

A Little About Portland's River Office

In January 2009, City Council established the [Office of Healthy Working Rivers](#) ("Rivers Office") to bring a new focus to advancing the City's river goals of achieving:

- a clean and healthy river,
- a prosperous working harbor,
- increased awareness of the river,
- a vibrant waterfront, and
- successful partnerships to implement river projects.

Overseen by [Commissioner Amanda Fritz](#), the four-person Office works collaboratively with other city bureaus, government agencies, non-profit organizations, and the community to steward, respectfully utilize, and enjoy the Willamette and Columbia Rivers.

Ann Beier, Director | 1120 SW Fifth, #1000 | river@portlandoregon.gov | General Information: 503.823.0275

The Willamette and Portland: Shaping the Future

There are some big processes on-going in the city that will shape how Portlanders engage the river in the coming decades. Because they can't be pointed out on a tour, a few are summarized, below:

- [Central City 2035](#): Updates the plan for the downtown and central areas of Portland. CC2035 will address challenges and opportunities to ensure this unique economic, transportation, cultural and educational hub will be a vibrant resource for all Portlanders over the next 25 years. Includes [Willamette River Framework](#), whose goal is to "Ensure that the Willamette River, and the land along the river, supports a diverse array of economic opportunities, community spaces and activities, and a healthy, functioning environment in the heart of the Central City."
- [Portland Harbor Superfund](#): In 2000, a segment of the Willamette was designated a Superfund site because of risks to human and ecological health from PCBs, dioxin/furans, the pesticide DDT, and PAHs. The affected area is from about Sauvie Island to the Fremont Bridge—north of downtown Portland. More than 10 years of intense study resulted in a [draft Feasibility Study](#) being submitted to the EPA, which will use it as a toolbox for clean-up decisions. A [parallel process](#) is underway to investigate what actions might be required not only to clean up the site, but to make up for damages to natural resources.
- [Willamette River Recreation Strategy](#): In February 2012, the Portland City Council accepted the Willamette River Recreation Strategy as the City's guide for river recreation and boating facility planning along the Willamette River in Portland. The Strategy articulates a new river recreation vision and prioritizes actions for the next 15 years.

The Willamette Community: Busy Turning Back to the River

Communities all along the Willamette are turning back to our river in exciting and innovative ways. The Rivers Office has had the pleasure of learning first-hand about a number of these efforts, and offers the following as an admittedly incomplete, but pretty cool, listing of some.

- Lane Council of Governments (LCOG): [Willamette River Open Space Vision](#); [Willamette Basin TMDL assistance](#).
- Eugene: [River to Ridges Partnership](#); [Delta Ponds Bike/Ped Bridge](#); [DeFazio Bike Bridge](#)
- Corvallis: [Riverfront Commemorative Park](#); [Wastewater Treatment Wetland](#) study/proposal.
- Albany: [Talking Water Gardens](#) wastewater treatment [Central Albany Revitalization Area](#).
- Salem: [Minto Brown Island Park restoration](#); [North Downtown Waterfront Redevelopment](#); [South of Mission Redevelopment](#); [Riverfront Downtown Urban Renewal Area](#); [Union Street Railroad Pedestrian & Bicycle Bridge](#); [Minto Bicycle and Pedestrian Bridge and Trail](#);
- Wilsonville: [Willamette River Water Treatment Plant](#); [Tonquin Trail](#) planning (w Metro)
- Oregon City: [Downtown Urban Renewal](#); [Riverfront Boulevard](#); [The Rivers](#);
- West Linn: [Fishing Dock](#) (w. ODFW); [Mary S. Young Park](#) (w. Oregon State Parks)
- Lake Oswego: [Charlie S. Brown Watersports Center](#); [Foothills Park Dock](#);
- Milwaukie: [Riverfront Park Plan](#); [Kellogg-For-Coho Initiative](#);
- Vancouver (OK, not on the Willamette, but exciting): [Waterfront Development](#); [Waterfront Renaissance Trail](#);
- [The Intertwine](#): the network of parks, trails, waterways, natural areas and special places in the Portland /Vancouver region. The Intertwine Alliance is a coalition working to preserve this network and to create opportunities for residents to connect with nature.

Willamette River Tour Information Sheet

Tour Purpose:

Stimulate dialogue about the unique challenges and opportunities facing local governments and their partners living and working along our urban Willamette by...

- ...calling out some examples of river and watershed projects, issues, and approaches in the Portland area, and by...
- ...offering a non-conference-room environment for the urban Willamette community to meet and interact with each other, as a way of...
- ...celebrating progress made, and teaming up for the work yet to come—upstream and down.

