

Declaration of Cooperation
THE WILLAMETTE FALLS HERITAGE AREA
April 2010

History

The Willamette Falls is a natural waterfall on the Willamette River between Oregon City and West Linn. Native American tribes built villages near the falls because of the abundance of salmon. In 1810, John McLoughlin established a land claim at the falls in the name of the Hudson's Bay Company. Oregon City and Linn City (later renamed West Linn) were founded soon after to meet the needs of steamboat traffic and the trade it generated.

In 1873, the Willamette Falls Locks were constructed to provide navigation past the falls. The Willamette Falls Locks remains the oldest continuously operating multi-lock system in the nation and is a critical historic and cultural resource for Clackamas County and the region. With the development of the Willamette Water Trail, the Locks became an important recreational resource as well; a part of Oregon's quality of life that will serve to attract high-quality jobs for the entire state.

The Willamette Falls Electric Company (renamed Portland General Electric) formed in 1888 to build a hydro-electric generation facility at the falls. A second generation station was built in 1985, which still operates today. Several paper mills opened in the late 1800s and still operate today.

Coalition

In 2007, public and private sector organizations gathered to designate a stretch of the Willamette River between the mouths of the Clackamas and Tualatin rivers as a National Heritage Area. This group became the Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition.

National Heritage Areas are places where natural, cultural, and scenic resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally important landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography. National Heritage Areas are designated by Congress. The National Park Service provides technical, planning and limited financial assistance to National Heritage Areas.

In 2009, U.S. Representative Kurt Schrader introduced House Resolution 4081, to direct the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a study of the suitability and feasibility of establishing the Willamette Falls National Heritage Area in Oregon, and for other purposes.

Coalition Mission

The mission of the Willamette Falls Heritage Coalition is to advocate for and strengthen the identity of the historic working communities of Oregon City and West Linn by preserving and promoting their important and distinctive natural, cultural, scenic, recreational and industrial resources through public/private partnerships.

Coalition Principles

The following initial set of principles have been identified for the Heritage area by the Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition (WFHAC). During the course of the feasibility study and in consultation with the local community they will be affirmed, revised, and added to. In other words, they will evolve into a set of overarching principles that best fit the Heritage Area and those who live in it:

Strengthen the identity of Oregon City and West Linn area with the falls at the heart.

Broaden and re-establish identification of the area with the falls and nearby heritage sites. Use preservation and interpretation to enhance the experience of the resource, and therefore the attractiveness of the area. Make it “discoverable”, “memorable” “inspiring”, “reachable” and aesthetically appealing.

Share this unique place with others, local residents and outside visitors.

Aim for the heart of the region to be a destination that will cause a ripple effect to the surrounding community in visitation and economic improvement. Incorporate “spin off” options for visitors to see and to provide support for visits such as the hospitality industry.

Make improved public access a priority.

A stronger visitor presence will keep the site and resources available in the future, as the importance of tourism takes a top seat with other economic uses.

Build the vision as an integral part of the community and who we are.

Hard working Oregonians are proud of their heritage and open to sharing it with others.

Create an easy to navigate approach to the area and the core site.

Create initial gateways at major transportation interface areas. Connect them to sites, routes, trails and trailheads by a variety of transportation modes. Find a way to get visitors to the locks/falls and beyond without interfering with the power plant or paper mill operation. Incorporate city, county, metro trails and trailheads.

Next Steps

The Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition (WFHAC) will focus on the following steps:

1. Develop and complete a Feasibility Study:
 - The study will create a National Heritage Area and develop a plan to leverage the area's biggest asset and its associated history: the Willamette Falls.
2. Ensure public involvement in the feasibility study.
3. Demonstrate widespread support among heritage area residents for the proposed designation.
4. Commit to the proposal from appropriate partners, which may include governments, industry, private and non-profit organizations and citizens.
5. Map the study area:
 - The inventory will identify recreational, natural, historic resources as well as economic drivers and tourist destinations.
 - Create a conceptual boundary map is supported by the public (presented for review at workshops).

6. Develop a special history study that shows:

- The area has an assemblage of natural, historic, or cultural resources that together represent distinctive aspects of American heritage worthy of recognition, conservation, interpretation, and continuing use, and are best managed as such an assemblage through partnerships among public and private entities, and by combining diverse and sometimes noncontiguous resources and active communities;
- Reflects traditions, customs, beliefs, and folklife that are a valuable part of the national story.

7. Plan Gateway Community Workshops:

- As part of the feasibility study, residents, business interests, non-profit organizations, and governments within the proposed area will be involved in the planning. To this end the workshops will:
 - Provide an opportunity for community input regarding the National Heritage Area proposal. This input will be documented and used as one of the components of the feasibility study.
 - Initial workshop for invited stakeholders (100 persons).
 - Three public workshops following focused group.
 - Develop knowledge, collaborations, and tools necessary to begin leveraging the Willamette Falls area through marketing and planning. The workshop is aimed at strengthening the relationship between the community, national and state parks and will be conducted in a way to produce definable and achievable actions for implementation.

