

# Willamette Greenway Parklands Strategy

*Oregon Parks and Recreation Department*



*A Report from the Task Force  
September 2005*



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## A Strategy for Renewed Action

Willamette Greenway parks and conservation areas were established through legislation in the 1960's and 1970's to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, historic, and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River. The system of "Greenway Parklands" that resulted from that interest continues today to offer Oregonians places to recreate and enjoy nature in beautiful settings that are close to home. Time spent at a riverside park, or boating, hiking or biking between access sites takes visitors away from the hustle of nearby city life. These parklands comprise a network of public lands that provide bases for linking to city and regional trails systems in many places, and to emerging new trails such as the Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway and the Mid-Willamette Water Trail. There is a potential to consolidate these lands into substantial natural areas especially along braided channels and at confluences; and to protect scenic backdrops from nearby urban expansion. At the same time, riverside lands work for us to clean our water, foster our fish and absorb floodwaters using natural processes at relatively little cost compared to "high tech" solutions. All of these things can contribute to the social and economic well being of the region and communities along the river.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department was handed the primary responsibility for coordinating the development and maintenance of state parks and natural areas along the river, and to foster cooperation among other parkland providers toward the objectives in the Greenway legislation. In the early years of the Greenway program the department acquired nearly 90 parcels of land and established four major state parks along the river. At the same time cities, counties, other state agencies and federal agencies have made their own contributions to today's series of parklands.

In the 1990's, interest in the Willamette River and lands along it increased dramatically. The river was named an American Heritage River bringing it to a national level of importance. Governor Kitzhaber created the Willamette Restoration Initiative, a public/private partnership to promote and coordinate efforts to protect and restore the health of the Willamette watershed. And most recently, Governor Kulongoski has championed renewed efforts to clean up the river, restore it's habitats and make it more accessible to Oregonians with his Willamette River Legacy Program. In addition we have a new understanding of how to manage the river and floodplain habitats, and how to provide for community recreation and social needs without harming on-going economic interests.

After nearly thirty years of routine management, the department and it's commission have decided it is time to join in with renewed efforts along the Willamette while remaining well within the parameters of current statute and rule. To assist us in that effort we called together a Task Force of stakeholders and experts, and a Local Government Committee who represented local parklands and Goal 15 land use responsibilities. The result of their work is this strategy for the future of the Greenway program and for working with our many partners toward a shared vision for the river and it's parklands and natural areas. Our next step will be to put together a plan of action for recreation and resource management along the river. Many thanks to Verne Duncan, Sara Vickerman, the members of the Task Force and of the Local Government Committee for their help in this effort.

Tim Wood, Director  
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department  
April 2005



## A Preface from the Co-chairs

This report represents the thought and learning process of the Willamette River Greenway Parklands Strategy Task Force as it has worked toward meeting its “charge” for the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The learning process was indeed a critical part of our work as we rediscovered what the actual history of the Willamette Greenway Program was and how the program is administered today. It was also a chance to step back and look at what had been achieved to date and to consider whether the program and its objectives are still relevant today. Part of the challenge of that consideration was finding out how best to evaluate the program, based on what other states and greenway programs have done recently.

Because it has been over 30 years since the final Greenway legislation was completed outlining the major values to be protected and managed along the river, it was also necessary to consider whether the way we define and evaluate the effectiveness of protecting natural, scenic, historic/cultural and recreational areas is up to date with modern science and planning. This offered us the opportunity to engage in a dialogue with key groups and individuals who are currently active in those fields and to obtain a synthesis of understanding in a relatively short time and with little expense. Since our charge was to provide a Strategy to the department, and not an exhaustive and detailed plan of action, this approach worked well.

Although we have learned that our focus was to be on the parklands along the river, we were intent on also understanding and finding ways of supporting the work that local governments do regarding planning for development and adherence with Goal 15. In addition, we felt that there is a third “party” that is crucial to good land management along the river, namely the thousands of private land owners who either simply reside on or near the river, or are conducting business through farming, forestry, mining and other activities. This “party” should and will continue as a strong presence along the river, and how they manage their lands will make a difference in the long-term ecological health of the greenway and protection of its scenery. We are grateful to private landowners for all they have done to conserve the natural and scenic values along the river, and hope that State Parks will work closely with them to enhance these values through incentives and partnerships, not just through regulation.

Our recommendations focus on what State Parks can do to enhance parklands, but we also ask the department to become a leader in a larger effort to address a broad spectrum of ecological, recreational and quality of life issues along the river. Our priority recommendations should set the department on the path toward revitalizing the Willamette River Greenway Program.

Verne Duncan

Sara Vickerman





# Introduction and Background





## Greenway Parklands: An Introduction

Greenway Parklands are publicly owned lands that are located along or very near to the Willamette River and its confluences with other rivers such as the Luckiamute, Molalla, Clackamas, Marys, Long Tom, McKenzie, Yamhill, Tualatin and Santiam Rivers. They can also be lands owned by land trusts and private lands with conservation easements or partnerships for conserving natural resources and sometimes to provide for public recreation. These parklands are generally larger than the concept of the relatively narrow "Willamette greenway boundary" although the boundary includes many of them. They are owned and managed by a variety of public agencies including State Parks, other state agencies, federal agencies, and county and city governments or local park districts, as well as by some private citizens.

The parklands along the Willamette are meant to provide long-term, "permanent" protection of the environments found on them including fish and wildlife and their habitats, and increasingly rare plant communities such as riparian forests, wetland communities, native upland meadows and oak forests and savannahs. These habitats also provide ecological functions that happen to be important to the economy and well-being of the human residents of the valley; providing places for floodwaters to disperse to, filtering water contaminants, mitigating other pollutants, and providing resting and feeding areas for fish and wildlife that are favored for hunting and fishing. Farming occurs on many of these lands, including public lands, as a way to provide wildlife crops, weed management and other benefits to habitat enhancement, while also providing farm products. In general, parklands are set aside from development, except for facilities needed for recreational uses in some places, and serve as a buffer to urbanizing areas, especially within the Urban Growth Boundaries of cities along the river.

One of the emerging functions of Greenway Parklands is their value for potentially mitigating pollution from necessary industrial and energy producing activities in other areas of the valley. It is becoming better understood that it is far less expensive and more effective to mitigate such impacts indirectly through natural processes than it is to require engineered solutions at the source. Although not all impacts can or should be resolved in this manner, Parkland areas needing planting enhancements or other simple measures can benefit from potential involvement by off site funders.

Because of the overall emphasis on the protection of natural values on Greenway Parklands, they have a secondary benefit and function in providing a naturalistic setting that can be enjoyed as viewed from outside the Parklands, or from within or along the river. The function of Parklands as scenic buffers from urban development and from large scale commercial farming is becoming better understood as being important to the psychological health of people, especially children and others living in stressful places. As the pace of life continues to increase in the Willamette Valley, the refuge that Greenway Parklands offer will also increase in important.

In many places, Greenway Parklands are the sites of the remains of past habitation and life ways, from Native American camps, burials and mounds to Euro-American settlements and their progression from a primitive beginning to a more industrialized and engineered setting. One of the functions of Greenway Parklands is the protection of these prehistoric, historic and cultural resources and sites for future generations. This is important from many perspectives including the educational benefits of understanding where we have come from and alternate ways of living along the river, and preserving a laboratory for researching past life ways with artifacts and structures that are intact in their original locations and layout. Some of the historic buildings can be reused in appropriate ways that extend their function into the future.

Finally, Greenway Parklands are meant to be places for recreation of many types, from simple walks along dirt trails to State Park-style campgrounds and day use facilities. Recreational access to the river is of primary importance, offering boat ramps and landings, docks and piers, swimming beaches, fishing spots, and duck and geese hunting access. In addition, the parking lots, toilet buildings, picnic shelters, roads, and maintenance and administrative structures needed to operate and supervise a well-run park are provided.

This four-fold function of Greenway Parklands, to provide for the protection of natural, cultural and scenic resources from non-recreational development, and to provide for appropriate types and levels of recreational opportunities is very inter-related and, in practice, it all works together. In addition, each Greenway Parkland property contributes to the function of others nearby, and each can offer a jumping off point along the river, along regional trails systems and along local roads to connect a variety of land and water-based trails opportunities.

This Strategy discussion is intended to examine how the functions and purposes of Greenway Parklands should be extended and expanded into the future, and what OPRD's role should be in that endeavor. OPRD's Greenway parks are the basis for responding to Governor Kulongoski's Willamette River Legacy Program.

Governor Kulongoski has identified three priority areas of focus for the Willamette River Legacy Program:

- REPAIR- cleaning up the industrial pollutants and toxins that have contaminated the river;
- RESTORE- returning the river to its natural state, restoring its abundant wildlife and pristine riverbanks; and
- RECREATE- addressing the incredible role that the Willamette River plays in Oregon's quality of life so Oregonians can enjoy the many activities the river offers, and to do so responsibly so that it will be here for future generations.

There are many opportunities on and about OPRD Greenway Parklands to respond to the governor's priorities, as well as covering the scenic and cultural aspects of those lands.

## Working with the Task Force and Local Government Committee

In 2004, former director Mike Carrier asked OPRD planning staff to embark on a conversation with interested parties and experts regarding what the future should be for the department's Greenway program. The conversation was to focus on identifying a broad strategy for the future, not a detailed plan. The strategy was to further focus on "parklands" along the Willamette River, and especially on OPRD's role in furthering these parklands either through direct ownership and management or through partnerships and other incentives. The term parklands was used to expand the discussion from the geographically narrow confines of the Greenway boundary and the land use zoning aspect of the Greenway that is primarily the responsibility of local governments. A Task Force was formed, as well as a committee of representatives of local governments with jurisdiction along the Willamette to advise the department regarding this effort.

The Task Force was headed by co-chairs Verne Duncan (former state legislator) and Sara Vickerman (Director of the Oregon office of Defenders of Wildlife) who provided exceptional direction on membership, meeting process, what the charge for the Task Force was and orchestrating the discussion and recommendations.

Task Force membership included the following:

- Verne Duncan, former state legislator
- Sara Vickerman, Director of Oregon's Defenders of Wildlife
- John Altucker, Eugene Sand and Gravel
- Rick Bastasch, Willamette Restoration Initiative
- David Primozych, Willamette Conservation Network, later Willamette Partnership
- Nik Blosser, Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission
- Mark Brown, Willamette River Navigator, Bureau of Land Management
- Lance Clark and Louise Soliday, Governor's Office
- Julee Conway, City of Corvallis Parks and Recreation Director
- Roger Fitts, Wigrich Farm owner/manager
- Dwayne Foley, citizen at large and former vice president of NW Gas
- Kristen Grainger, Vice President, Willamette University
- Rick Hayes and Matt Rea, Army Corps of Engineers
- Jerry Herrmann, River Resource Museum
- John Lilly and Nicole Kielsmeier, Division of State Lands
- Jimmie Lucht, Willamette Valley Visitors Association
- Cathy MacDonald and Jonathan Soll, The Nature Conservancy
- Rinee Meritt and Kristen Newman, Trust for Public Lands
- John Miller, Mahonia Vineyards and Nursery
- Don Schellenberger, Oregon Farm Bureau
- Wayne Shuyler, Oregon State Marine Board
- Greg Sieglitz and Chris Wheaton, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Chuck Solin, Oregon Recreation Trails Advisory Council
- Doug Spencer, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Dean Underwood, Underwood Farms
- Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper advocacy group
- Mike Carrier, former Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Director
- Tim Wood, current Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Director
- Dave Wright, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department Assistant Director

The Task Force met four times starting on July 8, 2004. Their final meeting was held on April 29, 2005. Each meeting included relevant presentations from State Parks staff or other experts, followed by Task Force discussion and direction to staff on how to proceed with each task on their agenda.

Their discussions progressed through the following topics:

1. Understanding what their assignment or charge was from the department;
2. Understanding the mandates and history of the greenway and what OPRD's current authorities include regarding ownership and management of lands along the Willamette River, and in regard to Goal 15, the Willamette Greenway Goal;
3. Understanding the role of local governments under Goal 15;
4. Exploring how best to evaluate "progress to date" for State Park's Greenway program;
5. Comparing Oregon's Greenway goals and objectives to other greenways to determine whether they are complete, up to date and meaningful;
6. Articulating a Task Force vision statement for the Strategy;
7. Identifying Oregon's cumulative objectives from Goal 15 and refining them;
8. Learning what is known today, versus when the Greenway legislation was passed, about recreational, natural, scenic and historic resource values and needs along the river;
9. Defining Strategy priorities for the state of Oregon and specifically for State Parks.

The Local Government committee included invitees from each of the nine counties located along the river (Polk, Marion, Yamhill, Columbia, Benton, Lane, Clackamas, Linn and Multnomah counties), Portland Metro Regional Center, the cities of Portland, Albany, Salem, Eugene, and Corvallis, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, Lane Council of Governments, Oregon Cascade West Council of Governments, and the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development. This group also met four times during the process, shortly after each of the Task Force meetings.

Their discussions included:

1. Reviewing and discussing Task Force presentations and comments on the topics listed above;
2. Answering Task Force questions about implementation of the land use planning aspect of Goal 15 and the role of local park providers;
3. Bringing forward actions and products that State Parks could provide or could assist with to help support local governments in completing their tasks regarding land use review and planning related to Goal 15 and other Goals related to lands along the river.

The discussions were cumulative from topic to topic, and from the Task Force to the Local Government committee and back again. State Parks management also participated, bringing the agency background and perspective to the discussion. In addition, two briefing meetings were held among agency planning staff and field managers in charge of areas with state parks greenway parcels along the Willamette.

## Background: History, Authority and Definitions

The history of the Willamette Greenway has affected what OPRD is mandated to do with its Greenway Parklands, and shapes how the public perceives OPRD's role along the river. Since time has shown that working within the parameters of existing greenway statute and rule can be effective and productive for the department, this Strategy effort is not concerned with changing those mandates. Because there is so much confusion about what really happened, and what OPRD is authorized to do, among agencies, local governments and the general public, as well as among the Task Force in early discussions, the history of the Willamette Greenway legislation and creation of a Parklands system, and the authorities that OPRD is able to exercise are outlined here, as a background for examining future proposals at the end of this report.

### History

The history of Oregon's Willamette Greenway has had several twists and turns that have left most people, including most planning professionals, in the dark about how it really ended up. The controversial events are what most people remember, not how it was all resolved. In order to be sure that the right understanding was provided to the Task Force, State Parks staff researched the administrative history of the related statutes, state rules, preliminary planning efforts, political ups and downs and finally the creation of Goal 15 and what it means. We now know that there is no official greenway plan per se, as Goal 15 circumvented earlier centralized planning efforts and assigned the responsibility for land use planning and the location of the greenway boundary to local governments along the river, both cities and counties. Greenway ordinances are determined by local governments. Boundary changes, when and if they are proposed, must be adopted locally and approved by the Land Conservation and Development Commission, as well as the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission.

