! BUT AMAZING VIEWS! ♥♥
Gallego, ID	
France, Narbonne	Superbe!
Winston-Salem NC	Beautiful!
Farmington NM	♥
Holland, MI 48829	Absolutely Gorgeous!
Wilmington, NC	Thank you Oregon!
Newaueper, Wisconsin	off the bucket list!! Nice
Horsham West Sussex England	Fantastic Place
murphy TX	Beautiful
Plano, TX	Absolutely Gorgeous
Atlanta	Great! ♥
Sevilla, FL	Beautiful

★ Japanese Translation: "Super Beautiful. Thanks!"

### Visitor comments from TripAdvisor & Yelp

- **Great place to stretch the legs.** First time here. WOW! What a view of the valley and river. Lots of parking, and the staff here is very friendly and helpful. They do have snacks, and drinks on the lower level
- **Don't Skip This on Your Trip Through the Columbia River Gorge.** This was a surprisingly favorite stop on our trip through the Columbia River Gorge. The views are breathtaking. The building is beautiful. There's a nice gift shop, restrooms, and even a coffee shop in the basement. There is a single person elevator to use if you need it, but you have to ask for assistance from the staff.
- **Spectacular views** of the Columbia River Gorge can be seen from almost every vantage point at the Vista House. This is a good stop for a bathroom break and a quick history lesson on the area. Plus, find souvenirs in the cute gift shop that also sells huckleberry flavored taffy and chocolates.

### Thor's Point or Thor's Heights or Thor's Crown becomes Crown Point

A goat stands alone on Thor's Point overlooking the Columbia River Gorge, the future location of the Vista House. Later called Thor's Heights then Crown Point.



Cannon fire highlights the Columbia River Highway dedication and Vista House groundbreaking event at Crown Point on June 7, 1916.

## **Waterfall Photography – Composition (Part 2).** By Daniel Rappaport

The journey to waterfall photography began in Part 1 (featured in the Winter newsletter 2023), where the basic camera gear and techniques were reviewed. Part 2 presents the fun part: Composition!

In Part 1, I stressed the rule number one is **“be there”**. The focus in Part 2 is **“the details”**. Once you have found your happy place on the river or stream, stop, calm down, and transition from being overwhelmed by the totality of the scene, to focusing your mind on individual details. I found talking to myself about what I’m seeing helpful. I hope the following recommendations may be helpful to you.

**One: Take your time.** Your perspective and image created could vary based on a few inches of movement (side to side or forward and back). You may have only one ‘safe’ spot from which to obtain your shot (Stay safe!). Even so, take time to settle in and observe. Don’t be afraid to take lots of shots from the same place - SD card space is cheap. Vary your camera settings and see what you get. More important, realize even a few minutes later, things are not the same. The light changes minute to minute. **Low angles often make for the most captivating images. A cell phone camera is perfect for this. Get down on your knees or even down on your tummy!**

**Ponytail Falls**



In this image, the spring greens competes for the attention of the falls

**Two: Pre-visualize the image you want to create.** I’ve found being open to seeing a totally different image is important and the process helps me. It is especially important when the elements conspire against you. Consider how you can make the sun or the rain or the snow or the wind you weren’t planning on be part of the story. Again, take your time.

**Three: Rules of composition are “meant to be broken”.** Try not to put the subject in the middle of the picture. The **“rule of thirds”** is at least a good starting point. Find a perspective that allows for a flow, especially from top left to bottom right. It is about having your image tell a story. The waterfall is a ready-made primary subject but keep your eye open for 1 or at best 2 secondary subjects. Wet or textured rocks can make a strong foreground subject. This is where a wide-angle lens can help you create the flow and emphasize the foreground. Again, I’ve found I rarely need a smaller aperture than f16 to keep the scene in adequate focus.

**“Beauty & Wonder equals Waterfalls. Unknown**

**Weisendanger Falls**



Rain and mist ‘almost’ made me give up on getting an image, but they became the primary subject.

**Four: Avoid direct harsh sunlight.** This is rarely an issue for waterfall images since you are most often in the forest. While early and late in the day light is typically best for landscape photography, it is less important in shaded forest. Dappled light is the best! If your camera allows for varying your white balance, shade setting is best so as to avoid the water being too blue.

