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**\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\* For Immediate Release\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\***

**Columbia Springs welcomes new Development Director, Heather Sparks**

VANCOUVER, WA (February 22, 2021) – Columbia Springs welcomes Heather Sparks as the new Development Director. With over twenty years of nonprofit development experience, Sparks brings a talent for creating community connections through inspired storytelling to her work. Her background in events management, communications, and major giving campaigns, combined with a deep appreciation for the natural environment, makes her a great fit for the role.

Sparks has a Master’s degree in Community and Regional Planning, with an emphasis in Environmental Planning, and a certificate in Nonprofit Management, all from the University of Oregon. She has served as the Development Director for a social service nonprofit and as the Coordinator for the Umatilla County Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee, a position that included extensive work planning for the exploration of natural sites. Her background ensures that she has a deep understanding of the work and mission of Columbia Springs.

As a child, Sparks lived on a farm in Eastern Oregon where she first developed her love for being in nature. That love grew as she traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest, hiking and swimming every chance she got. Sparks is inspired by the many programs offered at Columbia Springs saying, “Columbia Springs provides the community with the opportunity to experience nature without having to drive into the mountains. Everything you’d want from lakes, to trails, to educational opportunities is right here waiting to soothe your spirit and give you a sense of connection to the natural world.”

Columbia Springs is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit on the Old Evergreen Highway in Vancouver, WA. Its mission is to offer a unique setting and educational experiences that foster greater awareness of the natural world and inspire stewardship.