

Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation



*“Preserving and sharing stories of human enterprise
and the power of the great Falls of the Willamette River.”*

Lots of News at The Falls!

With all the news stories at The Falls, it’s hard to cover them in a single newsletter! But here is a brief recap of recent events:

- Metro voters passed Measure 26-803 that authorizes \$475 million in general obligation bonds to continue and includes \$20 million dedicated to the Willamette Falls Riverwalk Project that will provide public access to the falls.
- Willamette Falls Paper Company began making paper made from waste straw.
- Mill J, one of the oldest structures at the West Linn mill, is being demolished due to extreme decay.
- The Locks Commission is busy moving ahead with legislation for Public Corporation.
- The WFHF is putting the finishing touches on a study that outlines the feasibility of tours of the West Linn mill site.
- West Linn’s Historic City Hall project is moving forward with plans and a fund-raising campaign.



Willamette Falls is not usually thought of for blazing fall colors but they can be found if one knows where to look! This spot is on the east bank, just below Hawley’s old Mill A. In addition to the stunning colors it’s nice to see steam coming off the paper machine at Willamette Falls Paper Company!



Mill manager **Brian Konen** (front and center) poses with his crew and the first roll of paper made from non-wood pulp.
(photo and information courtesy of WFPC)

Another Historic Milestone at The Mill

October 26, 2019 marked a historic day at the West Linn mill when a successful trial run of paper made with non-wood pulp rolled off the paper machine. This was the first time the mill used pulp consisting of 10% waste straw to produce both coated and uncoated grades of paper.

Ongoing machine trials will refine the paper’s properties and specifications but early results and customer feedback has been very promising. The mill hopes to announce the start of commercial production of this paper by December.

“We want to be the first coated paper mill to offer non-wood grades made in the U.S. and sourced with local agricultural waste, in this case straw,” says **Phil Harding**, the mill’s Director of Technology and Sustainability. “Our long-term focus is sustainable papermaking, and successful trials using non-wood raw materials is another step toward this goal.”

At present, the mill is only running Paper Machine 1 but crews are preparing Paper Machine 3 to come on line soon. Meanwhile, the steam plant also anticipates firing up a second boiler sometime after the first of the year.

Mill Tour Feasibility Report Released

By Nancy Kraushaar, WFHF Vice president

As the steward of one of our nation's most undervalued assets, the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation is pursuing permanent public site tours of the West Linn Paper Mill Site and access to Willamette Falls. The Foundation envisions the tours will convey the significant natural, cultural, and industrial history of this stunning place.

WFHF commissioned a study to evaluate the feasibility of such tours. The initial draft report was released last August.

The site legacy includes not only the defunct sawmill and groundwood pulp operation, but also the historic TW Sullivan Hydroelectric Plant as well as the unique ecology, geology, and important Native American culture of the Falls. The report details key stories, features, and assets of the project area and explores their context within a unique site experience as well as a more extensive regional experience.

Establishing the feasibility for the tours creates a very exciting synergetic connection to the Legacy Project just across the river in Oregon City and broadens destination opportunities in the Oregon Mount Hood Territory and the Willamette Falls and Landings Heritage Area. The study will provide an important placeholder as the City of West Linn continues to develop its Waterfront Master Plan.

The report identifies the core partners and stakeholders that will be needed to further plan for future tours of the site and the area as a visitor destination – all with common interests in promoting, preserving, and/or activating the West Linn site.

The study recognizes PGE and the Willamette Falls Paper Company as essential partners given their essential operational needs at the site. A third key partner is the City of West Linn. Multiple agency and business interests are identified for their important roles and interests in the project's implementation success.

Willamette Falls & Landings Heritage Area Coalition News

By Siobhan Taylor

There's a new name for Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition. It is now Willamette Falls & Landings Heritage Area Coalition (WFL). The name reflects the inclusion of the upriver communities of Canby, Wilsonville and French Prairie. The "landings" refer to the canoe landings traditionally used by the Native American tribes along the 56 river miles of the proposed National Heritage Area.

These later became landings for fur trappers and traders employed by the Hudson's Bay Co., and later for riverboats, log landings and agricultural settlement. Today's Heritage Area stretches from Phillip Foster Farm near Estacada to Mission Bottom just outside of Salem and includes two State Heritage Areas: Willamette Falls Heritage Area and Champoeg Heritage Area.

On another front, Historic City Hall project is moving forward with focus and determination. The building is now referred to as the Willamette Falls Cultural Center, and will showcase the story of the Native Americans who lived and fished at the falls (in particular the Clo-we-wa-la and Clackamas), provide permanent gallery space interpreting the National Heritage Area story, changing exhibit space for heritage groups and incubator space for artists, community meeting space and limited office space. Fund raising is critical to



Nancy Kraushaar and Willamette Falls Paper Co. Mill Manager **Brian Konen** check out the falls from one of the potential tour viewing areas from Mill A on Moore's Island.

The study recommends a phased approach for plan refinement and developing the public tours:

Phase 1 – Advocacy Tours; **Phase 2** – Visitor Tours; and **Phase 3** – Long-Term Vision Tours.