When the smoke cleared following the implementation of Goal 15, State Parks retained a broad authority for acquiring lands and managing them as parks and natural areas, both inside and outside of the official greenway boundary. The department also retained the role of "coordinating" with other agencies and local governments about the provision of parklands along the river. Although State Parks has the option of commenting on local land use permitting for proposals within the greenway boundary, its role in the zoning arena focuses on its own compliance with local zoning along the river and commenting on development proposals that are adjacent to existing State Parks properties on the river. The following is a very brief summary of how it all happened:

- In 1967, initial greenway discussions that were advanced by Tom McCall proposing a continuous parkway of green along the river were reduced to legislation declaring a Willamette River Greenway and establishing a state grant program that was available to local governments for acquisition of land along the river to be used as natural areas and parks. The grant program was administered by the State Transportation Department and its Commission of which State Parks was, then, a part. This Willamette River Park System Program lasted only six years until it was discontinued under 1973 legislation. During that time few local governments purchased land because of the difficulty for them of providing the required matching funds. The Transportation Department (state parks section) and its Commission grew frustrated with the slow process of assembling greenway parklands.
- Four years into the grant program, the Transportation Department decided to start buying state park lands along the river to augment the ineffective grant program. The Transportation Commission and Governor Tom McCall approved of the acquisitions even though they technically violated legislative restrictions on state acquisition along the river. This was done to try to return to the greenway concept of a continuous parkway along the river, as it had been envisioned prior the 1967 legislation. The Transportation Department used federal funding through the Land and Water Conservation Fund to pay for many of the

parcels. They also reportedly threatened condemnation and actually condemned at least one parcel, as they commonly did for the acquisition of highway rights of way. This aroused the ire of many riverfront property owners, mostly farmers, who banded together to have the Emergency Board cut off state matching funding for the acquisitions and effectively halted further acquisitions for a time. Funding was restored when the Transportation Commission agreed to not use condemnation in the Willamette River Corridor Program, as it was called.

- ❑ In 1973, the Oregon legislature was pressed by farmers to amend the greenway legislation and created the Willamette River Greenway Act that placed certain restrictions on how the Oregon Department of Transportation (now Oregon Parks and Recreation Department) could acquire lands along the river and required completion of a Greenway Plan to guide acquisition and management. Using condemnation was expressly forbidden for most land transactions along the river according to the 1973 legislation. The plan had to be completed by the Transportation Department and adopted by their Commission, and finally had to be approved by the newly formed Land Conservation and Development Commission.
- ❑ The Transportation Department contracted with a consultant, Royston, Hanamoto, Beck and Abey, Landscape Architects and Land Planners, to complete the plan, including providing opportunities for public involvement. The initial draft plan reflected the input of local governments and elected officials, property owners along the river and other attendees of public meetings. However, before the plan was presented to the Land Conservation and Development Commission for confirmation Governor Straub requested major changes be made to bring the plan back to the idea of a more or less continuous parkway.
- ❑ Because major changes were made to the plan after the close of public involvement, the Land Conservation and Development Commission decided not to approve it. Instead, they drafted a statewide land use planning goal for the greenway, Goal 15 that integrated greenway planning into local comprehensive planning with the goal of controlling how development would occur along the river. An interim Greenway boundary for zoning purposes was based on the consultant's plan and the Transportation Department was directed to recommend a final boundary for local government consideration and approval, subject to final approval by the Land Conservation and Development Commission. This action by the commission effectively shifted the emphasis in the greenway program away from acquisition and toward regulation through local zoning and the commission's oversight of it.
- ❑ The Land Conservation and Development Commission also directed the Transportation Department to complete analysis to accompany and support the boundary recommendation, as well as future acquisition priorities. Goal 15 spelled out that the analysis was to include identification of existing and proposed river accesses, proposed acquisitions and intended levels of use for recreational purposes for lands owned or potentially acquired by Transportation. The draft document representing this analysis and the greenway boundary recommended by Transportation is called "A Proposal for the Willamette River Greenway" and is referred to as the Transportation Department's 1976 "plan".
- ❑ "With the concerns of many greenway opponents now satisfactorily addressed, interest in the greenway program tended to die out. Efforts of the Transportation Department turned to resolving boundary differences with local jurisdictions (as each jurisdiction moved toward local adoption and Land Conservation and Development Commission approval of their boundary) and to undertaking a modest program of development of acquired sites along the river. ....The year 1978 ended with State acquisition at a standstill, (recreational) development moving forward (slowly), no serious problems between State and local government or between the Transportation Department and farmers, and nothing on the horizon to indicate any future changes to either the scope or the emphasis of the greenway program." A Case Analysis of Oregon's Willamette River Greenway Program, Webb Bauer, 1980. To this day, little additional parkland has been purchased by the state along the river.



- The draft greenway “plan” was never finalized and does not reflect an accurate depiction of the Greenway Boundary as it was adopted by local governments. This draft “plan” remains today as a casual reference for the now Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (State Parks) to consider concerning its potential land acquisitions and recreational development. However, state greenway law allows State Parks broader authorities for acquisition along the river than are identified in the draft “plan” recommendations.

## **A Summary of OPRD Authority**

Legislation, state rule and Goal 15 define State Park’s areas of authority along the Willamette River today and direct the department in its role as a parkland provider. The following is a brief summary of that authority and direction.

Legislation and rule direct that the department must coordinate the development and maintenance of greenway properties (parklands) for the benefit of the citizens of the state. This is interpreted to include department advocacy for parkland ownership and management by other agencies and local governments under the department’s broad recreation mandate, as well as the department’s development and management of its own parklands properties.

Legislation directs that the department :

- Can acquire lands, through fee title ownership, inside or outside of the greenway boundary as long as condemnation is not used;
- Can condemn only for the purchase of the five prescribed greenway state parks and for scenic easements;
- Can acquire scenic easements within 150 feet of low water through condemnation, if public access is not provided and if farm use is not curtailed;
- Can acquire public access easements if no condemnation is used;
- Must acquire an entire farm if the owner requests it and if the farm would not be economically viable if reduced in size by a partial acquisition;
- Can sell lands purchased by the department that are located outside of the greenway boundary, including portions of farms that are not needed by the department after purchasing the entire farm.

The above summary of legislation refers to ORS 390.310-390.368.

The summary of acquisition legislation regarding lands along the Willamette River shows that State Parks has broad authority to purchase lands along the Willamette River, and the greenway boundary does not limit the geographic extent of that authority. Instead, the legislation limits what type of transaction can be used such as fee title versus easements and whether condemnation authority is allowed. Today, condemnation is an authority that the department has not considered using for many years for any purchase across the state, and negotiations are focused on willing sellers regardless of the department’s authority to use condemnation in certain areas.

State rule OAR 736-015-0160 allows the department to set up recreational use rules for visitors to its greenway parklands.

Goal 15 directs the department to do the following:

- Complete and update a greenway plan (which was done);
- Provide for recreation within the carrying capacity of the resources of the area;
- Select parklands that will not interfere with intended farming; and,
- Select parklands that will minimize disturbance of neighbors by recreational use of parklands.

Note: The Greenway “plan” completed in draft form only in 1976 is the plan mentioned in Goal 15. No riverwide plan has been finalized to date, although the department has completed master plans for some of its parks along the river. The department has broad authority to plan for its lands across the state under separate statute and rule. Also, all five of the greenway state parks mentioned in legislation were purchased long ago. Four remain in State Parks ownership, Molalla, Elijah Bristow, Willamette Mission and Bowers Rocks. The fifth, Mount Pisgah in Lane County, is owned and managed by local government. OPRD also owns another 90 or so, properties that are classified as “State Greenway” parcels.

## Terms and Definitions

Because of the confusion about what greenway, legislation says and the resulting general confusion about what the Willamette Greenway is, the Task Force asked State Parks staff to provide them with terms and their definitions for use in their Strategy discussions. The following terms and definitions were provided. These terms were used to define the focus and primary scope for the Strategy discussions to be “parklands” as opposed to the local land use responsibilities to administer the greenway Goal 15 related zoning restrictions and boundary.

1. Willamette River Greenway Parklands: This is a term/phrase invented for the Task Force discussion that focuses that discussion on lands that are managed by or in agreement with a governmental agency or trust. It assumes that these lands provide public access and/or resource protection as their purpose, and the lands may be located within or outside of the Greenway Boundary.
2. Willamette River Greenway Boundary: This is the edge of Goal 15 related zoning designations as determined by local governments (cities and counties). The boundary location was originally recommended by the Department of Transportation, but was then either accepted or amended, and then adopted by the respective local government. The Land Development and Conservation Commission then had to approve of the local government location.
3. Willamette River Greenway: For purposes of the Task Force’s Strategy discussions, this term was meant to refer to lands in general along the Willamette River, and this “greenway” land could be located either within or outside of the official local jurisdictional Greenway Boundary. This general term includes all parklands along the river, lands within the Greenway Boundary and potential parklands along the river that may be within or outside of the Greenway Boundary.
4. Willamette River Greenway Program: The program, overall, is described in Goal 15. It includes the administration of “parklands” as well as local government zoning responsibilities “within and near the greenway to maintain the qualities of the greenway”. The Task Force discussions used the program to specifically mean State Parks greenway properties and their management.
5. Willamette River Greenway Plan: This was defined as not actually existing in a finalized, riverwide form. Draft versions were discussed. Official current greenway plans are the Goal 15 portions of local comprehensive plans and State Park’s park master plans, as well as various local park provider plans.

# Task Force Charter





# The Task Force Charter

One of the first things the Task Force asked OPRD for was an official “Charter” from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission to them, outlining their charge for the Strategy process. The charter follows in detail for the reader’s information. The rest of this document is organized according to the seven tasks outlined in the charter below.

## A Charter for the Willamette Greenway Task Force

Background: The Willamette Greenway was created by Acts of the Oregon Legislature in 1967 and 1973. A greenway plan was adopted by the state Transportation Commission in 1974. The state Land Conservation and Development Commission adopted Land Use Goal 15, incorporating the goals of the 1967 and 1973 Acts into Oregon’s land use system and directing the completion of a revised Greenway Plan. The broad goals for the Greenway included: the public acquisition of parklands, the acquisition of scenic easements, the preservation of river valley farmlands and historic sites, and coordinated planning between state and local governments. To date, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has acquired nearly 90 properties, encompassing approximately 4000 acres along the Willamette River. Local governments have also established many Willamette River related parks and natural areas.

The Need For Review: Many have questioned how well the Greenway Plan has been implemented and ask what the future of the Greenway should be. Over the last 30 years, the demand for outdoor recreational opportunities in the Willamette Valley has increased. Also, much has been learned about how best to manage for the long-term health of the river and adjacent natural areas. Moreover, in the intervening years, many state and federal government programs have been established that provide incentives for agricultural landowners to implement conservation practices on private lands.

The Parks and Recreation Commission seek to evaluate how far the plan has come and where future efforts on the Greenway should be directed. To assist the Commission, a broad-based task force, representing key stakeholders, has been established. This charter outlines the role and expectations held for the task force.

Charter of the Task Force: The Charge for the Task Force includes:

1. Assessing the program’s “progress to date” as a beginning point for a renewal to action
2. Identifying recreation and resource management needs along the river
3. Identify opportunities for providing for those needs;
4. Exploring the creation of incentives for local government parkland initiatives.
5. Identifying opportunities for partnerships and incentives for private landowners to participate in achieving the goals of the Greenway.
6. Reaffirming or articulating a revised vision for moving forward with the Greenway Program.
7. Selecting priority actions

The Task Force will be asked to conduct its evaluation and report its findings consistent with the following tenants:

- The assessment will be undertaken in conformance with existing legislation, rules and land use goals governing the Greenway.
- The task force will be cognizant of social and political issues surrounding the Greenway, both historically and presently, but will not allow political considerations to influence its evaluation, findings or recommendations.
- The work of the task force is not intended to be an exhaustive evaluation of all components of Greenway activity. Rather, it is intended to “sample” each area of achievement, present activity and future needs and provide a general analysis of these areas for the Commission. The need for additional detailed studies, or proposed new Greenway initiatives may be stated as recommendations of the task force.

- The task force will conduct its work under the authority of the State Parks and Recreation Commission and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department as provided in ORS 390.310 through 390.368 and shall serve only as an advisory body to the Commission and Department.
- The task force will be supported in its work by staff of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. The task force may seek the advice of outside experts or other key stakeholders as it conducts its assessment.
- All task force meetings, as well as meetings of subcommittees of the task force, will be conducted as public meetings and all work products of the task force or its subcommittees shall be treated as public records.
- Membership on the task force may be expanded or reduced, on the recommendation of the task force or at the behest of the Director of the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department or the state Parks and Recreation Commission.
- At the conclusion of its work, the task force shall present a summary report of its findings and recommendations to the Director and the Commission.

Conclusion: The task force will complete its work and present its recommendations in mid-2005. The Parks and Recreation Commission will consider the task force's recommendations as it sets priorities or redirects existing programs in future biennia.

Adopted by the State Parks and Recreation Commission on: October 28, 2004

# Assessing Progress







## Assessing the Program's Progress to Date

The Task Force asked State Parks staff to research how others have evaluated their greenway programs to determine progress to date. Staff provided a review of the history of the establishment of the Willamette Greenway, and how it evolved from the idea of a continuous green parkway to a combination of intermittent parklands and local land use ordinances, as well as a review of the program objectives and planning recommendations. The history and evolution of the program has been addressed in the initial portion of this document. Assessment of the program and its objectives follows along with recommended changes.

### The Erickson Approach

The Task Force asked State Parks staff to search for greenway program evaluations that may have been completed in other parts of the country, and to look at greenway program research to find a method for evaluating the Willamette Greenway program. Terry Bergerson, of the department Planning Section conducted an intensive Internet search and obtained documents from several prominent greenway programs in different states, to compare with our program. He also connected with one of the few researchers who concentrate on greenways and other linear parks, Donna Erickson, with the University of Michigan. Her report to the National Park Service Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance Program entitled "Greenway Implementation in Metropolitan Regions: A Comparative Case Study of North American Examples" 1997 provided the basic method for evaluation. Terry also found one example of a greenway program review that was conducted by the greenway administrators themselves, that of Boulder Colorado.

Erickson's report recommended that any greenway program evaluation should ask the following three questions:

1. Is the greenway program being fully implemented?
2. Are the program objectives adequate?
3. How can the program best be implemented?

