

# CORE VALUES for RE-IMAGINING WILLAMETTE FALLS

Willamette Falls is one of the nation's most beautiful and historic natural wonders. The largest waterfall in the Pacific Northwest, Willamette Falls was long an important cultural and gathering place for Native American Tribes. Lewis and Clark made many references to the "Falls of the Multnomah" and the tribe that lived there.

The Falls sit at the end of the Oregon Trail, and throughout the late 1800s this was the heart of a thriving frontier city. This became the site of energy generation for Oregon's early industries, including the state's first paper mill and the world's first long distance electrical power transmission line from the Falls to Portland.

The Blue Heron Paper Company, which closed its doors in 2011, was the last in a succession of businesses that contributed to a strong working waterfront in Oregon City. The 23 acres formerly occupied by the mill are for sale, with purchasers interested in the site.

Oregonians now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to re-imagine Willamette Falls and its surroundings as master planning for the Blue Heron site gets underway. You can help define how this area is transformed for economic redevelopment, public access, healthy habitat, and historical and cultural interpretation.

A successful master plan will rezone the site and will reduce and remove barriers for redevelopment. Finding the right balance between certainty and flexibility for the public and a future owner will be driving goals for the framework plan. Early catalyst projects will be critical to maintaining momentum for the site's eventual transformation.

Project partners have identified four interrelated core values that will help guide the vision and redevelopment of the site.



## Public Access

Ensure access to the Falls and places for people to gather



## Economic Redevelopment

Provide jobs and prosperity



## Healthy Habitat

Maintain, restore and protect the unique ecosystem of fish, wildlife and plants along the river



## Historic & Cultural Interpretation

Provide opportunities to connect to history as well as current cultural practices related to the Falls

## PROJECT PARTNERS

The State of Oregon, Metro, Clackamas County, Oregon City, and the Trustee (and/or Buyer) of the Blue Heron site.



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



# Healthy Habitat

July 2013

# Key Facts

## Aquatic Habitat

Salmon, steelhead and lamprey are known to pass through this part of the river, but don't currently have adequate resting habitat.

## Shorebirds

Shorebirds use the falls, but access to rocky outcroppings is limited compared to the historical extents.

## Basalt Geology

The site is mostly underlain with basalt bedrock similar to the falls, with some soils that could support new vegetation

## Floodplain

Flood events, including the 1964 and 1996 floods inundated portions of the site. The river below the falls is tidally influenced, with an average change in water level of approximately 3-4 feet, twice a day.

## Shoreline Condition

Much of the naturally steep shoreline has been modified by years of development and industrial uses and is now lined with fill, pipes, and other structures. Five outfalls and three industrial tailraces (drainage channels) emerge at the shoreline.

## Restoration

Restoration actions will be developed to increase the presence and condition of native habitats and to improve water quality.

The riverbank south of the site is also part of this project and offers opportunities for habitat restoration.

*"The guide also mentioned that it is 20 days travel to the falls of this River, which falls is 40 feet perpendicular into that River & that the Tide water runs up to it,- & that the Natives have a very large Salmon fishery at that place."  
(Journals of Lewis and Clark)*



*Willamette Falls*  
◦ LEGACY PROJECT ◦

## Goals

- 1 Increase the presence and condition of native habitats
- 2 Protect and improve water quality for fish, lamprey, and other native species
- 3 Re-establish unique native plants that thrive in Willamette Falls' mist-created microclimates
- 4 Improve and sustain natural systems that support a healthier environment



Lamprey Harvest (Rick Bowmer/Associated Press)