The report provides valuable information on a tour route and recommendations on features to incorporate in story "zones" within the tour.

See our website to stay tuned on public meetings where the report will be presented. The WFHF will be closely working with the project partners to set the stage to achieve the next steps for the project.



this project and it takes ALL of us, not just the WFL.

Recent donors include the Autzen Family Foundation and the Jackson Foundation. Clackamas County Tourism, in addition to \$100,000 in grant support is working with WFL to bring high speed internet access into the building. Next up is getting the building on the National Historic Register. That will qualify us for more heritage funding. Thanks to **Larry McIntyre** for his ongoing outside landscape cleanup of the site. Parking is yet another challenge since the City, who owns the building does not own the parking around the building. We are working with the paper mill currently leasing the site to negotiate a parking agreement.

Foundations love this project, but they want to see more community engagement in order to kick in more funding– that means community/private donations. Every dollar counts! **Jim Mattis** is working to bring a team together for the donor wall project (goal \$500,000). Heritage roots run deep in this community and we need to tap into them. If you have a contact you think can be helpful or if you would like to donate please get in touch: siobhan@wfheritage.org or call me 503-704-5880.



Troy Bowers,
President WFHF

President's Message: *Troy's Trivia*

Did you know... that the Willamette Falls Locks were opened just after the Civil War? Did you know they are an American Society of Civil Engineers Historic Site?

The Locks Commission continues its work to identify the best new ownership structure so the US Army Corps of Engineers can transfer ownership once they upgrade the Locks. Oregon's upcoming legislative session will be pivotal for approving this structure and reopening the locks. With that in place, appropriating the funds to support the Corps' recommended repairs and transfer can happen.

Prior to construction of the Locks, all passengers and freight had to be portaged around the Falls. The Locks now connect the lower river and upper river into one river. Studies show that reopening the Locks will provide tourism and economic benefit and redundancy and resiliency for barging materials. Thanks goes out to our WFHF Board members **Sandy Carter** and **Joe Bernert** who have long championed the Locks as being important and vital to our past, present and future. Our continued encouragement and support is essential as they navigate the halls of our Capitol this Spring.

Thank you again for your moral and financial support as we work to save the future of our past! Together, we do make an important difference.

WFHF Collections Update

The Foundation's Collections Team received notification that we've been approved on a micro-grant request for \$750 from the Clackamas County Cultural Coalition to purchase archival folders for the Hawley Pulp & Paper Co. sulphite mill drawing collection.

Locks Commission Update

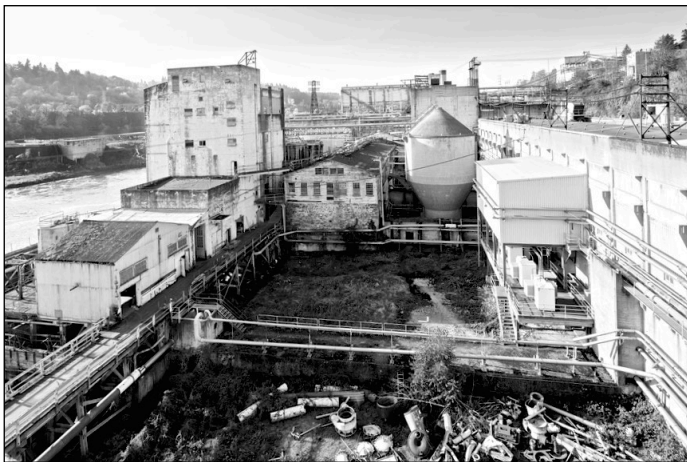
The Willamette Falls Lock Commission is preparing for the upcoming Oregon Legislative Short Session in February with presenting the Public Corporation model and business plan for the Locks. Additional information is available online at: <https://orsolutions.org/osproject/WFLC>

Mill J's Eminent Demise

The oldest surviving papermaking building West Linn will soon be demolished. Built in about 1895 by Crown Paper Company, the one story wood structure's roof has decayed to the point of becoming a serious safety hazard. Rather than risking an unplanned collapse, site owner PGE is having contractors carefully remove the roof and walls to preserve the original stone foundation.

Mill J once housed paper machines 7 and 8. It last operated in the mid-1980's.

As seen left photo below, Mill J crouches in the middle of the site, hidden from view behind the Bleach Plant and stock tanks. The right photo shows that the interior is an empty shell, its machinery long-removed, whose rotting walls are supported by bracing and cables.



Help WFHF Keep History Alive: [Donate Now!](#)

Make your year-end tax deductible contributions to:

The Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation



Preserving Mill A on Moore's Island

The various abandoned structures and equipment that comprise Mill A (as seen these photos) represent the essence of Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation's mission to preserve The Falls industrial and economic heritage.

These buildings house the artifacts of our past, including a sawmill, grinder rooms, hydroelectric generators, as well as portions of PGE's dam. We believe components of this unique place should be saved and eventually made accessible for public viewing.