Staff then proceeded to answer the questions and provided this information to the Task Force and the Local Government Committee for their consideration.

#### 1. Is the Greenway Program being fully implemented?

Staff looked to the greenway legislation, the Goal 15 goal statement and related objectives, and the Transportation Department's 1976 draft "plan" to pull together what the "program" entailed for the provision of parklands. The format below was created for the Task Force Strategy effort. This needed to be done as none of the mandates formatted their directives in a straight forward manner. Once the goal, objectives and "plan" recommendations were determined, they could be examined to find out whether they have been achieved, and what the gaps in implementation might be.

Existing Willamette Greenway goal and objectives as gleaned from mandates:

**Goal:** Protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River, as the Willamette River Greenway. Protect farm use and provide for recreational use.

**Objectives:**

1. Natural values
  - Provide for recreation within the carrying capacity of the area
  - Plan and zone public parks
  - Protect significant fish and wildlife habitat
  - Enhance and protect a natural vegetative fringe along the river
  - Direct development away from the river (except for needed water-related and water-dependent uses).
2. Scenic
  - Preserve scenic qualities and viewpoints
3. Recreation
  - Provide for recreation within the carrying capacity of the area
  - Provide adequate public access to the river
  - Maintain public safety
  - Protect and preserve natural, cultural, scenic and recreational qualities for public enjoyment
4. Historic
  - Preserve and restore historic sites, structures, facilities and objects
5. Economic/social
  - Avoid disturbance of adjacent lands
  - Provide for timber harvest
  - Provide for aggregate mining within Goal 5
  - Protect farmland and farming
6. Public Education
  - Protect and preserve natural, cultural, scenic, historic and recreational qualities for public education
7. Manage Growth
  - Recognize the need for existing uses along the river
  - Limit the intensification and change of existing uses to be compatible with greenway qualities.

The evaluation of progress in providing and managing parklands was based on the Transportation Department's 1976 "plan" recommendations for acquisition and recreational use, as there was no other "plan" to refer to. This was done by computer mapping analysis where the lands proposed for acquisition in the 1976 document were superimposed on current public lands along the river.

The Task Force also wanted staff to look at what local governments have done to determine if their part of the program has been implemented. Staff accomplished this by pulling out key topics from Goal 15 objectives and then reviewing as many of the county and city comprehensive plans and zoning ordinances as possible, that were directly related to Goal 15. A table was completed showing each of the topics that had been addressed by at least one local jurisdiction, which jurisdictions had addressed it and a summary of the language, combining similar texts together. The table showed a number of differences in how the various local governments approached their Goal 15 policies. The Task Force was concerned about this disparity, but learned from the Local Government Committee and the Department of Land Conservation and Development staff that since all of the local plans have been acknowledged officially by the Land Conservation and Development Commission, all are deemed to be consistent with Goal 15.

The members of the Local Government Committee also mentioned that each local government has many other policies and ordinances that apply to lands along the Willamette River, that are related to overlapping land use goals such as Goal 5 that protects natural resources and aggregate, Goal 3 that protects farmland and Goal 4 that protects forest land. In addition, many of the local jurisdictional planning departments and some park departments have completed strategic plans for their lands along the river that go well outside of the greenway boundary and Goal 15 in scope. Some of them are quite progressive such as the Eugene/Springfield 2040 project which was based on a concept of protecting riverside areas as well as major ridges for parks and trails purposes, and the Portland area's River Renaissance which stresses public/private partnerships to implement an extensive vision for the future of their lands along the river. Also, there is an opportunity for local governments to update their Goal 15 related ordinances and standards, on a voluntary basis, during the "periodic review" process. This is not a Department of Land Conservation and Development priority or requirement for this process currently, but would be welcomed from those local governments who would like to address these needs.

The Local Government Committee members pointed out that there is always more work that can be done, and that local governments could use some help in several areas such as comprehensive mapping and resource inventories, enforcement of ordinance infringements and grants to supplement their parks programs. With this said the Task Force decided that their interest was in looking at opportunities where State Parks research and planning could be shared with local governments, as well as expanding State Parks grant criteria to emphasize parklands expansion and improvements along the Willamette.

## 2. Are the objectives adequate?

Staff completed three main tasks to answer this question:

- ✓ Compare the Willamette Greenway objectives with those of other greenway programs;
- ✓ Look at the 1976 "plan" analysis versus current gap assessments, and;
- ✓ Look at whether the local land use efforts are adequate.

Comparing the objectives was done through a matrix that looked at Willamette Greenway objectives versus a composite list of other greenway program objectives, based on an Internet search for objectives from other greenways. Similarities and differences were easy to spot. The goal statements between the two examples are very similar, and most of the Goal 15 objectives are similar to those of other greenway

programs except for the “transportation objective” which is missing from Goal 15. There is a notable lack of detail in the Goal 15 objectives as compared to the other greenways, and some of the Willamette Greenway objectives use outdated or very general terms. Staff recommended that the Willamette Greenway objectives could be more specifically described for Strategy purposes without deviating from the intent of Goal 15 and its supporting legislation. That work is described in the next chapter.

Greenway Statute, Goal 15 and Plan	Examples from Other Greenways
<p>Goal: Protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational qualities of lands along the Willamette River, as the Willamette River Greenway. Protect farm use &amp; provide for recreational use.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Natural: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for recreation w/n carrying capacity</li> <li>• Plan &amp; zone public parks.</li> <li>• Protect significant fish and wildlife habitat.</li> <li>• Enhance, protect natural vegetative fringe.</li> <li>• Direct development away from the river (except for needed water-related, water-dependent uses).</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Scenic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve scenic qualities and viewpoints.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Recreation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for recreation w/n carrying capacity</li> <li>• Provide adequate public access to the river.</li> <li>• Maintain public safety.</li> <li>• Protect and preserve natural, cultural, scenic and recreational qualities for public enjoyment</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Historic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preserve and restore historic sites, structures, facilities and objects</li> </ul> </li> <li>e. Economic/social: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid disturbance of adjacent lands.</li> <li>• Provide for timber harvest.</li> <li>• Provide for aggregate mining within Goal 5.</li> <li>• Protect farmland and farming</li> </ul> </li> <li>f. Public Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect and preserve natural, cultural, scenic, historic and recreational qualities for public education</li> </ul> </li> <li>g. Manage Growth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognize the need for existing uses along the river</li> <li>• Limit the intensification and change of existing uses</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Goal: Protect, enhance and maintain the ecological, scenic, historical and recreational values while protecting farm and other economic uses along the greenway.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Ecological: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect relatively intact habitats</li> <li>• Enhance low-grade habitats in nodes</li> <li>• Provide sufficient habitat connectivity</li> <li>• Provide for flood mitigation.</li> <li>• Manage erosion/sedimentation</li> <li>• Manage point &amp; non-point pollution</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Scenic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect/restore naturalistic settings</li> <li>• Encourage screening of development.</li> <li>• Overlap natural &amp; scenic values</li> <li>• Provide viewpoints at intervals</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Recreation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide for rec needs as is appropriate to carrying capacity</li> <li>• Provide for river access at intervals</li> </ul> </li> <li>d. Historic: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage significant resources</li> </ul> </li> <li>e. Economic/social: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect farm and other economic uses</li> </ul> </li> <li>f. Public Education: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate citizens about environmental values</li> </ul> </li> <li>g. Manage growth to balance environmental and economic interests</li> <li>h. Provide links for non-motorized transportation</li> </ul>

For the second task, the Transportation Department's 1976 "plan" was examined to determine what the method of analysis was and which criteria they used to select priorities and whether the resulting "plan" was adequate to meet the objectives of the program. Goal 15 guided what was to be addressed in the plan including showing the public purpose for each proposed acquisition, the type of transfer whether fee title or easement, the proposed recreational use intensity level and the proposed and existing locations for river access. General criteria directed by Goal 15 included lands having the potential to serve the purposes of the Greenway (natural, cultural, scenic and recreational qualities), avoiding places that would interfere with farm uses, selecting places that could be well supervised to prevent vandalism and trespass, or else would have little feasible public access if meant solely for natural resource protection, and being suitable for maintenance and management.

The "plan" recognized that there is a lot of overlap among natural, scenic and recreational values that they are "inter-related and are often inseparable". They selected lands based on the following characteristics, with the recognition of the overlap of the three values:

1. Areas of brush, timber and riverine vegetation bordering river channels, sloughs, tributaries and backwaters;
2. Areas near the river with direct influence on the river scene and views of the river;
3. Areas of historical and archeological significance;
4. Significant recognized fish and/or wildlife habitat;
5. Areas with potential for public use, whether low, medium or high levels;
6. Areas already in public ownership;
7. Areas outside of a proposed greenway boundary where there would be no other protection of scenic values;
8. Areas with no current development.

It is also apparent in looking at the proposed areas on the old air photo base that they avoided cultivated farm fields and farmsteads, as well. Most of the natural areas were selected based on obvious physiographic characteristics such as vegetation and water features, rather than on detailed surveys of species occurrences. This was the science at the time and it was what could be accomplished in the time they had been given to do the last plan by the Land Conservation and Development Commission.

In the last ten years, several groups have conducted extensive natural resource assessments in the Willamette Valley. At the request of the Task Force Co-chair, Sara Vickerman, three of the main research groups volunteered to pull together the analysis from 11 recent studies into a single habitat priority map for properties along the river. This was a challenging undertaking. The Task Force is grateful to The Nature Conservancy, The Willamette Partnerships and The Army Corp of Engineers for producing this synthesis, as well as to the research groups who did the original studies. This work represents the "state of the art" in ecological research and thirty years of inventory work along the river.

The resulting map from The Nature Conservancy and Willamette Partnership identifies high priority ecological areas and sections of the river with the lowest constraints to restoration, and recommends management focus on 15 cluster areas along the river. These areas roughly correspond with and expand somewhat beyond the clusters recommended in the 1976 "plan". Because of the more current and complete analysis afforded by the Conservancy and Partnership, the Task Force supported using it as an updated reference for achieving the Greenway objectives. More is said about the proposals themselves in the Ecological Resource Needs and Priorities section of this report.

For the third task, staff asked the Local Government Committee whether their policies and ordinances, as well as their review processes and enforcement capability are adequate. They stressed that in a perfect world with plenty of money, time and staff more could be done. However, in most cases the process works all right. However, zoning ordinances tend to lead to a cumulative effect as one parcel at a time is developed up to the limits of their zoning. Planners in some jurisdictions pointed out that it is important to do broad planning to foresee what those consequences will be in total. Some places are doing this now, such as the 2040 effort in Eugene/ Springfield and the River Renaissance plan in the Portland area. Money is needed to support this extra-ordinary level of planning, in most cases more money than local jurisdictions have in their annual budgets. Grant opportunities would be welcomed by the jurisdictions. Others looked at the need for more enforcement of ordinance violations, citing the lack of staff to keep up with the violations. Most violations have to do with illegal and excessive vegetation removal. As well as some development that does not comply with local standards. They felt there needs to be a supervision and enforcement body that focuses on these violations, and that is not likely to be the local planning departments.

### **Updating the Objectives**

After the assessment of the adequacy of the original objectives for the Willamette Greenway, as outlined in the preceding section, the Task Force asked staff to “translate” the early objectives into modern terms and to provide a level of detail that would be more acceptable today, and would more closely approximate the type of language used in other more current greenway programs objectives. The following Strategy Goal and Objectives were approved by the Task Force.

### **Updated Greenway Goal Statement**

Greenway Goal: Protect, conserve, enhance and maintain the natural, scenic, historical, agricultural, economic and recreational qualities along the Willamette River, as the Willamette River Greenway. Recognize all three aspects of greenway management as important in achieving this goal, including parklands ownership, local government land use zoning and landowner resource management actions.

## Updated Greenway Objectives

### Ecological Objectives:

- ❑ Protect and enhance target habitats, habitats at risk and rare habitats along the river.
- ❑ Provide the conditions needed for viable fish habitat (clean water, erosion and run-off management, optimal water temperature, and favorable in-water structure)
- ❑ Provide low bank side areas to absorb floods
- ❑ Provide habitat connections wherever feasible along the river and up tributaries, especially between key habitat nodes

### Scenic Objectives:

- ❑ Protect and restore naturalistic settings along the river, especially in rural areas
- ❑ Provide attractive urban parklands settings for public enjoyment
- ❑ Screen parklands facilities from river vantage points, except for river dependent uses such as boat ramps
- ❑ Provide public viewpoints of the river from upland parklands sites at intervals along the river

### Cultural/Historic Objectives:

- ❑ Locate features of cultural or historic significance along the river and manage for appropriate public access and preservation
- ❑ Determine the level and type of public access that each important cultural site can sustain

### Recreational Objectives:

- ❑ Plan and zone for public recreational use in a manner that is compatible with the carrying capacity of the area. Select locations to avoid damaging important resources.
- ❑ Provide adequate public access to the river to boat, fish and swim
- ❑ Provide adequate and appropriate riverside opportunities to picnic, hike, bike, horseback ride and camp
- ❑ Provide a series of land-based trails and water trails along, and/or near the river with public access facilities at intervals. Connect trail segments as is feasible given ownership and resource constraints. Connect community trail systems where feasible.
- ❑ Design and place recreational facilities to protect public health and safety.
- ❑ Select and design recreational sites and facilities to protect the privacy and property of neighboring sites.
- ❑ Provide interpretation for the public about greenway values and objectives

### Economic/Social Objectives:

- ❑ Protect farming and other economic uses along the river
- ❑ Encourage the use of trails for pedestrian and bike commuter routes, and water trails, where they can contribute to local transportation.
- ❑ Recognize the importance of natural areas for human psychological health and the role that greenways can play in providing emotional refuge from urban life.
- ❑ Support and encourage research that seeks to use natural processes to resolve pollution problems for industry, and finding ways of determining the appropriate financial value of those services.

### Growth Management:

- ❑ Recognize existing uses along the river.
- ❑ Limit the intensification and change of uses along the river as needed to be compatible with greenway qualities and direct development away from the river, except for water-related and water-dependent uses that can be appropriately located and designed.
- ❑ Complete proactive planning proposals locally that balance environmental and economic

### 3. How best to implement a greenway program

These recommendations were taken from Donna Erickson's work, as well as the City of Boulder's evaluation of their greenway program. This advice is offered as a consideration for an expanded role for OPRD and local providers concerning greenway parklands especially.