**Five: Shooting directly into the sun is challenging,** however in the forest, you are often protected by leaves between you and the sun. A tiny edge of sunlight is what allows the camera to create those “sun-stars”. You might need to do a lot of moving around to get this to work. It can be exasperating with both leaves and sun moving while you are trying to keep your perspective on your primary subjects – that is the fun of the process. The books say you need a tiny aperture, f22 to make this work, but I’ve found that f16 works OK.

**Six: Don’t be afraid to get wet.** (Again, stay safe). Many of my favorite images required that I hike in carrying my flyweight waders.

**Seven: Be prepared for your lens to get wet** from spray. I’ve found a lint free cotton rag gets mist off the lens quicker than a microfiber one. (Even if you are not using a polarizing filter, a clear UV lens protective filter is a good idea). Sometimes using a plastic bag over the camera during set-up helps to save time.

**Eight: Gear to bring:** A daypack for your camera, raingear, lunch, with a side strap to hold a small collapsible tripod is the best way to carry what you need for a fun day hike.

One good way to share your creations is on Instagram. My son got me started on that site. Look for: [pnw\\_naturescape\\_dan](#). I hope to see your work soon. Have fun!

Latourell Falls



The intense spring greenery in the foreground draws the viewer into the

Angel’s Rest Trail



Dappled sunlight is the subject in this cascade. The ‘Sunstar’ is typical with forest light at f16.

Punchbowl Falls



I had my flyweight waders for this image. I was up to my thighs in high spring water.

# The Oregonian

## **"Mrs. Henderson is the pioneer caterer on the Columbia River Highway"**

**"A typical Western woman, one who knows how to overcome difficulties and carve success right out in the wilderness, is Mrs. M.E. Henderson. Her parents were pioneers of the early days and she inherited their courage and pluck (spirited). Left with no resources other than an indomitable will and a determination to make good together with an ability as a housekeeper, cook, and homemaker, Mrs. Henderson decided to try her luck." *Sunday Oregonian. 1914***

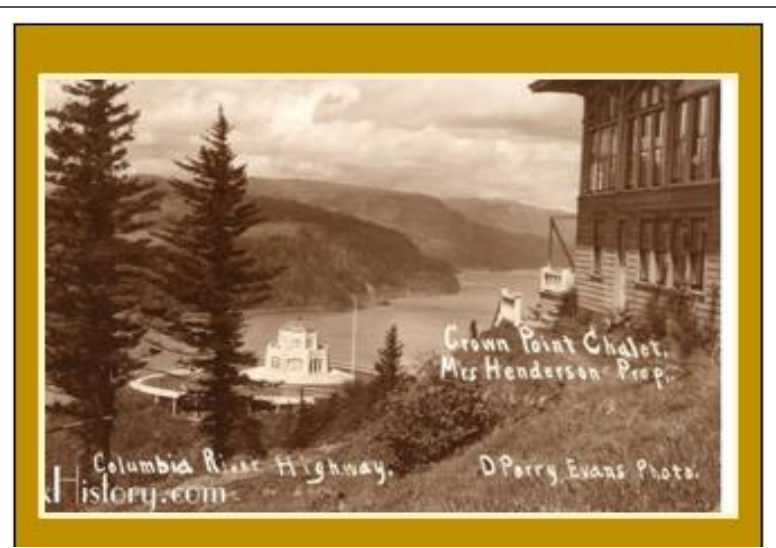
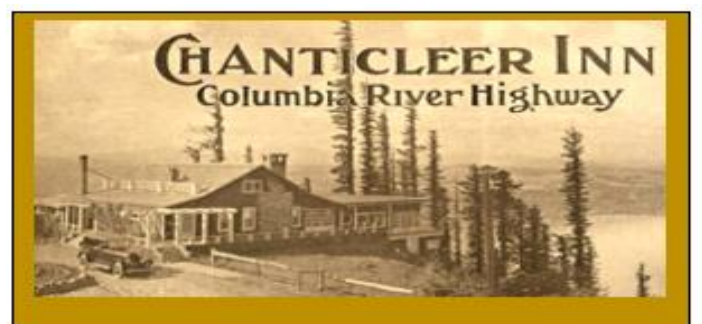
Here is her story: In 1912 when the Columbia River Highway was merely an idea, Mrs. Margaret E. Henderson, along with a partner, succeeded in establishing the Chanticleer Inn, located where Portland Women's Forum State Park is today. "She was a real free spirit", said grandson, Dr. Edward Holden (details on Holden below (\*). She later built the Crown Point Chalet, which overlooked the Vista House.