The Foundation's efforts to preserve pieces of this amazing time capsule of The Falls industrial history need your support. Our next steps are to help fund the restoration and repurposing of the Historic City Hall Cultural Center — gateway to The Falls and beyond — and to build a virtual museum to showcase and leverage this rich history.

Please send your donations to the address below and help us continue with our mission.



P.O. Box 635
West Linn, OR 97068
email: willamettefalls@msn.com
phone: 503-650-9570
Newsletter editor: Dan Butler
dtb17@me.com

(All photos by the editor unless otherwise noted)



(above) One of the eight water-powered turbines in Grinder Room 2.

(below) Slasher saws in the sawmill portion of Mill A



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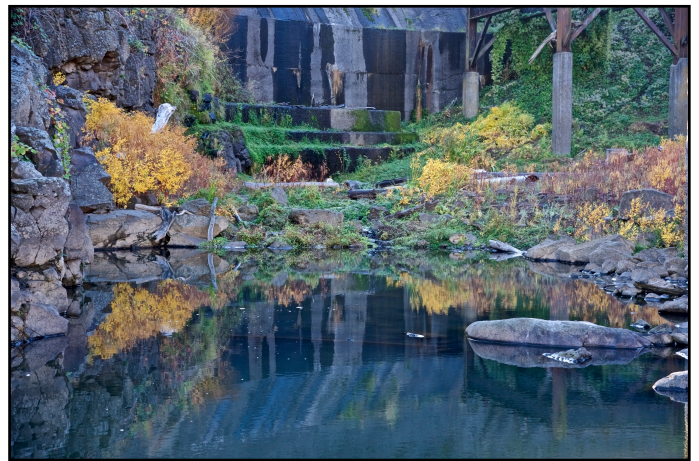


Fall at The Falls!

Sometimes it is easy to overlook the natural beauty that can be captured at The Falls. This year's fall colors were especially stunning.

Whether highlighting the locks and mill or lurking amongst the rocks and ruins, these vibrant hues tinged The Falls with a spectacular display of color.

While some of these scenes are only visible by boat, hopefully the future Willamette Falls RiverWalk will provide an opportunity for anyone to experience these views.



The Beautiful Falls

By Samuel L. Simpson

Here wheels the thunder-breathing steed,
As if in dread to stay and heed

A grander pageant than his own,
Wild waters whirl in cresting spray,
Fair as the fragrant wreaths of May,
And loud with laughter, song and

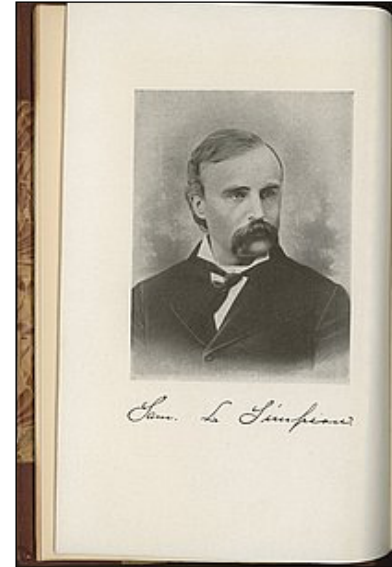
Yonder embattled firs around,
Chant high above, in martial sound,
The paeans of the marching years;
And here a dark, historic cliff,
Writ o'er with many a hieroglyph,
Echoes and answers, leans and hears.

And lo! Within the surge and roar,
Scarfed with a rainbow evermore,
The pallid priestess of the flood,
Swinging her censer to and fro,
As swift suns wheel and soft moons glow
Aloof, through lapsing time has stood.

The tented and the tawny bands
Whose camp-smoke curled along these sands,
....And climbed and crowned the rocky shore

To murmurless deep seas and pale
Have passed, with gray and slanting sail,
Forgetful of the spear and oar.

So now beside this stormy gate,
Pilgrims of brighter visage wait,
To rest in turn beneath the sod:—
Yet shall this melody be rolled
For aye, these voices manifold
The echo of a changeless God!



The Story Behind Simpson's Poem

By Nancy Dunis
WFHF Board member

I discovered "The Beautiful Falls" by Oregon poet **Samuel L. Simpson** (1846-1899) while doing some research about what teachers in Oregon used to teach from prior to the adoption of textbooks.

Oregon adopted its first textbooks, consisting of five readers, in 1873. Called *The Pacific Coast Series*, Samuel L. Simpson wrote readers four and five. These were considered *literary* readers. Although he grew up near The Grand Ronde Indian Reservation and wrote mostly about the Willamette Valley,

Samuel L. Simpson died in Portland the result of an inebriated fall. He is buried at Lone fir Cemetery.

Please help support Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation with your donation!

Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation is a 501(C)(3) non-profit Oregon corporation established for educational purposes and heritage preservation, and is on the Oregon Cultural Trust's list of qualified Oregon nonprofits.

Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation • PO Box 635 • West Linn, OR 97068
VoiceMail (503) 650-9570

Donations may also be made online at: www.willamettefalls.org