1. Create a coordination and advocacy body with a structure that promotes cooperation, but still can provide direction to all of the partners involved;
2. Such a body needs to be made up of strong partnerships and coalitions;
3. Public participation and education should be focused at the local level, regardless of greenway size/scope;
4. Greenway program implementation and incentives should be funded by a diversity of funding sources, to avoid problems with the loss of any one funding source;
5. A coordination body should have a clear, current plan of action;
6. Management of greenway parklands should be focused on entities that are financially secure and can undertake the scale of diverse management interests necessary for such multipurpose parklands;
7. There should be plenty of room for local authority and flexibility toward mutual goals and objectives.
8. Priorities should be based on a system wide inventory and analysis;
9. The coordinating body should be integrated with other entities as needed to make communication and implementation happen smoothly, and such a group should be formally defined;
10. There should be a financing plan set up to achieve priorities in a systematic way;
11. There should be a plan of action with as much detail as is feasible to outline projects on a yearly, biennial and six year basis.

The question is whether there is a need for one overarching coordinating body for Willamette parklands, and other greenway and river issues that goes beyond the roles and presence of the several existing advocacy groups such as the Riverkeeper, Willamette Partnership and the River Navigator. Task Force members differ in their answer to this question. Until now, progress has been made through loosely organized partnership efforts that are focused on specific project outcomes, such as the completion of the Mid Willamette Water Trail and the Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway, or The Nature Conservancy priority natural area analysis. There would be a benefit from one entity such as OPRD, undertaking a broad coordination role with an annual or biennial conference that would bring all of the parties together with their updated needs and proposals for the next year. Outside of that OPRD would do well to complete an action plan of their own regarding their lands and any potential partnerships related to them or their grant programs.



# Recreation and Natural, Cultural and Scenic Resource Needs and Opportunities





# Recreational Needs and Opportunities

## Recreational and Resource Management Surveys and Studies

Public opinion is a crucial factor in selecting priorities to recommend to State Parks, and this has been especially true for issues related to the Willamette River Greenway. Initially, the greenway concept was very new to most Oregonians, and there were concerns about how a greenway might affect private lands and uses. Both early legislative discussions and public meetings associated with the ill-fated original greenway plan, were passionate and contentious. As time has gone by management of the parklands along the Willamette has not been an issue of much controversy, but there have only been a couple of surveys since the 1973 legislation that tested what the current issues might be. For this Strategy effort State Parks decided to conduct a series of surveys that could provide a current understanding of statewide opinions as well as those opinions of visitors to 13 key recreation sites on the river. Staff also reviewed other relevant plans and studies to collect any additional information about public opinion, and recreation and resource conservation need along the river. These references provide the basis for identifying the recreational needs and priorities for the river primarily, as well as land acquisition and management priorities for resource protection.

## OPRD Willamette River Survey Strategy

During initial Willamette Greenway Parklands Strategy project planning, it was determined that a two-part survey design would be used to gather Oregonian's opinions related to outdoor recreation and resource/open space protection on public lands along the river corridor. The surveys included a statewide telephone survey entitled *Managing Public Lands Along the Willamette River* and an on-site and mail-back survey of visitors to selected parklands along the river entitled the *Willamette River and Greenway Survey*. The following section includes a description and key findings from these two surveys.

### Managing Public Lands Along the Willamette River

The first part of the overall survey strategy was to provide all Oregonian's an opportunity to respond to questions regarding the overall management of public lands along the Willamette River corridor. Since the Willamette Greenway was established to protect and preserve the natural, scenic, and recreational qualities of lands along the river, it was important to gather opinions from all Oregonians—not just those recreating at parklands along the Willamette. As a result, the study provides a larger picture of how Oregonians prioritize recreation management strategies in relation to other critical resource management strategies such as natural and cultural resource protection. This project was conducted during the months of March and April, 2004 by the University of Oregon's Survey Research Laboratory.

#### Key Findings: "Managing Public Lands Along the Willamette River"

1. 34% of Oregonians had used city, county or state park lands along the Willamette River for recreation purposes during the past year.
2. Top priorities for managing publicly owned lands along the Willamette River include:
  - Protecting and restoring fish and wildlife habitat;
  - Informing the public about historic and archeological sites; and
  - Promoting tourism in the Willamette Valley.

Although not a top management priority, strong public support was also shown for:

- More trails for recreation;
- Encouraging more urban recreation;
- More trails for commuting purposes; and
- Encouraging more rural recreation.

3. Top funding priorities for managing and protecting public lands along the Willamette River include:

- Working with private property owners to improve management of fish and wildlife;
- Acquiring land to protect important fish and wildlife habitats; and
- Enhancing and restoring habitats on existing public lands.

Although not a top funding priority, strong public support was also shown for:

- Improving existing park facilities;
- Acquiring and developing additional parks and open space;
- Developing trails and walkways; and
- Acquiring land to provide public access to water.

### Willamette River and Greenway Survey

The second part of the survey strategy was to provide an opportunity for people currently involved in outdoor recreation activities on public lands and waters to respond to questions about recreation and resource/open space protection along the Willamette River corridor. This survey was conducted during a 3-month period from June 19 to September 19, 2004 by Oregon State University. The survey was conducted at 13 publicly owned parks along the Willamette River shown in Table 1.

Park Name	Relative Location	Management Authority
Alton Baker Park	Eugene	City of Eugene
Marshall Island Access	Eugene	OPRD
Crystal Lake Boat Ramp	Corvallis	City of Corvallis
Downtown Waterfront Park	Corvallis	City of Corvallis
Hyak Park Boat Launch	Albany	Benton County
Montieth Park	Albany	City of Albany
Riverfront Park	Salem	City of Salem
Wallace Marine Park	Salem	City of Salem
Champoeg State Park	Champoeg (formerly)	OPRD
Molalla River State Park	Canby	OPRD
Clackamette Park	Oregon City	City of Oregon City
Willamette River Park	Portland	City of Portland
Sellwood Riverfront Park	Portland	City of Portland

Survey methods included on-site observations, on-site questionnaires, and a detailed mail survey. These data tell us what people use these parks for, how crowding perceptions are distributed across the user groups, and the prevalence of conflicts. Mail survey results provide a wide variety of recreation management information including popular recreation activities, barriers to participation, most important facility additions/improvements, top priorities for park planning, level of support for purchase of lands for public recreation, and visitor opinions on a range of resource/open space protection questions.

### Key Findings: "Willamette River and Greenway Survey" On-Site Questionnaire

1. Top recreation participation activities at Willamette River parks and on the river include:
  - scenic enjoyment;
  - walking for pleasure and hiking; and
  - nature/wildlife observation.
2. The primary activities that bring visitors to parks along the Willamette River include:
  - walking for pleasure and hiking;
  - exercising dog(s); and
  - picnicking.
3. Proximity to the park is the primary reason people choose to visit parks along the Willamette River, although most (83%) still use a personal vehicle to travel to the park.
4. Visitors perception of crowding at parks are in the "Low Normal Range" described as areas unlikely to be a problem and that may offer a unique low-density experience.
5. Approximately 16% of visitors to Willamette River parks reported using a motorized watercraft during their visit and 10% a non-motorized watercraft.
6. Motorized and non-motorized boaters also perceived crowding on the river in the "Low Normal Range." From a boating perspective, it is very uncommon to find low-density boating experiences in such close proximity to a major population centers such as the Oregon's Willamette Valley.

### Key Findings: "Willamette River and Greenway Survey" Mail Questionnaire

1. A majority of visitors to Willamette River parks reported an improvement in their quality of recreational experience in recent years.
2. Visitors prefer a balanced approach to managing public lands along the Willamette River with highest priority for natural resource conservation.
3. River pollution is the strongest factor limiting recreational use of the Willamette River and public lands along the river.
4. Park visitors report lack of access to shoreline, excessive motorized boat speed or wakes, and litter as the biggest problems on public lands along the Willamette River.
5. Additional walking/biking trails and scenic views of the river would encourage current park users to visit parks more often.
6. Enjoying scenery and the peace and quiet were the most common activities reported.
7. Top funding priorities reported by park visitors include improving water quality and controlling new residential developments along or near the river.
8. Visitors are very satisfied with their overall recreational experience at parks and recreation areas along the Willamette River.
9. Park visitors report being dissatisfied with the swimming facilities along the Willamette River.

10. Top Willamette River Greenway benefits include making communities a better place to live and connecting communities with natural corridors and trails.
11. Strong support among park visitors for land purchases for natural area protection and for scenic protection using lottery dollars.

### **2003-2007 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan**

Every five years, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department actively engages public and private sector recreation providers, recreational interest groups and citizens across the state in a planning effort to complete a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) for Oregon. The 2003-2007 Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan constitutes Oregon's basic five-year plan for outdoor recreation. It provides the state with an up-to-date regional information and planning tool serving as the basis by which all Oregon recreation providers (state, federal, local, and private) catalogue and rank their recreation needs, obtain funding through partnerships and grants, and affirm their respective roles. The following section includes a description of SCORP findings that are relevant to the Willamette Greenway Parklands Strategy project.

#### Key Findings: "2003-2007 Oregon SCORP Plan

1. Top recreation participation activities occurring in the Willamette Valley regions
  - ✓ Running and walking for exercise;
  - ✓ Walking for pleasure; and
  - ✓ Nature/wildlife observation (including bird watching).These activities are generally engaged in near home, and on a regular basis.
2. Top recreation participation activities by out-of-state visitors to Oregon include:
  - ✓ Running and walking for exercise;
  - ✓ RV/trailer camping; and
  - ✓ Walking for pleasure.
3. During a period from 1987-2002, the most significant growth activity in the Willamette Valley regions was nature/wildlife observation.
4. During the same time period, participation in non-motorized boating activities had more than doubled in the state while motorized boating participation remained constant.
5. Top regional and statewide outdoor recreation issues relevant to the Willamette corridor include:
  - ✓ Need for land acquisition of natural areas, land for recreational development and river corridor acquisition;
  - ✓ Need for non-motorized trail connectivity. The objective is to connect communities, existing park and natural areas, and outlying federal trails into an inter-jurisdictional trail system;
  - ✓ Need for increased access for motorized and non-motorized water-based recreational activities in both urban and remote settings; and
  - ✓ Need for designated canoe and kayak routes (water trails) throughout the state.

## **Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan**

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has taken an innovative approach to statewide trails planning by conducting simultaneous motorized, non-motorized and water trails plans. Each is a comprehensive study and depiction of the state of recreational trail and non-motorized boating use in Oregon. *Oregon Trails 2005-2014: A Statewide Action Plan* is the state's "official plan for recreational trail management" for the next 10 years, serving as a statewide and regional information and planning tool to assist Oregon recreation providers (local, state, federal, and private) in providing trail opportunities and promoting access to Oregon's trails and waterways. The following section includes a description of non-motorized trail and water trail findings that are relevant to the Willamette Greenway Parklands Strategy project.

### The 2004 Oregon Statewide Trail User and Non-motorized Boater Survey

The 2004 Oregon Statewide Trail User and Non-motorized Boater Survey was conducted over a four-month period from January to April 2004 by the University of Oregon's Survey Research Laboratory. The purpose of the survey was to assess the needs and opinions of Oregon's citizens about trail opportunities and management, assess the need for future investment in trail facilities and opportunities and provide trail planners with up-to-date information for local and regional trails planning. It provides statistically reliable statewide information for each of the three user groups (motorized and non-motorized trail users and non-motorized boaters).

#### Key Findings: "2004 Oregon Statewide Trail User and Non-motorized Boater Survey (Non-motorized trail users)

1. Thirty three percent of Oregon households (approximately 438,500) households have a person reporting non-motorized trail use during the past year.
2. Among non-motorized trail users, hiking and walking for pleasure are the most popular.
3. Joggers and runners are more likely to engage in their activities on a regular basis (weekly) followed by bicyclers and walkers.
4. Non-motorized trail users overwhelmingly prefer natural trail surfaces (packed soil, grass, crushed gravel) to other surface types.
5. There is a need for more close-to-home trail opportunities to encourage greater use of Oregon's non-motorized trails.

#### (Non-motorized boaters)

1. Fourteen percent of Oregon households (approximately 185,200 households) have a person reporting non-motorized boating participation during the last year.
2. Among non-motorized boaters, white water rafting, canoeing and drift boating are the most popular activities.
3. Drift boaters are more likely to engage in their activity on a regular basis (weekly) followed by canoeing.
4. Drift boaters and canoeists prefer flat-water rivers and streams to other types of waterways such as white water rivers.
5. Non-motorized boaters are more likely to use short day use water trails and water trails to specific destinations than multi-day water trails.

6. Non-motorized boaters strongly support separating non-motorized watercraft from motorized watercraft use on water trails.
7. Eight nine percent of non-motorized boaters reported that they would be willing to pay a yearly fee of water trail development and maintenance.

### Key Regional and Statewide Trail Issues

The State Trails Plan also identified key recreational trail issues that affect the future of outdoor recreation in Oregon. During April through May 2003, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department staff completed a series of 9 regional "trails issues" workshops across the state. Approximately 230 people attended a workshop, including representatives from 56 public-sector recreation provider organizations. Information gathered from these workshops was used in the process of developing top regional and statewide issues and concerns.

#### Key Findings: "Key Regional & Statewide Trail Issues"

1. Top regional and statewide non-motorized trail issues relevant to the Willamette Valley regions include:
  - ✓ Need for trail connectivity;
  - ✓ Need for more trails in close proximity to where people live; and
  - ✓ Need to consider public ways (roads, railroads, utility corridors) proposed for closure or abandonment for trail use.
2. Top regional and statewide water trail issues relevant to the Willamette Valley regions include:
  - ✓ Need to address conflicts between non-motorized boaters and waterfront property owners;
  - ✓ Need for more public access to waterways;
  - ✓ Need for adequate and consistent information resources including signs, maps, level of difficulty and water level information and available paddling opportunities; and
  - ✓ Need for dedicated funding source for non-motorized water trail development.

### A Proposed State-Administered Water Trails Program for Oregon

The State Trails Plan has identified three critical factors which pose a serious threat to long-term non-motorized boating access to waterways in Oregon including a rapid increase in participation in non-motorized boating, a lack of legal clarity and understanding of the publics' right to Oregon's waterways for recreational purposes and an increasing potential for conflicts between paddlers and waterfront property owners. To address these concerns, the plan proposes a state-administered water trails program to encourage the development of a statewide system of water trails carefully designed to minimize conflicts between paddlers and waterfront property owners.

#### Key Findings: "Key Aspects of a State-administered Water Trails Program"

1. Developing a statewide system of water trails carefully designed to minimize conflicts between non-motorized boaters and waterfront property owners.
2. Encouraging water trail development that includes proper management planning and consulting with waterfront property owners;
3. Providing adequate public facilities along the length of the water trail (parking, sanitation, designated public access points).



4. Providing trip information (trail guides, maps, proper trail ethics) that allow paddlers to safely and respectfully use Oregon's waterways in a manner that is considerate of the interests and concerns of private property owners along these waterways and other waterway users (boaters, fishers, etc.).