Agenda:

Given the nature and length of the cruise, this will be an informal gathering, with ... 'organic' ... timeframes.

1. Welcome and introduction (we will gather as a group on a separate deck)
2. Lunch (ordering, wandering, seating, eating, talking)
3. River observation (we'll provide materials & light narration of specific sites & issues during the cruise.)

(Note: Carbon offsets have been purchased for this tour.)

A few interesting facts about the Willamette in Portland	
Length of Willamette through Portland	17 miles
Total length of shoreline in Portland	38 miles
Total length of entire Willamette River	186 miles
Mean monthly flow range of Willamette in Portland (cubic feet per second)	8,400 – 67,000
September 20 th daily mean flow in cfs at Morrison Bridge	12,200
Peak flows of Willamette in Portland (in cubic feet per second)	200,000 to 400,000
Percent of Willamette in Portland in the late 1880's less than 20 feet deep	80
Percent of Willamette in Portland that is now more than 20 feet deep	80
Number of fish species living in the Willamette River in Portland	39
Number of fish species that are not native	19
Percent of impervious area in Portland's Willamette Watershed	40
Number of gutter gallons per year collected by one house in Portland	22,000
Number of houses that disconnected gutters since 1996	About 50,000
Gallons per year that disconnection keeps out of storm drains discharging to Willamette	Over 1 billion
Number of years it took for Portland to complete CSO/Big Pipe project	20
Length / diameter of East Side Big Pipe	6 miles / 22 feet
Total cost of CSO/Big Pipe project	About \$1.4 billion
Amount covered by federal government	About \$0
Points by which the Water Quality Index improved in the Willamette in Portland from 2000-2009	7 (from 83 [fair] to 90 [excellent])
Rank of Portland in West Coast ports (by tonnage)	4
Proportion of jobs in Portland created by Harbor area industries	1 in 8
Percent of Portlanders living within 1 mile of Willamette (2004)	30
Portland river-edge character	70% built 30% natural
Portland river-edge ownership	56% public 44% private



Willamette River Activity Sampler (September 2012)

Tour Route: North

Future Morrison Bridgehead/James Beard Public Market

Central City Plan update ("CC2035") underway; includes [Willamette River Framework](#). (see back page)

Downtown swim beach? Rivers Office & Portland Parks to explore citizen proposal.

WARNING
NO LIFEGUARD ON DUTY
SWIM AT YOUR OWN RISK

Dreyfus Grain Elevators & Wharf

Eastbank Esplanade's 1,200 foot floating bridge longest in US.

The "**Big Pipe**" – CSO project

City Council OK's new [Willamette River Recreation Strategy](#) in Feb. 2012. (see back page)

Light Watercraft Dock & Portland Boathouse; Willamette Riverkeeper office.

Route of [The Big Float](#) 2011 & 2012.

RiverPlace: Completed in 1985, the city supported the project with urban renewal funding through the Portland Development Commission: 158 condo units, a 75 room hotel, a public marina, a floating restaurant, & specialty shops.

Zidell property redevelopment & riverbank restoration.

Zidell Marine barge facility. (barge launch [video](#)).

South Waterfront: Greenway construction began summer 2012.

Ross Island Natural Area. 40 acres donated to City by Ross Island Sand & Gravel & managed as natural area.

Ross Island clean-up and reclamation activities.

OMSI: river & watershed exhibits; new [Salmon Walk](#) (photos); light rail bridge exhibits.

Portland-Milwaukie Light Rail bridge to open in 2015. ([Webcams](#)—live-stream & time lapse).

Tour Route: South

Willamette Park. Portland Parks, 26 acres. [Redevelopment plan](#) to improve shoreline and riparian habitat; river bank stability; stream habitat; passive recreation.

Holgate Channel No/Slow Wake Zone

Oaks Bottom Wildlife Refuge: Portland's 1st wildlife refuge—140+ acres on former landfill. Parks & Portland Environmental Services leading [restoration project](#).

Sellwood Bridge replacement. New bridge to open in 2015.

City of Portland South Portland Riverbank program: 7 projects for a cleaner river.

City of Portland Powers Marine Park. 14 acres

River View Forest: BES, PPR, Metro, TPL partnered in 2011 to acquire 146 acres for watershed protection and upland wildlife habitat preservation.

Johnson Creek Confluence Restoration: Milwaukie, Johnson Creek Watershed Council, Metro partner to restore confluence.

City of Milwaukie's Riverfront Park Plan.

Elk Rock Island. City of Portland property undergoing [oak release](#) and ecological restoration.

City of Milwaukie's Kellogg Creek Restoration project includes dam removal, wetland restoration.

Map images from Google