Mrs. Henderson, born Margaret E. Darling in 1872, was raised in Portland. She began her career as a restaurateur at 40 years old, and divorced from her third husband. First marriage to an orchardist in the Hood River Valley by the name of Hackett, she later married a steamboat captain, and then Judge Henderson. She had two children when married to Hackett (Lavine/Vine, and Henry). Her first name seemed to change with careers and marriages which were Bessie, Bess, Bidy, and Margaret.

Bessie Hackett began her career as a clerk at Locke and Gullette (shipping). Around 1911, she was hired by Portland's Meier & Frank Department Store downtown. She was a window designer and worked as a waitress in M&F popular lunchroom. The decorating skills she learned at M&F would be used in future roadhouses.

The Chanticleer Inn had an incredible eastern view of the Columbia River Gorge, and became a popular destination for Portland's affluent. Managed by Mrs. Margaret "Bidy" Henderson, the inn became known for its hospitality and delicious meals. Visitors took a train or steamboat to Rooster Rock, then climbed a dirt trail to the Inn at the top of the bluff. It was an adventure. By 1913, the Columbia River Highway was being pushed through the Gorge, and Bidy was actively involved with the effort.

After 2 years, Mrs. Henderson wanted a place of her own, and sold her interest in Chanticleer. She built an inn at Latourell Falls (east of Crown Point). The inn was completed by the spring of 1914 on property owned by the Maffetts of Latourell. The Falls Chalet was nestled among the tall firs on the hillside in the mist of the falls, a hundred yards from the Columbia River Highway, which was nearing completion. With a magnificent view and Mrs. Henderson's abilities, the Falls Chalet became a favorite stopping point for travelers.



Just three months after the chalet opened, Mrs. Henderson's luck ran out on January 23, 1915. While preparing for a dinner dance, the inn caught fire and burned to the ground. Mrs. Henderson escaped with the clothes on her back and two chairs. Losses included a fine library and handcrafted furniture. "My ability to cook biscuits and make angel (food) cake has not been burnt up" as quoted in the *Oregon Journal*.

Mrs. Henderson was determined to make her own luck, and focused her energies on a new endeavor. She set her sights on an overlook where the Vista House would be built. Lacking cash, Mrs. Henderson came up with unique ways to achieve her goal. Since she was well-established, well liked, and had a good reputation, her friends bought \$2,500 worth of dinner books in advance (\$20 per book). The notable friends included Sam Hill, Samuel Lancaster, John Yeon, C.S. Jackson, Julius Meier, Simon Benson, Henry Pittock, and many other well-known Portland businessmen.

"She was a real wheeler-dealer", said Holden with regard to building the chalet. With land donated by Mr. & Mrs. C.S. Wiseman, construction began on the Crown Point Chalet. Mrs. Henderson moved to the site and lived in a tent in order to supervise the construction of the Chalet, and cook for the crew. Her father, Henry L Darling, did the interior woodwork at the chalet. "Whenever the chalet is finished it will be a testimonial to pure grit", quoted, the *Oregon Journal* in 1915. According to a *Sunset Magazine* article in May 1925, "the estimated value of the chalet was \$78,000. Cost to build the chalet was ~\$5,000."

Crown Point Chalet (known as a roadhouse) opened for business on May 18, 1915. The Chalet held both a beautiful dining area, and lodging for Mrs. Henderson's family and some of the girls who worked for her. It quickly became the "Place To Go" in the Columbia River Gorge. In December, the first winter it opened, the roof blew off and it was quickly replaced. The Chalet was heralded for the spectacular views, gracious hospitality, fried chicken, beaten biscuits and angel (food) cake. The (Old) Columbia River Highway was dedicated on May 6, 1916, and the Vista House opened on May 5, 1918. These events encouraged more travelers to visit the area and the reputation of the Crown Point Chalet grew.

Many famous people were entertained at the Chalet, including military brass both foreign and domestic, congressmen, members of notable families during this time, such as the Rockefellers, Vanderbilts, as well as European royalty and US Presidents. The Chalet was closed in winter, and Mrs. Henderson promoted the Chalet with trips to New York and Los Angeles.