### Six-Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan: 2005-2011

The Six-Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan (Six-Year Plan) is compiled by the Oregon State Marine Board to identify and prioritize public recreational boating facility needs throughout the state of Oregon, and to plan for funding and implementation of the recommended improvements. The Six-Year Plan is used by the Marine Board to guide the allocation of grant funds to local governments, port and park districts, and other state agencies to provide boating access and support facilities such as boat ramps, boarding floats, parking, restrooms and waste disposal systems.

The updated Six Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan was released in 2005. The following section includes a brief summary and analysis of Six Year Plan findings that are relevant to the Willamette Greenway Parklands Strategy project.

#### Planning results:

The Six-Year Plan needs assessment identifies boating access site needs for motorized, non-motorized and mixed-use boating on the Willamette River (Table 24). The majority of need has been identified at motorized watercraft sites (72% of total dollars). Mixed boating use (motor and non-motor boating) facilities accounted for 20% of the high priority funding recommendations. The need for non-motorized facilities accounts for 7% of total dollars.

Table 24. Boating Facility Projects Identified on the Willamette River

Watercraft Type	# of Sites	Dollars	% of Total Dollars
Motorized	29	\$10,705,000	72%
Non-motorized	11	\$1,019,000	7%
Mixed Use	18	\$3,130,000	21%
Totals	58	\$14,854,000	

Table 25. Priority of Boating Facility Projects Identified on the Willamette River

Watercraft Type	High Priority		Medium Priority		Low Priority	
	# of Sites	Dollars	# of Sites	Dollars	# of Sites	Dollars
Motorized	18	\$6,271,000	1	\$150,000	10	\$4,157,000
Non-motorized	2	\$128,000	5	\$676,000	4	\$215,000
Mixed Use	10	\$1,686,000	3	\$729,000	5	\$842,000
Totals	30	\$8,085,000	9	\$1,555,000	19	\$5,214,000

The Marine Board is funded through watercraft registration fees (from motorized watercraft and sailboats 10 feet or longer) and marine fuel taxes paid by motor boaters. No general fund tax dollars are used to

support Marine Board grant programs. Currently, owners of non-motorized watercraft (with the exception of sailboats) are not required to register their watercraft in the state of Oregon. As a result, owners of non-motorized watercraft do not contribute to Marine Board funding (unless they also own a motorized watercraft).

#### **Key Findings: Six-Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan: 2005-2011**

- ❑ Significant investments are needed to maintain and improve existing boating access sites On the Willamette River.
- ❑ There is a need to provide additional access to the Willamette River for all types of boats.
- ❑ An estimated \$14 million needs to be invested in existing launch sites.
- ❑ Twelve new potential boating facilities have been identified, costing \$4 million.

### **Other Plans and Efforts**

#### OPRD Regional Interpretive Plan

Interpretation is an important and popular part of recreation in Oregon. OPRD recently completed a statewide review of the regional interpretive priorities, on a regional basis, for its park system, with the aim of avoiding duplication with other providers and taking advantage of opportunities to sequence stories with other providers and among OPRD sites. For each region "overarching" or predominant interpretive themes were identified that would be the basis for planning interpretive messages and media around. For the Willamette Valley, not surprisingly, the Willamette River and life along it was a major theme. Also, key interpretive opportunity sites along the river were identified for future development, including Elijah Bristow/Dexter, Luckiamute, Champeog, and Bower Rock. In the Portland area, Molalla and a greenway site on Sauvies Island might be added to that group.

#### Willamette Valley Scenic Bikeway

This new bikeway was designated in 2005. Its creation was sponsored by OPRD and Cycle Oregon with assistance from the Governor's Solution Team. The bikeway was inaugurated with a large riding event along its entire route. The bikeway formalizes the idea of a designated route that uses existing roads to traverse the valley in the vicinity of the river. A map brochure is available of the route. Yet to be designated are extensions of this bikeway along the Middle Fork and Coast Forks and north of Champeog.

#### Mid Willamette Water Trail

Another trail designation in 2005 was the Mid Willamette Water Trail, which was created a coalition of local agencies, governments and non-profit organizations through the Mid-Willamette Connections Group. This effort created a designated route from Buena Vista ferry to Wheatland ferry, along the river, and using existing put in and take out sites. A map brochure is available of the route and associated features and stops. The plan associated with this trail highlights access sites in need of facility improvements to enhance the use of the trail in the future. Advocates and governor's office propose extending the trail south to Dexter Dam and north to the Columbia River.

#### Regional and Local Parklands and Trails Systems and Plans

All of the major cities along the river have a parks and trail system that connects with the river in at least one place. These systems are currently disconnected from each other except for paddling along the river or biking along existing roads. There is interest and some potential to more directly connect some of these

systems via new trail easements from willing landowners near or along the river. Examples include connections between Corvallis and Albany, Willamette Mission and Salem, the Portland metro area, and Eugene/Springfield with Cottage Grove and Elijah Bristow State Parks.

### OPRD Camping Capacity Needs

In 2005, OPRD completed an assessment of which of its state park campgrounds are over capacity during the summer season, and looked for opportunities for providing some more capacity either within the existing parks and through targeted acquisition to create some new parks. For the Willamette Valley, Champeog and the campgrounds at Lookout Reservoir are over capacity. OPRD has no other developed campground parks on the Willamette River, but does own Bowers Rock State Park, which has not yet obtained major public access to support development. It was found that there is some space for expanding camping capacity at Champeog with the acquisition of an adjacent parcel, and at Winberry with no expansion of the current lease arrangement there with the Army Corps of Engineers. Due to topography, flood constraints and priorities for natural resource restoration there are few opportunities for provide for more camping at other existing state parks along the Willamette River without additional acquisition. Bowers Rock's location between Albany and Corvallis provides an excellent long-term situation for providing primitive camping, and could provide a major increase in RV/tent camping capacity for the south valley with the acquisition of some adjacent land that is above the 100 year flood zone, and that can provide the public access that is needed.

### **Combined Priorities**

This chapter concludes with a final set of needs and opportunities for the Willamette Greenway Parklands Strategy project that are based on the findings and analysis of planning projects including the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department *Willamette River Surveys*, *Oregon Statewide Comprehensive Plan*, *Statewide Trails Plan*, *Six-Year Statewide Boating Facilities Plan* and other sources presented in this chapter.

- ✓ More recreation sites, in general, along the river. There is strong public support for additional recreational sites and faculties along the Willamette and especially those that would be close to home.
- ✓ Protect and restore fish and wildlife habitat is the clear resource management priority, and purchase more habitat to protect it as needed.
- ✓ Provide more nature and wildlife viewing opportunities on public lands along the Willamette River, and in associated naturalistic settings.
- ✓ Provide more land based trails are desired and needed by Oregonians; especially where they can connect to parks and natural areas. Trails should provide access to views of the river and opportunities to get into the water. Trails can be planned to work well with natural areas and with restoration project areas. Develop additional "natural surface" recreational trails to accommodate activities such as hiking, walking for pleasure, jogging or walking for exercise, and bicycling.
- ✓ Connect trails to communities along the river with natural corridors, existing trails, and to existing transportation networks. There is a strong need to increase neighborhood access to Willamette River parks and trails to encourage daily exercise. Examples for connections through willing landowners include between Corvallis and Albany, Willamette Mission and Salem, the Portland metro area, and Eugene/Springfield with Cottage Grove and Elijah Bristow State Parks.

- ✓ Create a Willamette River Water Trail from Dexter Dam to the Columbia River. There is strong public support for the creation of a "Willamette River Water Trails System" designed for use by canoeists, sea kayakers and drift boaters for the Willamette River. From a non-motorized boating perspective, it is very uncommon to find low-density boating experiences in such close proximity to a major population center such as Oregon's Willamette Valley. This has, in fact, already begun with the creation of the Mid-Willamette Water Trail. Advocates and the governor's office supports expanding the Willamette Water Trail to the Columbia River to the north and to Dexter Dam to the south.
- ✓ Provide more boating access. There is a need for improving many existing boating access sites and to provide more new sites, to provide for motor boating needs, mixed boating needs and paddling needs, as outlined in the Marine Board's Six Year Plan.
- ✓ Work with the Marine Board to identify some areas on the Willamette or its back channels and confluences that can be designated as "no wake" zones to support a quieter alternative for non-motorized boating on the Willamette as is desired by many paddlers. These areas could coincide with areas where motor boating is no longer feasible at high speeds due to siltation in the river and curtailment of riverbed dredging.
- ✓ Provide additional swimming opportunities where safe river conditions exist. Park visitors report being dissatisfied with the swimming facilities along the Willamette River.
- ✓ Provide more primitive camping opportunities along the river where appropriate to neighboring land uses, management access and surrounding habitat needs.
- ✓ Provide more standard camping. Existing State Park campgrounds along the river are used to capacity in summer months. More standard State Park camping opportunities are needed in the north, central and south valley. Expansion of land and facilities at Champoeg, Winberry and Bowers Rock could address the need for more capacity.
- ✓ Develop interpretive programs and infrastructure for interpretation of the Willamette River and life along it at key sites: Champoeg, Molalla, Bowers Rock, Luckiamute, Elijah Bristow/Dexter and Sauvies Island.

## Natural Resource Needs and Opportunities

As mentioned in earlier sections, the Task Force determined that it is important to update the vision statement and objectives based on several decades of ecological and social research, and to offer new priorities for the protection, enhancement, and restoration of lands along the Willamette River, including some acquisition targets. The Task Force asked that the Strategy be based on a composite recommendation from The Nature Conservancy, Willamette Partnership and Army Corp of Engineers. A summary narrative of that work and related mapping follows as taken from a presentation to the Greenway Parklands Strategy Task Force by The Nature Conservancy and the Willamette Partnership 03/17/2005.

### Willamette Floodplain Conservation Analysis

The Task Force has identified the following ecological objectives as part of their Strategy work to date:

- ✓ Protect and enhance target, at risk and rare habitats along the river;
- ✓ Provide the conditions needed for viable fish habitat;
- ✓ Provide low bank side areas to absorb floods;
- ✓ Provide habitat connections wherever feasible along the river and up tributaries, especially between key habitat nodes.

The Task Force asked the Willamette Partnership and The Nature Conservancy to present a summary of recent fish and wildlife conservation planning efforts as a beginning point for identifying priority areas for possible parks acquisitions and/or management or partnerships along the Willamette River to advance the ecological objectives established for the Greenway and further defined for this Strategy.

They reviewed existing plans and available spatial data and compiled the existing spatial data within five kilometers of the Willamette River from the eleven following sources.

1. Current and historical vegetation from the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center;
2. At-risk species and habitat data from the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center;
3. Federal floodplain data;
4. Land use cover data from federal mapping (USGS)
5. Ownership and management status data from Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center;
6. The 2050 Conservation Alternative Scenario from the "Alternative Futures", and historic floodplain and channel information from the Pacific NW Ecosystem Research Consortium;
7. Priority conservation areas from the gap assessment for the Willamette Valley, Puget Trough, and Georgia Basin developed by The Nature Conservancy;
8. Priority wetlands habitats identified by The Wetlands Conservancy;
9. River restoration potential data compiled by the Pacific NW Ecosystem Research Consortium;
10. Conservation Opportunity Areas identified by the Oregon Biodiversity Project; and,
11. The primary river confluences with the Willamette River.

They analyzed the data to identify priority areas the Task Force could consider for improved management, restoration and possible acquisition and/or development of partnerships with private and other public land managers to advance the Greenway's ecological objectives. They looked for areas identified in multiple conservation assessments and identified as being important for floodplain restoration, and/or key habitats for aquatic species and/or at-risk species. Finally, they overlaid current public land ownership to identify opportunities to build on existing public lands within priority areas.

## Results and Recommendations

They identified the following geographic priorities for improving management, restoring habitat, and acquiring additional properties:

1. Confluence of the McKenzie River to the confluence with the Mary's River above and below the confluence with the McKenzie River to downstream of Green Island for approximately 2 kilometers.
  - a. Blue Ruin Island downstream approximately 2 kilometers
  - b. Around the confluence of the Long Tom River to Haocum's Landing, especially around Sam Daws Landing (mostly west side of the river).
  - c. Around Harkins Lake Landing
  - d. Above the confluence of the Mary's River.
2. Lands upstream and downstream of Willamette Mission State Park
  - a. Downstream to Jackson Bend Landing from Willamette Mission
  - b. From Jackson Bend Landing to the confluence with the Yamhill River
  - c. Upstream from Willamette Mission to Darrow Bar Landing
  - d. Downstream from the confluence with the Yamhill River past Dundee to a southerly turn in the Willamette River.
3. Downstream of Corvallis
  - a. Luckiamute/Santiam confluence downstream from Vanderpool on both sides of the Willamette River to just below Sidney Access
  - b. Downstream of Corvallis to Half Moon Bend Landing
4. Confluence of the Middle Fork and Coast Fork of the Willamette River and upstream to Bristow Landing on the Coast Fork and Pisgah landing on the Middle Fork.
5. Downstream from Elijah Bristow State Park and including Elijah Bristow
6. Downstream of the confluence of Rickreal Creek, on the east side of the Willamette River approximately 5 kilometers
7. Lower reaches of the Mollala and Pudding Rivers, Tualatin River and the Willamette River Narrows.
8. In addition, lands around Scappoose Bay.

**Priorities:** Additional analysis of existing at-risk species data and habitat data could be done to refine and describe the benefits of the above priority areas. Further, they recommend that State Parks complete a field assessment of these priority areas and evaluate more detailed topographic information to refine the priority area boundaries.

