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River News Digest: February 10, 2012

River News Digest is a compilation of interesting items and announcements relating to rivers—with a focus on better understanding, enjoying, and caring for our local rivers, while touching on items from around the country and the world. Please note much of the information is from sources other than the City of Portland [like news media, non-profit organizations, and other government agencies]. The Rivers Office lists these items for information purposes only and is not responsible for their content

Coming Right Up!...

On the Waterfront

education series

**Navigating the Hazards:
Fish, the Willamette
and You**

February 15, 2012
 7:00–8:30 pm
Madison's Grill
East Wing Banquet Room
 1109 SE Madison St., Portland

Wondering if it's safe to swim in the river? To eat the fish? Dr. Dave Stone and Sandra Uesugi from OSU discuss risks and benefits to help you navigate through the health issues posed by the Lower Willamette River. Moderated by Gail Shibley, Oregon Health Authority.

**River City Confidential:
The Willamette River's
Pollution Story Revealed**

March 21, 2012
 7:00–8:30 pm
Widmer Gasthaus
Great Room
 947 N Russell St., Portland

James Hillegas shares insights from his upcoming book on the original Willamette River pollution cleanup, from the 1920s to the 1970s. Co-hosted by the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group and Oregon Historical Society.

**If the Willamette River
could talk, what would
it say?**

April 11, 2012
 7:00–8:30 pm
McMenamin's Kennedy
School Gym
 5736 NE 33rd Ave., Portland

Join Oregon experts as they lead you on a journey through the Willamette River, sharing stories of its ecological past and visions for its future. Introductory remarks by Congressman Blumenauer. Co-hosted by The Freshwater Trust. Moderated by Doug Stamm, Meyer Memorial Trust.

For more information: [Portland Harbor Partnership.](#)

[Rain Gardens 101. May 6, 12:30 – 4:30 pm.](#) “This workshop explores the critical role rain gardens can play in urban stream restoration, all while adding beautiful landscaping to your yard.” Registration open now; classes can fill quickly. *East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District.*

[Get to know your backyard birds and the Backyard Habitat Certification Program. Feb 22, 2012 from 6:30 - 8:00 pm.](#)

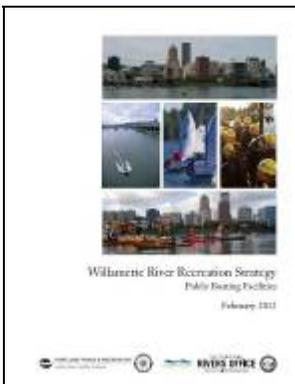
Willamette Riverkeeper “Early Bird” River Discovery Paddle at Smith and Bybee Lakes: Saturday, February 25th. Launch at 7:30 am, be on the water by 8 am, off the water by 11 am. Canoes are available upon request, though you must recruit your own paddling partner. Register with kate@willametteriverkeeper.org , 503-223-6418.

Eco Paddle with the People, February 26. [Alder Creek Kayak & Canoe](#) is offering a community trip to give back to the river. Led by the [Out of Sight, Out of Mind \(OSOM\) team](#), paddlers will remove trash from the Willamette while exploring the Portland Waterfront and Ross Island area.



[14th Annual Johnson Creek Watershed Council Watershed Wide Event. Saturday, March 3 • 9am- Noon.](#) “On the first Saturday in March, you are invited to join over 300 others to restore natural areas in the Johnson Creek Watershed. Organizations, individuals, and businesses will gather for a day of ecological stewardship, spring stream-cleaning, and community-building at priority restoration sites. ... In the thirteen years of Watershed Wide, 3,600 volunteers have planted over 44,000 trees and removed more than 53 tons of invasive weed debris.” Pre-registration required ([click here](#)). More info: Amy Lodholz, 503.652.7477.

1. News In Our River Neighborhood...



[Willamette River Recreation Strategy to go before City Council.](#) Produced jointly by the City of Portland’s Rivers Office and Portland Parks and Recreation, the Willamette River Recreation Strategy will be presented to the City Council on February 22nd. The Strategy lays out a 15 year framework for maintaining and improving public boating facilities on the Willamette in Portland, and recommends actions to enhance Portlanders’ river experiences.



[Robots, Rebar and Slurry: Inside a Massive Public Works Project.](#) “Redesigning the entire sewer system was an expensive prospect that would require crews to rip up the streets of half the city. Engineers instead proposed a campaign to disconnect old pipes and tie new construction into existing infrastructure. The crux of this plan was two massive pipelines spanning a combined 10 miles along either side of the Willamette which would increase throughput to the city’s treatment facility and vastly reduce overflows. ... To ensure the public’s money was spent wisely, the BES circumvented low bid contests with a qualifications-based approach. They negotiated costs up front (verified afterward by an independent evaluation), and, by doing so, spared the two big pipe projects the money-wrangling that can mar big-ticket construction deals.” *WIRED.com, February 8*



[DEQ Downtown Willamette River Sediment Investigation Finds Pollutants Don't Pose Recontamination Threat to Portland Harbor](#). "...[DEQ] has determined that pollutants in the downtown section of the Willamette River do not pose a threat of recontamination to Portland Harbor ... [recent] studies focused on ... PCBs, dioxins/furans, pesticides (DDT, chlordane, dieldrin), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (also called PAHs), metals (lead, mercury, arsenic), and tributyl tin. ... In general, the ... data ... suggested that contaminated areas are limited in extent. ... DEQ's evaluation and data reports on this project... are available at [DEQ's website](#)." *DEQ News Release, Feb. 1*