Mrs. Henderson continued in her role of gracious hostess of the Crown Point Chalet, until she sold it in 1927 (~12 years), which marked the end of the social history of the Columbia River Highway. Mrs. Henderson passed away April 28, 1930, at the age of 58. The Crown Point Chalet reopened in June 1932, under the management of Fred Gast. During WWII, it was used for defense housing, and in 1948, it was torn down.

(\* *Edward and Beryl Holden were grandchildren of Mrs. Henderson's daughter, Vine Hackett Holden. Ed and Beryl spent time at "Grandmother's house" in their younger years. As quoted by Ed, "It was a big tradition spending nights at the Chalet, and I always had a sentimental attachment to it". Ed volunteered at the Interpretive desk for 10 years, and served on the Vista House Board of Directors.*

*Original article was by Steve Lehl and Laurel Slater, and appeared in Vista House Views, Spring, 1995. Current editor, Linda Holden (great granddaughter) added details.*



## History of Old Columbia River Highway



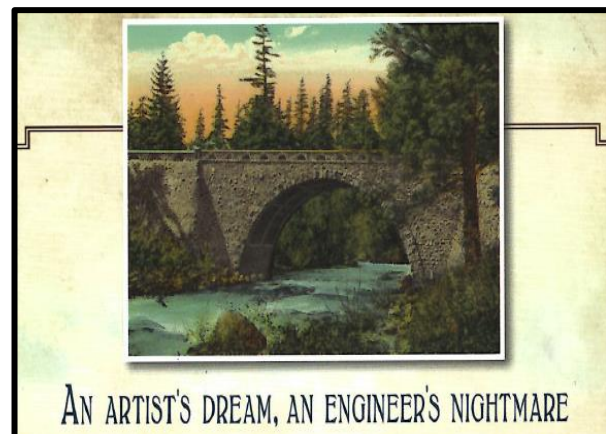
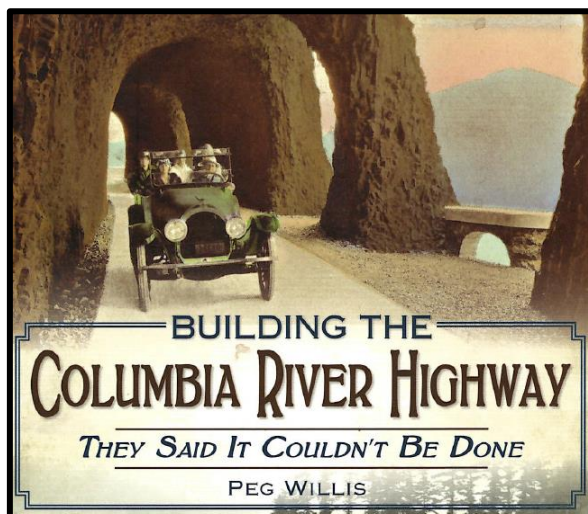
Jeanette Kloos with **Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway** was at Vista House four times during the 2023 summer months to share with visitors the history of the old Columbia River Highway.

She had photos and told the history of the road Vista House is located. We look forward to her visiting again in 2024.

Their website:  
<https://www.hcrh.org/>

### From the Vista House Library:

In keeping with the history of the Old Columbia River Highway (CRH) and for those who would like to learn more, we recommend “Building the Columbia River Highway” by Peg Willis. Filled with facts, historical biographies of the movers and shakers, and photographs. The library is located 27046 SE Stark Street, Troutdale, OR 9706. Hours are flexible Mon – Fri. Please call before coming - Phone: (503) 705-5965. The book is on sale in the Vista House Gift Shop.

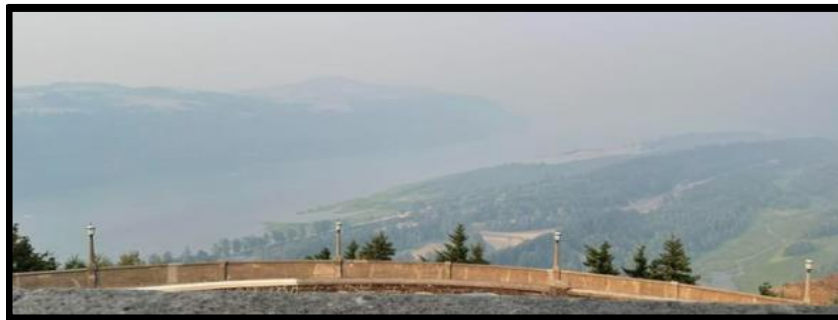


From the book's back cover:

“It took an artist-poet-engineer extraordinaire to conquer piece of real estate and produce the nation’s first scenic highway. Meet Sam Hill and Samuel Lancaster who turned modern engineering on its ear to create a “poem in stone”. Ride along with Peg Willis as she explores the beginnings of this miracle highway and the men who created it. Note: History of Margaret Henderson’s efforts in building the CRH are included.