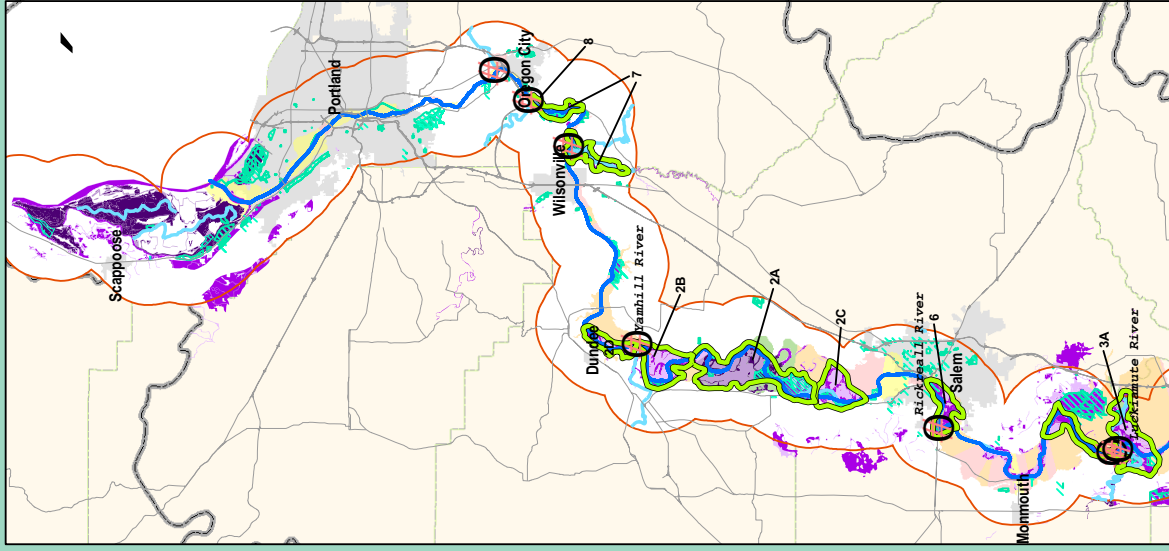
The Task Force sees a role for State Parks in completing detailed planning for each of the priority areas, perhaps one at a time, or a grouping of nearby areas all at once, and in partnership with other researchers who are doing relevant work in the same area. The first area recommended for detailed planning are the priority areas on the Middle Fork of the Willamette River to coincide with Army Corp of Engineers research. Detailed planning methods and criteria could be designed by OPRD and its partners as a model for use on other priority areas. It seems appropriate that State Parks budget to provide some matching funding to The Army Corps flood function study and related Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife analysis, as well as to complete detailed management action recommendations.

# Willamette Floodplain Conservation Priorities

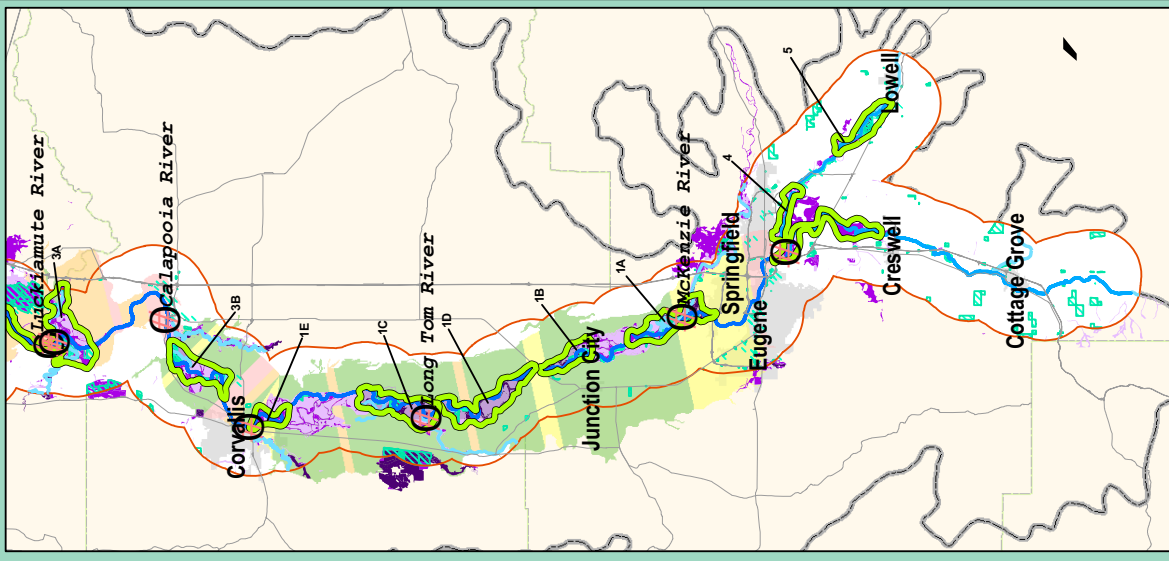
Preliminary analysis of biodiversity data from the Pacific NW Ecosystem Research Consortium (2050 Tier 1 & 2, and River Restoration Potential), Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and the Wetlands Conservancy (TWC) to identify priority areas for possible acquisition and/or development of partnerships to restore native floodplain habitats and conserve at-risk species.



## Lower Reach



## Upper Reach



**Biodiversity Priorities**

- Priority Floodplain Areas
- TNC + TWC + 2050 Tier 1
- TNC + 2050 Tier 1
- TNC + TWC + 2050 Tier 2
- TNC + 2050 Tier 2

**River Restoration Potential**

- High Ecological Potential w/ Low Constraints
- High Ecological Potential w/ High Constraints
- Low Ecological Potential w/ Low Constraints
- Low Ecological Potential w/ High Constraints

○ Key River Confluences  
 5 KM Buffer  
 Managed Lands

The Nature Conservancy  
 www.nature.org





## Cultural Resource Needs and Opportunities (Prehistoric/Historic)

For Strategy purposes, cultural/historic resources are defined as any objects, structures, buildings, sites, districts or landscapes that are eligible for the National Historic Register of Historic Places. This includes below ground and above ground resources that are of historic or prehistoric importance.

Aside from the very few parcels that were identified in the Transportation Department's 1976 "plan" there were no other priorities identified to date, at the state level, for protection and restoration of cultural/historic resources along the Willamette River outside of a few outdated state park master plans. Each county and city has an historic resources inventory that was required for the completion of their Local Comprehensive Plan. So there is no current equivalent to the ecological gap assessment work that is mentioned in the previous section that can be relied on as a reference for selecting priority sites for protection and management.

Because the State Historic Preservation Office is a part of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (State Parks), it is not necessary for the department to seek ownership of all significant cultural resources to fulfill these objectives. Rather, the department can foster the completion of up to date inventories by local governments, other agencies and even by private landowners who are interested in their properties. They can also advocate for appropriate management of the resources through their incentive and educational programs.

The Strategy objectives for cultural/historic resources direct State Parks to coordinate an effort to:

- ✓ Locate features of cultural or historic significance along the river and manage for appropriate public access and preservation;
- ✓ Determine the level and type of public access that each important cultural site can sustain.

State Parks traditionally has considered the acquisition of cultural resource sites that are available for purchase, by evaluating them against a review of the property's significance, condition, suitability and feasibility to become part of the state park system. This process is too involved to be described in detail here, but considers what the pending threats are to the resource and any alternatives for ownership other than the department.

### Priorities

1. Manage existing prehistoric and historic sites on OPRD lands, (and other public lands) to preserve them for future research and understanding and for educational purposes for the general public. Make use of those historic buildings and other structures that can be used for modern purposes without harming their historic values.
2. Acquire those historic or prehistoric sites along the river that are of the highest significance and can be feasible for public management, and that are threatened with damage or destruction without public intervention. Return appropriate sites to private ownership with any needed deed restrictions and monitoring oversight.
3. Continue to provide preservation information, guidance and incentives for good management through its Heritage Conservation Program. Interpret the history of life along the river.



## Scenic Resource Needs and Opportunities

Scenic values or qualities are mentioned as being important to protect in the Greenway legislation as well as in Goal 15 and the Transportation Department's 1976 "plan". The Task Force version of those objectives for scenic values is to:

- ✓ Protect and restore naturalistic settings along the river, especially in rural areas;
- ✓ Provide attractive urban parklands settings for public enjoyment;
- ✓ Screen parklands facilities from river vantage points, except for river dependent uses such as boat ramps, and;
- ✓ Provide public viewpoints of the river from upland parklands sites at intervals along the river.

These objectives came out of Task Force discussions that there are several types of acceptable "scenic settings" along the river, including urban and rural settings. They acknowledged that highly developed urban settings such as the downtown waterfront in Portland can be considered to be very scenic, as can naturalistic, even wild appearing settings along the river in rural areas. To date, greenway zoning and development standards protect the bank from building development in most urban areas along the river and usually include some degree of protection of the vegetation along that edge. The City of Portland is going beyond current zoning to explore the future vision of life along the river in its River Renaissance Plan. Other cities have worked on waterfront parks and plans on their riversides including Albany, Corvallis, Eugene/Springfield and Salem.

Riverside development in rural areas is addressed by county zoning and development standards that allow much less dense development such as buildings needed for farming or forestry, and includes a minimum setback from the water for development that is not water dependent, and some level of vegetation protection along the fringe. Because rural zoning outside of cities limits development on farm, forest and other resource lands, the chances of seeing a lot of buildings along the river are very few. Most are older structures that were in place before current zoning. However, Measure 37 may open up some places to development pressure that were previously protected by zoning constraints.

Despite land use regulations some stretches of the river in urban and rural areas that have lost the vegetated fringe to erosion, cultivation, or illegal removal due to a lack of sufficient staff for enforcement.

Regarding viewpoints, staff did not find any existing riverwide assessment of current or needed public viewpoints, and did not complete such a study for this strategy. Public opinion has shown that there is a demand for public access to see the river, even when there is no direct river access for boating or swimming. Land managing agencies need to balance the demand for visual access to the river with the need to limit the number and extent along the river of accesses to protect riparian and other riverside habitat.

### Priorities

1. Protect and restore natural settings as seen from the river on department lands, except for water dependent and water related uses such as appropriately located viewpoints for trails. Road access all the way to the river's edge was not considered to be necessary;
2. Conduct an air photo analysis to determine rural, riverside places where riverside vegetation has been depleted, and provide that information to local governments and public lands owners along the river, as well as land trusts and other advocacy groups to provide incentives to the landowner to restore the vegetative fringe. If there are no other options, consider offering to purchase a

scenic easement in these areas that would have no public access and little impact on the existing use. Pursue easements from willing sellers only. Priority should be given to lands identified as a priority for ecological restoration as well. Complete needed vegetation restoration and management.

3. Identify existing viewpoints and trail corridors along the river on existing State Parks lands and determine whether they are adequate or excessive in relation to habitat protection and plan accordingly for more or fewer accesses. Look at the viewpoints offered among all public lands in a river stretch to determine what the current spacing is, and decide what the spacing objective should be as a context to viewpoint planning within department lands.
4. As new lands are acquired by State Parks include them in the spacing consideration for viewpoints and regarding habitat protection needs, and plan accordingly.
5. Encourage other public land managers to use the department viewpoint and setting analyses as a context for scenic planning for their own properties.
6. Recognize city planning efforts as the determinant for scenic protection within urban areas. Encourage creative partnerships among volunteers and advocacy groups and cities to increase their ability to monitor illegal vegetation removal, and report it.

# Economic and Social Needs and Opportunities





## **Economic and Social Needs and Opportunities**

It is generally understood that natural areas provide income from recreationists buying goods and services while vesting natural areas, as well as by attracting businesses to areas where quality of life is seen to include access to natural areas. Also, natural areas can provide services through the function of natural processes to clean and disperse water and air. In addition, studies are showing that they can also combat costly suburban sprawl, reduce the incidence of crime, stabilize or enhance property values, support neighborhood identity and healthy citizens. Protecting natural areas passes these 'values' on to future generations.

Eighty percent of Americans live in urban areas today, and many are lacking in park and natural space. Most of Oregon's parks systems were built in the years prior 1960. After that both state and federal funding for parks began to drop and hit a low in the 1980's and early 1990's. During that same time period the Willamette Valley experienced extensive growth within its Urban Growth Boundaries, without the creation of a proportion of parks that was comparable to what had been provided previously. The result has been a growing deficit of parklands closest to where people live in the Willamette Valley. Also, many parks that exist along the Willamette River cannot adequately respond to growing recreational needs because of a lack of funding to provide access facilities and operational supervision. This section talks about how enhancing and expanding the parklands in the Valley, especially along its primary feature, the Willamette River, can enhance the economic and social well-being of the residents of the valley.

It is also important to note that Oregon's land use system, which is designed to protect farm and forest lands, and other resources lands, for future generations, goes much farther toward protecting open spaces and green spaces than is done in many other states. In many states, the purchase of green spaces is needed in rural areas to protect them from residential and even commercial and industrial development. In Oregon, outside of a few Measure 37 eligible parcels, rural areas are protected through zoning. For this reason the acquisition of green spaces becomes more important within the Urban Growth Boundaries, especially in regard to the prevention of sprawl, enhancement of neighborhoods and the lives of their citizens. Often, however it is much more cost effective to purchase natural areas just outside or near to the Urban Growth Boundary. In these cases good trail connections, and close proximity will make the difference in how effective they can be in abating the detrimental aspects of urban, and suburban life.

In rural areas, the purchase of farm lands, or conservation easements on portions of the farm, can make it more economically viable for farmers to allow drainages and riverside areas to return to riparian conditions that can do a better job of filtering water and cooling water temperatures, rather than be needed to abate non-farm development.

There are many aspects to the economic and social environment along or associated with the Willamette River. Many, if not most, of those aspects have been explored by the Task Force with staff assistance, and are outlined below. Combined needs and opportunities across these aspects are presented at the end of this section.

### **The Economy of Recreation and Tourism**

The Willamette Basin supports a tourism economy that depends on the amenities of the natural setting and the special events surrounding sightseeing, biking, hiking, boating and fishing in the valley and foothills. The Willamette Valley (including the Portland area) accounted for 41% of Oregon's overnight visits in 1997. In 2002, total traveling spending in the Valley topped \$3 billion, generating about \$140 million in state and local tax revenue. Recreation spending alone accounted for over \$330 million (Oregon Tourism

Commission 1998 and 2002). Nature observation and sightseeing are among the fastest growing recreational activities in the Willamette Valley (increasing by 254% and 69% respectively in the last 15 years. Recreation providers report that:

- Demand is increasing for recreational opportunities associated with stream protection, fish and wildlife habitat, and natural settings in general;
- Rural communities are developing recreational opportunities to diversify their economies;
- Nature studies are rising in popularity (Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, SCORP)

Protecting and restoring riparian areas can increase recreational and tourism opportunities throughout the Basin by supporting paddling trails, birding areas, bike paths, scenic byways, and hunting and fishing areas. Demand for recreation-related restoration services in Oregon is projected to increase by up to 25% between 2001 and 2010.

### **Promoting Health and Well-being**

Studies show that when people have access to parks and trails, they exercise more, and enjoy better physical and mental health. Regular physical activity has been shown to increase health and reduce the risk of a wide range of diseases, including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, colon cancer and diabetes. The current health crisis, obesity, is linked with all of these diseases. Physical activity has also been found to relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety, and can improve mood and a sense of well-being. A study by University of Illinois researchers Andrea Faber Taylor, Frances Kuo and William Sullivan has shown that the symptoms of children with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) are relieved after contact with nature. The greener the setting, the more relief. A 2000 study by Nancy Wells at the College of Human Ecology at Cornell University showed that being close to nature helps to boost a child's attention span. Another study showed that green spaces appear to foster social interaction among those gathered there and thereby promote social support. One study showed that children and parents who live in places that allow for outdoor access have twice as many friends as those who have restricted outdoor access due to traffic. Also, studies have shown that the closer parks and natural areas are to places where people live, the more they use them and the more benefits are derived.

