

Dear Members,

As another season winds down, please take a minute and consider the proposed change in the membership and goals of the Columbia Gorge Windsurfing Association. The Board of Directors and I have many opportunities to interact with many of the river users here in the Columbia Gorge, many of whom are not windsurfers, but kilters, SUP enthusiasts, paddlers, foilers and outrigger canoe or surfski enthusiasts. Over the last year, we have been watching the use of the river become more intense than in years past and as I am sure you are aware, windsurfing is not the only game out there anymore.

The CGWA has spent over 30 years creating relationships and supporting local agencies, state governments, port districts, the Tribes and the Army Corps of Engineers to develop and maintain all of the great launches and access points along almost 100 miles of river. Rowena, Viento, Bob's Beach, Swell City, Arlington, Doug's Beach, the Hook, The Hatchery, Home Valley, Maryhill, Mosier, the Event Site, to name a few, have all benefitted from the CGWA's efforts. None of that would have been possible without the hard work of the members and the generous donors and businesses that support what we do.

What is occurring now is an evolution in watersports on the river and guess what? They all use the access and a safe river environment we've created to play in, and as the pointy end of the spear, (windsurfing started it all) the Board and I feel that we should invite all of these new users to join us in our continued efforts, by making them a part of our organization. The time has come to expand what we do, and the work and funding for that type of program will have to come from increased membership and participation from all of the new wind and human powered river users. The windsurfing community cannot carry that burden alone, and so what we are proposing to all of you, is a "re-branding" of our Association into one that can include, represent and get support from the broader community of river enthusiasts we all share the water with.

It is in that light that we would like to find a better way forward to continue what the CGWA has always done, and expand what it can do, by asking you for your thoughts on becoming the CGWAWA, Columbia Gorge Wind and Watersports Association. We would like to invite the other user groups to join our association with the idea that we work together to get what we all need: access and safety on the Columbia River here in the Gorge.

If we become one group, we will have a larger voice when it comes to advocating for river use. We can also raise more funding to chase down what we collectively want, and to improve the Gorge experience for all water users. In the interests of safety, we would like to see this new group set out guidelines for how we all can interact with each other on the water in the safest way possible. We have a safety agenda we are working on and it has long included a goal to have a rescue/chase safety boat program that can help sailors, paddlers and kilters in need during the summer season. Equipment failures, fatigue, cold water and big conditions on the river often require the need for a rescue/assist boat, and that is something we think all the river users need and would support. One boat at the Event Site and one at Rowena would be a great start. The funding to start a program like that will require a hefty fundraising effort, and we would like to share that task and responsibility with everyone who enjoys the river, regardless of their passion on the water, to serve everyone.

The potential for what the CGWA can become is only limited by the resources and will of the membership. If all of you as current members of the CGWA can send us feedback on these thoughts, the Board and I will make a proposal reflecting your wishes.

The CGWA, as a membership organization, cannot make changes of this magnitude without broad member support, and in fact will require a vote of the membership, currently planned for early December, and we will move as the membership feedback dictates. Included is a copy of a logo proposal for you to consider as well. Please send us your thoughts by email, mail or phone on this proposed idea, we need and value your input. This branding change is something that the board and I hope to implement by the first of the year, with a ballot sent out on December 1st for your vote. If you could respond with your thoughts before November 30th, it will be greatly appreciated. We look forward to hearing from you. On behalf of the Board and myself, thank you.

Fair Winds (and Waves), Bart



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