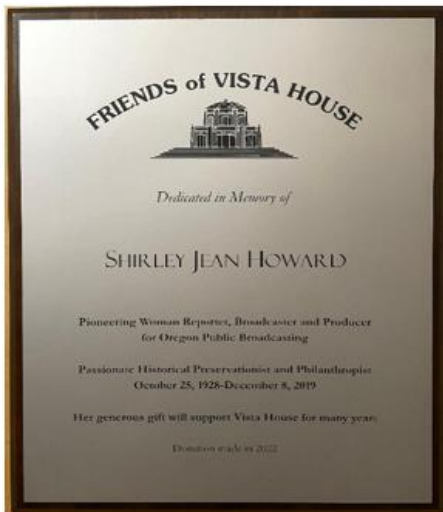


The Vista House joined with the US Forest Service in wishing SMOKEY BEAR a Happy 79<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Smokey reminds us: “Only you can prevent forest fires”.



The beautiful view from Vista House was impacted in August 2023 by wildfire smoke from many fires in Canada and northwest US. The smoke settled in the Columbia River Gorge. This reminds us to follow Smokey’s fire prevention guidelines.

**In Recognition:** Shirley Howard’s estate included a generous donation to the Vista House. A plaque was placed in the Vista House in honor of the gift. She loved the Vista House and the people who worked with her remember her fondly. Stop by to read the inscription on the plaque of this “Pioneering Woman Reporter” for Oregon Public Broadcasting. Shirley was born in 1928 and died in 2019.



A gathering of Shirley Howard family, Vista House and OR Parks staff during the dedication of the plaque in 2023.



**Many Thanks:** The Friends of Vista House want to thank the many people who donated money in 2023. To this date, **over \$5,000 has been received.** The donations are essential and help us stay open to continue welcoming the public and provide educational events. Go to our web page [VistaHouse.com](http://VistaHouse.com) and click **Donate** in the top right corner, or complete the form on Page 11. We look forward to your next visit.



## Welcome to the Vista House:



The Vista House volunteers at the Interpretive Desk have fun greeting visitors! Several enjoy dressing in period costumes and talking about what traveling the Historic Columbia River Highway was like years ago.

### Why I love volunteering at the Vista House

Following are comments from volunteer Kelly John:

The Columbia River Gorge and the Historic Scenic Hwy have been one of my favorite places to go when I want to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city. I was thrilled to find out they needed volunteers. So it was a natural step for me to sign up.

It is always interesting to talk with the many visitors we get. And there are so many we meet from other countries. It really gives me a sense of pride to show off the beauty we have here in the Pacific Northwest and to explain the history of the area. By the way, I am always learning something new. I am so glad I signed up.

### Interested in Volunteering?



Do you want to meet lots of people, have special skills, or share in Oregon's history? If so, join our fantastic group - Friends of Vista House (FOVH) volunteers. This group makes Vista House a memorable place to

Think of joining us in 2023 and help support Oregon's most beloved and cherished icon.

Details are available upon request: email [Volunteer@vistahouse.com](mailto:Volunteer@vistahouse.com) or call (503) 344-1368.



**Vista House Views**  
**Friends of the Vista House**  
Published Semi-Annually

**Administrative Offices:**  
27046 SE Stark Street,  
Troutdale, OR 97060

**Mailing address:**  
PO Box 204, Corbett, OR  
97019

Ph (503) 344-1368

[VistaHouse.com](http://VistaHouse.com)  
[Friends - Vista House](http://Friends-VistaHouse.com)

**Board of Directors**  
Elections held in March

**Executive Director**  
[director@vistahouse.com](mailto:director@vistahouse.com)

**Volunteer Opportunities:**  
[Volunteer@vistahouse.com](mailto:Volunteer@vistahouse.com)

**Newsletter Editor:**  
Linda J Holden  
[Lholden627@yahoo.com](mailto:Lholden627@yahoo.com)

Vista House on  
**INSTAGRAM**  
[Vista House at Crown Point](https://www.instagram.com/vistahouse)

## Oregon State Parks Corner:

Friends of Vista House has been working in partnership with Oregon State Parks since 1982 to staff the desk inside Vista House. Without volunteers' commitment of time and energy, Oregon State Parks could not keep the Vista House open. Oregon Parks is proud to partner with Friends of Vista House to provide access to this unique treasure.