### **Enhancing Property Values and Related Tax Revenue**

Numerous studies have shown that parks and natural areas increase the value of nearby residential and tourism related properties. Also, the availability of natural areas and outdoor recreational opportunities is an important quality of life factor for corporations choosing where to locate facilities and well educated, high income staff. Corporate CEO's are reported to say that quality of life for employees is the third most important factor in locating a business, behind access to domestic markets and availability of skilled labor. Owners of small companies ranked recreation, parks and open space as the highest priority in choosing a new location for their business. In Salem Oregon, it was found that land adjacent to a greenbelt was found to be worth about \$1,200 an acre more than land only 1,000 feet away. Real estate industry analysts confirm that quality of life as a determining factor in real estate values and economic vitality is a test for determining the strength of the real estate investment market. If people want to live in a place, companies, stores and services will follow.

Also, the availability of natural areas close to housing sites allows for more acceptance of denser development. The former ideal of suburban life has been found to not provide enough tax revenue to pay for the cost of its diffuse infrastructure and other services. Residents of denser urban settings are far more satisfied with that type of lifestyle if parks and natural areas can be found nearby.



## **Neighborhood Enhancement and Fighting Crime**

Green spaces next to urban areas are especially important in making livable neighborhoods that their residents take pride in. They offer low cost recreational opportunities for people of all ages, but especially for children who need an outlet for their boundless energy and curiosity. Access to public parks and natural areas has been strongly linked to reductions in crime and especially in crime by juveniles. This is even more pronounced with kids are involved in protecting and enhancing the parks and natural areas in their neighborhood.

## **Environmental Benefits**

Green spaces can provide substantial environmental benefits at a lower cost than many other solutions. Trees and other vegetation, reduce air and water pollution, keep temperatures of land and water lower, and can absorb storm and floodwater. Vegetation and soil act as natural filters for water and can remove pollution related materials from water before it reaches storm sewers and river inputs. This includes certain toxic compounds as well as elements that contribute to eutrophication of water bodies making them devoid of oxygen and water life (nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium).

Vegetation can also act as a natural air conditioner and filter, due to the evaporative effect of plants and their uptake, recycling and released of gases converting carbon dioxide to oxygen. Vegetation can more effectively and less expensively manage the flow of storm water runoff than do engineered structures. Unpaved areas absorb storm water, slowing the rate at which it reaches outfalls and filtering it as it goes.

In addition, these functions can be harnessed to mitigate impacts caused in other locations and can "financed" in a manner that does not break the bank.

## **Task Force Invitational on Economic Benefits of Green Spaces**

On April 7, 2005, led by Sara Vickerman, a subcommittee of the Task Force met with invited guests to discuss the potential for the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation to incorporate information on the economic value of ecosystem services (providing ecological mitigation, trading and banking opportunities) into the Willamette Greenway strategy, and to participate in continuing efforts to understand, document and apply this information to natural resource management.

### **Attendees:**

Harry Upton - Economist, Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife  
Bill Gaffi - Clean Water Services and Chair of Willamette Partnership  
Roger Fitts - Willamette Valley farmer  
Dave Primozich - Acting Director, Willamette Partnership  
Doug Spencer - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Gillian Ockner - David Evans and Associates  
Dan Heagerty - David Evans and Associates  
Bill Jaeger - Ag Economist, Oregon State University  
Martin Hudson - Army Corps of Engineers  
Mark Brown - Bureau of Land Management and Willamette Navigator  
John Miller - Wildwood and Mahonia Inc.  
Louise Solliday - Governor's office  
Matt Rea - Army Corps of Engineers  
Sara Vickerman - Defenders of Wildlife  
Kathy Schutt - Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

The conversation covered three major topics:

- 1) How to improve the overall cost-effectiveness of public and private conservation actions by taking advantage of trading and mitigation programs;
- 2) How to leverage federal funds so that more can be done at a lower cost to local investors; and
- 3) How to estimate the value of benefits associated with natural resource projects to assist parks and its partners in making better natural resource decisions.

David Evans and Associates, in cooperation with the City of Portland and other partners, conducted extensive literature reviews and case studies to document the value of ecosystem services in the Willamette Valley. A list of 18 services was created including values related to water and air quality, fish and wildlife habitat, aesthetics, recreation, and others. The list follows.

### **Ecosystem Services in the Pacific Northwest**

Climate regulation: Thermal regulation, carbon sequestration

Disturbance regulation: Storms, flood, drought

Water regulation: Regulation of flows

Water supply: Water cleansing, flow retention

Erosion control & sediment retention: Prevent loss of soil, store silt, stabilize banks

Nutrient cycling: Nitrogen fixation, uptake of nitrogen, potassium, etc

Urban runoff treatment: Runoff pollution filtering, pollution uptake

Pollination: Native plant reproduction, domestic crop reproduction

Biological control/stability: Terrestrial and fish species population stability

Refugia: Habitat for migratory species, habitat for wintering species

Genetic resources: Genes to resist plant pathogens & pests, protect integrity of natives

Recreation: Provide for sport fishing, birding, boating, swimming, trails

Cultural: Aesthetic, artistic, educational, spiritual, scientific

Real estate: Green spaces value enhancement, pollution avoidance

In a study valuing ecosystem services on a 140-acre parcel in the Johnson Creek watershed, two options were evaluated for abating frequent flood events. The traditional engineered solution produced \$13 million in benefits, attributable to avoided flood damage, while the restoration solution produced \$31 million in benefits including avoided flood damages, creation of bird and salmonid habitat, air pollution removal, water quality improvement, property value increases, and creation of recreation opportunities.

With the help of the Asia Pacific Environmental Exchange, David Evans and Associates, Inc. provided a preliminary snapshot of value in land cover and land use types in the entire Willamette Basin based on 1990 data collected for the Alternative Futures project. It was estimated that each year valley ecosystems provide between \$28 billion and 100 billion in ecological and recreational benefits to basin residents.

David Evans and Associates plans to continue to expand this evaluation, working with multiple partners. The long term goal is for policy makers and the public to understand and consider the value of ecosystem services when making investment decisions relative to natural resources. It will be much more cost effective to conserve and restore natural landscapes and ecological processes that are currently providing us with services in effect for “free” than to use technical solutions to replace them once they have been degraded or destroyed. Funds can be leveraged from multiple sources to finance this work by demonstrating where the highest value is, who stands to benefit, who is currently paying, who should be paying long-term, and where the dollars are being used versus where they should be invested.

The Willamette Partnership is working to establish a marketplace in the basin, to increase the pace, scope and effectiveness of conservation and restoration activities. The project has many dimensions, and will ultimately address the full range of ecological services including water quality and quantity, fish and wildlife habitat, recreation and aesthetic values. Financing will be derived from multiple public and private sources including traditional incentive programs, mitigation responsibilities, cost-share programs, carbon trading, and other sources. For example, Clean Water Services uses local ratepayer funds to supplement federal and state money to pay farmers to restore and maintain riparian habitat needed to improve water quality. The Partnership will be both strategic and opportunistic.

In the short term, the Willamette Partnership, Governor’s office, and industrial leaders are working to establish a basin-wide water quality trading approach. The goal is to facilitate investment in projects likely to produce a broad range of benefits in a cost-effective manner. For example, investments in upstream restoration can improve downstream water quality. Because State Parks is a large public land holder along the river, with land in many of the recommended restoration and management sites identified by TNC and Willamette Partnership, and because State Parks has an excellent record of using and promoting partnerships for a variety of programs, the Task Force sees State Parks taking a leadership role along with the governor’s office and Willamette Partnership in this new area of matching restoration needs and economic mitigation needs.

#### Additional Research Needed

- Quantify the value of ecological services not yet valued.
- Assess ecosystem service values in current “Willamette Greenway” and compare to potential values under enhancement scenario.
- Identify properties within greenway most likely to provide enhanced ecosystem services at reasonable cost and with minimal social and political resistance.

- Improve knowledge about fair compensation for ecosystem restoration in different areas, and on different land types. Recognize that market forces will affect prices.
- Determine when public investment in protection of intact habitat is appropriate as a mitigation strategy to avoid paying landowners simply to continue existing activities.
- Evaluate potential for regulatory streamlining to expedite completion of conservation projects now inhibited by the cost and complexity of permitting requirements.

Note: It is important to note that parks and open space cannot provide the social benefits discussed here without adequate maintenance and supervision. Without this parks can become dangerous places that are shunned by law abiding citizens. Once a park is “let go” it is tremendously expensive to bring it back to an acceptable level of civility and amenity.

### **Priorities**

- ✓ Acquire lands and conservation easements to conserve natural areas: Open space conservation is a one-time investment that can boost property values and swell tax coffers long after the land is paid for. In Oregon, this is especially true of parks within or near communities.
- ✓ Work with the Willamette Partnership to evaluate opportunities to tap mitigation, trading, and conservation banking programs for priority conservation projects on State Park properties.
- ✓ Work with adjacent landowners to design restoration projects and to generate revenue from a variety of industrial and municipal sources to fund the activities.
- ✓ Use park properties for demonstration sites to encourage others to participate undertake similar restoration projects.
- ✓ Future park expansion can be guided in part by opportunities to enhance ecosystem services from a basin-wide perspective.
- ✓ Participate in continued assessment of ecosystem values and mitigation techniques. State Parks can be instrumental in advancing needed research by offering lands for study and by contributing to funding for research projects.

# Incentives & Partnerships





## **Exploring the Creation of Incentives**

The Task Force discussed a number of areas in which OPRD could provide incentives to others to participate in enhancing and expanding the Willamette Greenway and its functions and purposes.

### **Grants**

The department has several grant programs that are designed to direct funding to other providers of recreation and in some cases for resource protection. These programs include two federal pass-through programs, Recreation Trails Program through the Federal Highway Administration, and the Land and Water Conservation Program through the National Park Service. In addition, there are state funded grant programs to local governments and others, including the All Terrain Vehicle Grant Program, Local Government Recreational Grant Program, and RV Grant Program. It may be possible and desirable for the department to add grant review and approval criteria to the existing criteria for these programs that could promote project associated with the Willamette River.

### **Expertise and Information**

Often what is lacking for many landowners is the knowledge of where to finding funding sources, what the best techniques are for restoration and enhancement projects and who can provide assistance of various types to a project. OPRD could create a web site and central staff contact for sharing this type of information with all who are seeking it.

### **Use of OPRD Lands**

Offering OPRD lands, where appropriate, as sites for experiments in restoration and enhancement techniques and in environmental credit trading could be a powerful incentive for the completion of research related to restoration and pollution mitigation. This could include the acquisition of priority lands needed to complete a project.

### **Facility Development and Management**

Projects such as water trails cannot be successful without each of the recreational land owners providing what is needed at each access site. This becomes a critical incentive in the creation of water and land based trails systems that extend beyond OPRD lands.

### **Creating and Managing Volunteer Groups**

OPRD has an extensive and well recognized volunteer program that could provide outreach to local communities and other agencies on how to organize and manage volunteer groups that could be directed at a wide range of planning and implementation projects.





## **Identifying Opportunities for Partnerships**

There is a long list of potential partners for OPRD to seek out for help and support in completing its priority work along the Willamette. Some of the prominent partners are listed and described below, although there are many others that could be interested. They would serve as a core group of stakeholders and experts in any forum discussions about the greenway, and for the completion of specific projects.

### **The Division of State Lands**

DSL owns lands under the bed and banks of navigable waterways up to the mean high water line in Oregon including the Willamette River. It manages the state's submerged and submersible land under navigable rivers, lakes, estuaries, and the Territorial Sea to maintain fisheries, commerce, recreation and navigation. DSL also arranges leases for sand and gravel removal, log storage, marinas and commercial or marine industrial facilities on this land. The Department issues leases, licenses, temporary-use permits and registrations for uses of state-owned submerged and submersible land.

In many places throughout Oregon, marinas, wharves, docks, floating homes, log rafts, and ship repair facilities have been constructed on publicly owned submerged and submersible waterway land. Often, because of its desirability, restaurants, hotels, and tourist facilities are situated next to or on submerged and submersible land. This land is also sometimes dredged by privately owned companies to produce commercial grade sand and gravel. Given the high public demand for the state's submerged and submersible land, it is critical that this resource be carefully managed and the citizens of Oregon be fairly compensated for its use.

### **Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department**

The Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is responsible for protecting and enhancing all Oregon fish and wildlife. The agency has a wide range of responsibilities from operating hatcheries to selling hunting and angling licenses to advising on habitat protection for Oregon's diverse wildlife populations. ODFW works closely with other agencies, volunteers, property owners, hunters and anglers to balance protection of fish and wildlife with the economic, social and recreational needs of Oregonians. ODFW is the enabling agency for awarding federal flood mitigation grants from the Bonneville Power Administration. This is funding that is provided to mitigate loss of habitat from the impounding of the Bonneville Dam and others, and can be used for habitat acquisition or enhancement projects that can fit the mitigation requirements.

### **Oregon State Marine Board**

The Oregon State Marine Board was established in 1959. The board is Oregon's recreational boating agency, dedicated to safety, education and access in an enhanced environment. The Marine Board returns user fees (marine fuel tax and title and registration fees) to boaters in the form of boating safety educational programs, marine law enforcement and improved boating facilities. The board titles and registers recreational vessels, which currently number more than 195,000. The board also registers outfitters and guides and licenses ocean charter boats. The board establishes statewide boating regulations and contracts with county sheriffs and the Oregon State Police to enforce marine laws. The board provides technical training to marine patrol officers and supplies their equipment. The board also provides grants and engineering services to local governments (cities, counties, park districts, port districts) to develop and maintain accessible boating facilities and protect water quality. The board actively promotes safe and sustainable boating through several programs. The Mandatory Boater Education program, when fully

phased in, will require powerboat operators to complete a boating safety course. Sustainable boating campaigns encourage boaters to upgrade to clean-burning marine engines, adopt clean-boating practices and avoid spreading aquatic nuisance species. The board also provides numerous safety publications and access information. The Marine Board completes various surveys of boating needs and its Six Year Statewide Facility Plan to direct the improvement of existing boating access sites and the creation of new sites.

### **Army Corps of Engineers**

The Army Corps of Engineers is the steward of the lands and waters at Corps water resources projects. It also provides ecosystem restoration services to re-establish the attributes of a natural, functioning and self-regulating systems. Since passage of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, environmental protection has been an important component of the civil works planning process. Legislation passed in 1990 established environmental protection as one of the primary missions of water resources projects--along with navigation and flood control. The Corps has been instrumental in the completion of important research into flooding regimes and potential restoration options along the Middle Fork Willamette River. The Corps has also provided grant funding for a variety of restoration projects in the Willamette Valley.