[Study: Portland Harbor Superfund costs could reach \\$2B](#). "A new report ... commissioned by three of the harbor's largest companies ... projects that cleanup of the Portland Harbor Superfund site could cost as much as \$2.2 billion. ... [The report] ... comes about a month before Gunderson and Vigor, along with several other Willamette River-area companies, will release a feasibility study to the Environmental Protection Agency. The study will reveal possible harbor clean-up measures along the Willamette's 10-mile stretch between the Fremont Bridge and Sauvie Island. The EPA will eventually issue final clean-up recommendations." *Portland Business Journal, February 7*

[Portland harbor cleanup could cost billions, provide little health benefit, industry-sponsored study says](#). "A study paid for by three of Portland's biggest industries contends there could be high costs -- from \$445 million to \$2.2 billion -- and minimal health benefits from the Superfund cleanup of contaminated sediment in Portland Harbor. The study, commissioned by harbor businesses Schnitzer Steel, Gunderson and Vigor Industrial, is the first attempt to pin down costs and benefits of Oregon's largest cleanup, covering a heavily industrialized 10-mile stretch of the Willamette River." *OregonLive.com, February 8*



[Portland officials partner with Brookings Institution to boost exports](#). "Regional economic development officials will this week unveil early versions of their strategies designed to boost Oregon exports. ... The representatives are working with the Brookings Institution and the Rockefeller Foundation on a project that would help companies sell more goods outside the area. ... Portland businesses hope to double the \$22 billion worth of products and services that Oregon companies exported last year by 2016." *Portland Business Journal, January 31*

Photo: [-Portland Ground: Pictures of Portland Oregon](#).

[2011 trail counts and surveys for the Intertwine—now available](#). "Each September, volunteers ... count and survey people biking and walking on the Intertwine – the Portland metropolitan area's system of trails, parks and natural areas." As featured in [Metro's slideshow](#) on the results (in trips per year), popular trails include ...

Most used trail:

- Tom McCall Waterfront Park Trail..... 3,500,000

Top used trails:

- Eastbank Esplanade2,100,000
- South Waterfront Trail..... 1,300,000
- Springwater on Willamette 1,200,000
- Columbia Renaissance Trail 700,000
- Salmon Creek Greenway..... 410,000
- Fanno Creek Greenway 220,000



[Portland firefighters risk their lives, rescue man from frigid Willamette River](#). "The current swept over them toward a massive field of logs about 100 yards downstream. Schimel knew if he lost his grip, Hinrichs would slide under the debris and be killed. Schimel risked being towed under, too. 'The water was the worse I've seen it,' Schimel said. 'We got submerged a couple of times with the current ripping up against us.' He said it was the most dangerous rescue he's experienced in his 12 years as a Portland firefighter." *OregonLive.com, January 27*

[February 11 Polar Plunge in Portland and around Oregon raises cold cash for charity](#). "...about 1,500 people in street clothes and costumes are expected to charge with a yell across the sands of Northeast Portland's Broughton Beach and into the Columbia River -- where yells may well turn into yelps. Law enforcement volunteers from the Portland Police Bureau and other agencies help organize the [Polar Plunge](#) as a fundraiser for [Special Olympics Oregon](#)." *OregonLive.com, February 4*

2. Up the Willamette and Columbia...and more

[Clackamas County commissioners approve \\$1.75 million purchase of Blue Heron's West Linn site.](#)

"Clackamas County is pursuing the site in order to obtain its outfall permits, which would allow the county to release treated wastewater into the river from the property." *OregonLive.com, January 26*

[Mill Creek's flood woes—Despite levees, monitoring, Willamette tributary in Salem still poses problems.](#)

"The creek offers a tranquil, park-like setting for much of the year — until heavy rains and snowmelt cause its waters to rise." *StatesmanJournal.com, January 28*

[Drawing Down Fall Creek Reservoir To Stream Level Aids Willamette Spring Chinook.](#)

"In 2011, the Corps lowered the reservoir to elevation 680 feet, which resulted in a complete drawdown to streambed. According to preliminary estimates, the reborn river swept from 13,000 to 23,000 naturally born and raised spring chinook smolts past the dam." *Columbia Basin Bulletin, February 3 (Photo: US Corps of Eng.)*



[April-Sept. Columbia Basin Streamflow Prediction Now Pegged At 92 Percent Of 30-Year Average.](#)

Columbia Basin Bulletin, February 3

[Two meetings coming up this month to discuss voracious northern pike in the Upper Columbia.](#)

"The red flag came up a little more than a year ago that a new predator was lurking in the waters of northeastern Washington that could have a big impact on salmon and steelhead in the Columbia River." *Seattle Times, February 7*

[Smelt fishing remains closed in 2012.](#) "While the 2012 smelt forecast for the Columbia River and its tributaries is favorable, recreational anglers should plan to leave their nets in the garage for another season." *Tacoma News Tribune, January 29*



Photo: NOAA

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