8. Plan for programs and projects:

- Based upon the heritage area mission statement, strategies and goals that result from the forthcoming workshops, WFHAC will identify programs and projects that will promote the heritage area and benefit the local community. WFHAC is already active in this area:
 - Three planning studios conducted in collaboration with the University of Oregon have identified recreation, redevelopment, and preservation opportunities in the study area.
 - WFHAC has identified and scoped projects that would fit the concept of a heritage area including art projects, trailheads, and tourist centers.
- By combining the above two efforts with new ideas that result from the workshops, WFHAC will build a comprehensive list of program and projects for the heritage area. This list will include priorities, phasing and costs for each program or project. To meet National Heritage Area criteria the planning effort will need to:
 - Provide outstanding opportunities to conserve natural, cultural, historic, and /or scenic features;
 - Provides outstanding recreational and educational opportunities;
 - The resources important to the identified theme or themes of the area retain a degree of integrity capable of supporting interpretation;

9. Develop a marketing and economic development plan:

- WFHAC will take a lead role in developing a marketing plan for the heritage area that capitalizes on the momentum created by the workshops. A WFHAC marketing team will be created to develop a strategy for selling the concept of the heritage area and the benefits it affords the community.

- WFHAC will work on developing an economic development effort that focuses on joint projects between the Cities of West Linn, Oregon City, National Park Service, Oregon State Park and other identified partners. To meet National Heritage Area criteria the development plan will be “consistent with continued economic activity in the area.”
10. Develop an Organizational plan:
- To pass as a National Heritage Area, WFHAC needs to outline three major features of the organization:
 - The management entity, currently known as WFHAC, is clearly defined in the feasibility study and there is a description of how that organization intends to implement the study.
 - There needs to be a conceptual financial plan that outlines the roles for all participants including the federal government, and have demonstrated support for designation of the area.
 - The study also needs to show the proposed management entity and units of government supporting the designation are willing to commit to working in partnership to develop the heritage area.

Declaration of Cooperation and Agreement

This Declaration of Cooperation, while not a binding legal contract, is evidence to and a statement of the good faith and commitment of the undersigned parties. The undersigned parties to this Declaration of Cooperation have, through a collaborative process, agreed and pledge their cooperation to the above findings and further actions:

SAMPLE AGREEMENTS –as used in One Willamette River Coalition DOC

Clackamas County SAMPLE

Clackamas County has been an active supporter and participant in the One Willamette River Coalition. We have provided administrative services for the Coalition, including the signing and administration of a Partnership agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 2007 for operation of the locks. In addition, Clackamas County has provided financial assistance to several Coalition projects.

We are willing to make the following commitments, subject to the limitations of future budgetary and staffing constraints:

1. Convene the One Willamette River Coalition, as necessary, for future planning, studies, or other efforts necessary to resume operation of the locks.
2. Providing a letter of support for the use of Economic Stimulus funds for completion of the HSS inspection and necessary repairs.
3. Provide staffing and financial assistance in completion of the expanded historic status nomination.
4. Provide legal support should the Coalition decide to propose federal legislation and/or funding to effect a transfer of the locks to a local operating authority.

5. Continue, through Clackamas County Tourism, to participate in the planning for a Heritage Area in the Willamette Falls area.

6. Provide administrative services, including serving as the single repository for local funds, as needed, by the Coalition.

SIGNED BY: _____

Wilsonville Concrete SAMPLE

Wilsonville Concrete has been an active supporter and participant in the One Willamette River Coalition. We have provided financial support to the Coalition, and have supported proposals to Congress for federal funding .

We are willing to make the following commitments, subject to the limitations of future budgetary and staffing constraints:

1. Participate in future One Willamette River Coalition meetings, to help ensure continued operation of the locks.
2. Continue to support and help develop the increased industrial use of the Willamette River and the Willamette Falls Locks for freight transport.
3. Help in funding specific studies or efforts identified by the Coalition for continuing Locks operation, as needed.

SIGNED BY: _____

Governor's Economic Revitalization Team (ERT) SAMPLE

The ERT has been an active supporter and participant in the One Willamette River Coalition. We will continue to assist the Coalition in coordinating with Oregon state agencies for future operation and improvements to the Willamette Falls Locks.

SIGNED BY: _____

Clackamas Heritage Partners SAMPLE

Clackamas Heritage Partners has been an active supporter and participant in the One Willamette River Coalition. We have helped in the heritage planning for the Willamette Falls Locks, and have provided administrative services for two contracts on behalf of the Coalition.

We are willing to make the following commitments, within the limitations of our budgetary and staffing constraints:

1. Continue to actively participate in the planning for a Heritage Area in the Willamette Falls area, including taking the lead in planning for public observation facilities for the Willamette Falls themselves.

2. Participate in future meetings of the One Willamette River Coalition for planning or decision-making purposes, as the project goes forward.

3. Provide administrative services and contract management, as needed, similar to those provided for two previous contracts on behalf of the Coalition. (The Engineering Study on the locks, and the CEDER study on potential transfer issues).

SIGNED BY: _____

City of Oregon City SAMPLE

The City of Oregon City has been an active supporter and participant in the One Willamette River Coalition. We have provided financial support on several Coalition projects, and have written letters encouraging federal funding.

We are willing to make the following commitments, subject to the limitations of future budgetary and staffing constraints:

1. Participate in future One Willamette River Coalition meetings, to help ensure continued operation of the locks.

2. Providing a letter of support for the use of Economic Stimulus funds for completion of the HSS inspection and necessary repairs.

3. Continue to provide leadership in the planning for a Heritage Area in the Willamette Falls area.

SIGNED BY: _____