### **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

This federal agencies offers many services related to fish and wildlife habitat and the protection of sensitive species. Those services include a wide variety of grant programs, staff expertise and assistance with enhancement design and permitting, as well as regulatory advice and guidance. The Service also owns and operates several wildlife refuges in the Willamette Valley. Ankeny Wildlife Refuge, south of Salem is located the closest to the Willamette River and should be recognized as a key component to habitat conservation in that area. The staff at the refuge are available for consultation and to work with other providers on habitat enhancement projects in the valley.

### **The Nature Conservancy**

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. They offer biological and ecological expertise and computer modeling, mapping and database expertise. The Nature Conservancy of Oregon has been instrumental in the completion of key habitat gap inventories and mapping for the Willamette Valley, in cooperation with other researchers including The Defenders of Wildlife, Oregon Natural Heritage Program and OSU and U of O, to name a few. They also purchase and trade lands with the purpose of protecting important habitats.

### **Defenders of Wildlife**

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive. Defenders have completed an important habitat gap assessment for Oregon, called Oregon's Living Landscape and continue to produce important literature and information about how to protect and enhance Oregon's biodiversity. They offer extensive expertise in biological/ecological areas as well as long term participation in a variety of Oregon's programs and planning efforts toward that end, including the Willamette Restoration Initiative.

## **Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center**

The Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center is part of the Oregon State University the Institute for Natural Resources at OSU. Their mission is to identify the plant, animal, and ecological community resources of Oregon. As part of the Natural Heritage Network and NaturServ, the Oregon Natural Heritage Information Center contributes to a better understanding of global biodiversity and provides tools for managers and the public to better protect our vanishing species and communities. They have completed extensive habitat inventory work within the Willamette Valley and offer inventory and analysis services.

## **Bureau of Land Management and the Environmental Protection Agency**

The American Heritage Rivers initiative is an innovative response to help river communities that seek federal assistance and other resources to meet some tough challenges. Without any new regulations on private property owners, state, local and tribal governments, the American Heritage Rivers initiative is about making more efficient and effective use of existing federal resources, cutting red-tape, and lending a helping hand. This program is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The American Heritage Rivers designation on the Willamette includes the nearly 200-mile-long reach from Springfield north to Portland. This stretch of the river flows through the three largest cities in the state: Eugene/Springfield, Salem (the state capital), and Portland. More than two million people live in the Willamette basin, the fastest growing portion of the state. The River Navigator for the Willamette River is the Bureau of Land Management in Salem. The River Navigator has been instrumental in the creation of the Mid-Willamette Connections Workgroup and Mid-Willamette Water Trail, the Keizer Rapids Regional Park, and a variety of community and technical assistance projects.

## **Willamette Partnership**

The Willamette Partnership started out as the Willamette River Initiative group. The Willamette River Basin Task Force, appointed by Governor John Kitzhaber in 1996, developed both short-term and long-term action plans for the river. As a result of this work, Governor Kitzhaber created the Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI), a public/private partnership to promote, integrate and coordinate efforts to protect and restore the health of the Willamette watershed. Composed of key stakeholders throughout the basin, the WRI coordinates the AHR program. Designation as a heritage river will help carry out an integrated vision for the Willamette.

## **Willamette River Keeper**

Willamette Riverkeeper is a non-profit organization, with the goal of enabling the Willamette to function more naturally, with cold, clean water, and provide a healthy habitat for fish and wildlife. Further, we believe that a river with good water quality and abundant natural habitat is a basic right for all people. The Willamette River belongs to all of us, and should be protected as such. Founded in 1996, Willamette Riverkeeper is the only organization dedicated solely to the protection and restoration of the Willamette River. Our efforts with regard to the improvement of habitat and water quality on the Willamette have made us the leading organization when it comes to Willamette River issues.

Willamette Riverkeeper operates under the principle of the Public Trust Doctrine. The Public Trust Doctrine holds that common areas such as rivers belong to the people, all of the people. While one may

own the land next to the river, one cannot own the river itself. Resources like the Willamette River should be protected from harm, pollution and habitat destruction, for the entire public. The public should be able to experience a clean river that poses no threat to their health, and should be able to not only see, but know that wildlife are not threatened. The River Keeper has been instrumental in

### **Local Governments**

Local governments (cities and counties) have been entrusted with the task of growth management through the state's land use program and goals, including the Willamette Greenway Goal 15. They address growth management through their specific comprehensive plan policies, zoning ordinances and related development standards; as well as through special planning projects such as Portland's River Renaissance and Eugene/Springfield 2040 Plan.

Local governments have been key partners in a number of river-related partnerships groups such as the Mid Willamette Connections Group and related Mid Willamette Water Trail. Since local governments are so knowledgeable for the specific needs and interests of their county or city, they are crucial to the success of any river related venture.

### **Land Trusts**

Land trusts are non-profit organizations that advocate and coordinate the protection of lands in their area of interest. They generally work with private landowners to secure conservation easements, or outright ownership, of critical lands, and then often hold any monitoring responsibility that may go with the easement. Land trusts can use public funding, or their own privately acquired funding. Land trusts are active in the Willamette Valley, but due to the confidential nature of their work, specific information about existing easements is generally not available.

# A Vision and Priority Actions





## Articulate a Revised Vision for Moving Forward

With a clearer understanding of the history of the Willamette Greenway, State Park's authority and what may be needed to improve the greenway program, the Task Force moved on to articulating a vision statement for their Strategy. The vision statement was based on a review of various other group's vision statements as well as on Task Force discussions.

The vision for the future of the Willamette River and its adjacent parklands and greenway includes:

- ❑ A rich, biologically diverse, natural environment, both in the water and on the land
- ❑ A network of channels, oxbows and sloughs with generous tributary connections and floodplain benches to absorb the river's ebb and flow
- ❑ Thriving communities that value the river as an asset
- ❑ Viable rural farming and forest enterprises that are rewarded for managing erosion and runoff, and protecting the riparian lands and working landscapes that characterize the setting
- ❑ Well protected cultural and historic treasures
- ❑ Safe, healthy and inviting places to swim, fish, boat, picnic, hike and camp
- ❑ A luxuriant natural setting along much of the river, striking riverside urban settings and plenty of opportunities to enjoy a view of the river along the way
- ❑ Proactive community planning to connect to, and protect the benefits offered along, the river
- ❑ Parklands consolidated at key locations along the river, that support the vision for natural, scenic, cultural and recreational values, with connections that honor privacy and commerce

## Priority Actions

The Willamette River and its Greenway parklands are an opportunity to make a better future for Oregon. OPRD is poised to be a key part of that future. The Task Force feels it is important for the department to take a stronger role as a public land provider and manager along the river, and to set the example and provide incentives for private land management. Since the department is the largest public landowning agency on the river, it already has a strong role in protecting scenery, recreational opportunities and natural resource reserves that the public considers is important for the Willamette. OPRD owns land in places that have been recommended as priority natural resource management areas where partnerships with private landowners could expand the scope, pace and effectiveness of restoration efforts along the entire river. Researchers and funding agencies, such as the Army Corps of Engineers, Pacific NW Research Consortium and The Nature Conservancy, have looked to department lands along the river as places where restoration can occur without undue impacts on private land uses and interests. Also, the department is known as an agency with a professional and dedicated staff, both in Salem and in the field, with an excellent track record in carrying out its objectives, as exemplified in its rehabilitation program, growing interpretive program, cultural property restoration work and emerging natural resource management focus. Finally, it is an agency with funding, whether for its operations, recreation and resource programs, interpretation, acquisition, rehabilitation and even for the creation of one new state park a year. The Task Force looks to OPRD to implement this strategy for action for the Willamette Greenway as a part of its emerging legacy.

Primary among the issues to be addressed are expanded resource management, water quality protection, improving trail connectivity whether on water or land, improving river access for the public, providing for the growing paddling community and working with willing landowners to use unique incentives and partnership arrangements. That is not to say that the department should shoulder this work alone. It has the opportunity to provide incentives to other parklands providers through its grant programs, and information and guidance through its Recreation and Trails Programs, a potential State Water Trails Program, its planning and mapping sections and through the parks themselves. Department staff and management are skilled at bringing partners together toward a common goal, and can dedicate time and energy to coordinating with the many partners and projects that are happening now along the river.

To describe our Strategy for Renewed Action, the Task Force proposes six general areas of action, with specific projects to undertake for each.

- A. Update the Vision:** The Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission should adopt the updated vision, goal, objectives and priority actions proposed in this Strategy Report, and proceed with implementing them.
- B. Take a Stronger Leadership Role:** Become a leader for furthering the Willamette Greenway Program and related parklands and projects. Bring together the community of stakeholders for consultation about meeting program expectations, as well as emerging issues and accomplishments. Communicate Greenway Program expectations for all and provide information and incentives to achieve them. Market, promote and explain the benefits of the Greenway Program and system of parklands. Be a catalyst for others through grant funding, model projects and establishment of partnerships.
  1. Host an annual forum of stakeholders.
  2. Create a web-based clearinghouse for information on the Willamette River Greenway Program and related parklands and projects. Address the history, natural history and recreational importance of lands along the river, and provide information on priority resource enhancement areas, projects and techniques. Include links to other river advocacy groups and state agency programs that are relevant to the river and riverside activities. Identify partnerships, grants and other funding to be tapped for implementation.
  3. Designate a central staff contact for greenway related queries and proposals with contact information on the Greenway web site.
  4. Add grant review criteria to OPRD's grant programs to help direct funding to local governments for recreational and resource enhancement projects along the Willamette River.
  5. Create a State Water Trail Program within State Parks to oversee and coordinate efforts related to the expansion of the Mid Willamette Water Trail and other water trails. Dedicate a staff person to coordinate this program with other department programs, the field management and outside partners.
  6. Offer some OPRD lands for experiments with economic credits and/or other resource banking approaches with the private sector and with federal funding.
  7. Share inventories, analysis and planning work with local jurisdictions, other agencies and the public through the department, web site and other outreach actions.



8. Share information with local governments about planning, research, enhancement projects and recreation improvement projects, and pursue any required permits.
- C. Recognize the Tradition:** Inform others about the history, mandates and authorities of the Willamette Greenway and other public lands along the river.
1. Include a synopsis of Willamette Greenway history on the proposed Greenway web site, including references to mandates and other materials.
  2. Make the central Salem contact available for questions from within and outside the agency.
- D. Refine the Focus:**
1. Complete OPRD master plans, and detailed, site-specific proposals for recreational needs and natural, scenic and cultural resource protection and enhancement for the following properties:
    - ✓ Middle Fork Willamette River properties, 2005-07
    - ✓ Luckiamute area, 2005-07
    - ✓ Bowers Rock area, 2007-09
    - ✓ Molalla River Sp area, 2007-09
    - ✓ Scappoose Landing, 2007-09
    - ✓ Willamette Mission area, 2007-09
  3. Complete an interpretive and education plan for State Park's lands along the river and in partnership with other public landowners. Build on the State Park's Regional Interpretive Plan guidelines.
  4. Complete archeological and "above ground" historic/prehistoric resource mapping for OPRD lands along the Willamette River.
  5. Complete an air photo review of sections of the river where the riparian border is very narrow, in rural areas; and target for the acquisition of scenic easements that can expand the width of that border.
  6. Keep up to date on Army Corps of Engineers and ODFW research into flood mitigation recommendations for the Middle Fork and fine-tune park restoration projects to be compatible as per the objectives of the master plan. Also, coordinate on additional studies for other reaches of the river.
- D. Enhance What We Have:** Step up State Park's management of important resources and recreation opportunities. Leverage expertise, funding and partnerships for the most effect with the least cost.
1. Target detailed restoration and recreation efforts first on State Park's lands along the Middle Fork of the Willamette and at the Luckimute/Vanderpool properties and other current projects, and schedule implementation at the focus areas above, in addition to Champoeg. Work with The Nature Conservancy, Willamette Partnership, Army Corp of Engineers, Marine Board and others toward refining the needed inventories and restoration project techniques. Emphasize removal of barriers to fish passage and increasing winter floodway flow, and management to enhance sensitive species and habitats.
  2. Work with the River Navigator/BLM and the National Park Service, and other partners to expand the Mid Willamette Water Trail to include the entire river from Dexter Dam to the Columbia River. Produce an updated map/brochure and celebrate completion with paddling and media events.
  3. Within six years, complete facility improvements needed on OPRD lands as identified for Willamette Water Trail, Middle Fork Willamette properties, Luckiamute, OPRD's Six Year Plan for Facility Investment, and Marine Board Six Year Plan.

4. Phase in integrated pest management plans with farmers who lease State Park's land.
  5. Once access and upland additions to Bowers Rock are secured, create a new OPRD management unit there.
  6. Ensure one full time Greenway Ranger per each OPRD management unit on the Willamette.
  7. Create an OPRD Greenway habitat enhancement crew to be used riverwide and stationed at Luckiamute/Vanderpool, who would work with the Salem Natural Resource Management Section. Use inmate crews, volunteer teams and interns to assist.
  8. Consolidate the Willamette River into one OPRD administrative area.
  9. Work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wildlife refuge management staff to share expertise and management out of the Findley Wildlife Refuge HQ.
  10. Connect with Division of State Lands on location and types of lease and permit agreements for installations along the river that are within their jurisdiction.
- E. Expand the Base:** Add key parcels to public ownership using OPRD's acquisition priority and evaluation process. Seek easements that can meet the objectives and partnerships where possible.
1. Pursue acquisitions only where offered by willing sellers and where public ownership can meet recreational and conservation needs. Before deciding to purchase more lands be sure that existing OPRD lands (and other public lands) are being used to the fullest extent possible for their intended purposes for recreation and/or conservation. Be strategic and thoughtful about what to buy, and don't deny willing sellers a chance to consider their property whether for outright purchase or for easements.
  2. Focus on Middle Fork Willamette, Luckiamute area, Bowers Rock area, Molalla River SP area, Scappoose Landing area, Willamette Mission area, Peoria Landing, Christianson Landing, Marshal Island.
  3. Work with local governments and parks systems to expand trails connections at the following locations:
    - ✓ Between Albany and Corvallis
    - ✓ Along the Middle Fork from Dexter Dam to Mount Pisgah
    - ✓ Along the Coast Fork from Dorena reservoir to Mount Pisgah
    - ✓ Between Willamette Mission and Salem/Keizer
    - ✓ In the Portland Metro area
  4. Pursue scenic easements for targeted scenic/riparian fringe gaps.