During the summer months, Kyle Peters is the interpretive seasonal ranger assistant who works at Vista House. Visitors will see Kyle there on weekends and he is ready to tell the stories of Vista House – just ask him.



## In Memoriam:

A memorial for Judith Scott, long-time volunteer and board member, was held at Gresham Historical Society on August 8, 2023. Judith loved Vista House and the Friends of Vista House and was the longest-serving board member to date. We will miss her wise counsel and 'youthful-beyond-her-years' energy.

## Tidbit: The Most Expensive Comfort Station

The Vista House opened in 1918 and has been called everything from the "Crown Jewel" of Oregon Parks to the most expensive comfort station in Oregon history, but the views can only be called **stunning**. When the scenic Columbia highway was created, the builders were given \$4000 to build a rest stop and bathrooms. There were slight cost overruns, that might be because of the Tiffany Windows, and Italian marble. Initially, they thought to build this place with 20 bathrooms, when at the time there were only about 20 cars.

## CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE [vistahouse.com](http://vistahouse.com)

New features are continually added.

- See spectacular pictures of the **Vista House (VH)** and gorge at each section.
- Log on and you will immediately see when and if the VH is open.
- Learn interesting historic information on the VH.
- Check Weather Watch for real time updates on temperature and wind at the VH.
- Learn about volunteer opportunities with Friends of VH.
- Make a secure donation.

**Benefits to Friends of Vista House:** Link your Fred Meyer Loyalty account to Friends of Vista House, and for every purchase, **Fred Meyer (FM)** will donate to the Friends of Vista House. If you don't have a FM account, you can create one at [Fred Meyer.com](http://FredMeyer.com). Then go to My Account -> Community Rewards -> search for "Friends of Vista House" -> Select.



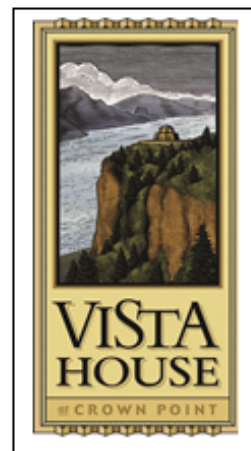
Participants must swipe their FM rewards card or use the phone number related to their FM rewards card when shopping for each purchase to count. Note: Your FM rewards card or registered phone number is linked to the FM loyalty account. Thank you for supporting Friends of Vista House.

### Help support Friends of Vista House (FOVH)

FOVH volunteers contribute thousands of hours annually welcoming visitors and telling the history of the Vista House and its place in Oregon history. FOVH works in partnership with Oregon Parks & Recreation Department to provide educational and interpretive services to the public, and help improve, restore, and maintain Vista House for all to enjoy for generations to come. FOVH is a private non-profit organization with tax exempt status 501(c)(3).

**"Help support Oregon's most beloved and cherished icon".**

Your tax-deductible contributions support FOVH educational and volunteer services for Vista House. Donations can be made by check, credit card, and/or to make a secure donation on-line go to: [vistahouse.com](http://vistahouse.com).



For check or credit card complete the form below:

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ One time Donation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Annual Donation: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Monthly via credit card: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (example \$15.00)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

VISA ~ Mastercard ~ Am Ex: Amount: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_  
Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: (mm/yy) \_\_\_\_\_  
Security Code (xxx): \_\_\_\_\_  
Authorized Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Make out check to: **Friends of Vista House**  
Mail form w/check or credit card information to: **Friends of Vista House,  
PO Box 204,  
Corbett, OR 97019**

**Interested in Volunteering: Call (503) 344-1368 or email: [volunteer@vistahouse.com](mailto:volunteer@vistahouse.com)  
Follow us on Facebook: Friends of Vista House**

To be removed from our mailing list, send email to [director@vistahouse.com](mailto:director@vistahouse.com).