

Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation

“Preserving and sharing stories of human enterprise and the power of the great Falls of the Willamette

Fall Newsletter — 2021

A Key Open to The Locks!

By Sandy Carter

It isn't often that diverse community groups give a collective sigh of relief and leap of joy with the signing of a bill in Salem. But that's exactly what happened when **Governor Brown** signed HB 2564 into law last June, creating the Willamette Falls Locks Authority.

The Locks Authority is the future that the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation have long imagined: a working river once again allowing the unhindered passage of a vibrant assortment of marine traffic from Corvallis to Portland and beyond. After the tremendous time and effort to get here, this *is* quite the accomplishment!

WFHF board members have led the locks advocacy long before the Corp of Engineers closed the canal in 2011. Our efforts began with the Lock Fest celebrations. When federal funding shrank to a pittance, we helped organize **Darlene Hooley's** Willamette River United Convocation in Oregon City. We then applied and became a partner in an Oregon Solutions consensus process led by **Verne Duncan**. Next we led the One Willamette River Coalition, which in turn led to the County's Locks Working Group. This resulted in **Governor Roberts'** Locks State Task Force. We were at the table when that group recommended the creation of a State Locks Commission. Laboring extensively since 2017, the Commission successfully negotiated the finish line in the Governor's office this summer – and we were there in spirit!



In August...

Locks Commissioner **Sandy Carter** joined a tour of Willamette Falls Locks on August 9 that was organized at the request of Oregon's Senatorial staff. The group included **John Serra** (Rep. Kurt Schrader's office), **Kelli Horvath** (Senator Jeff Merkley's office), **Trent Wilson** (Clackamas County Governmental Affairs), **Jeff Hicks** (WF Locks Corps of Engineers Project Manager) and **Liza Wells**, new Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, and Senior Civilian at the Portland District offices.

In September...

The Locks Commission meeting got an overview of the new Authority's governing legislation, its membership requirements and a staff-created, long-term, to-do list. The Commission's two primary responsibilities going forward are: (1) develop a candidate list for appointments of members to the Willamette Falls Locks Authority, and (2) revisit the Authority's business plan.

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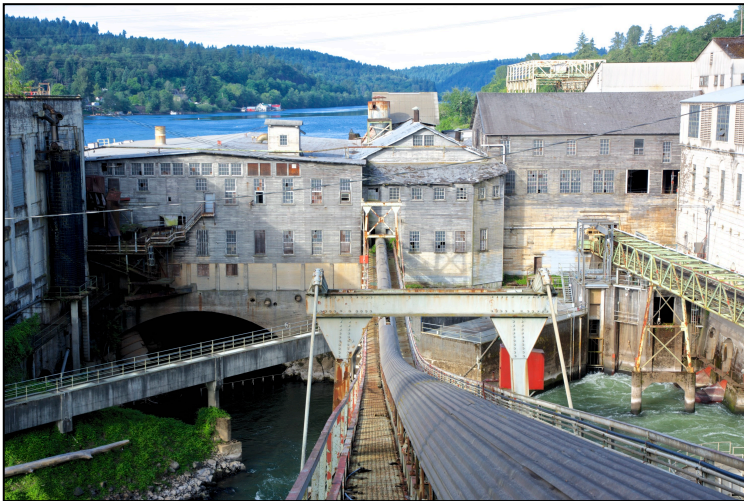
A Key to Open The Locks!

The plan's first business will be to rally Commission member organizations and government entities to renew their previously pledged fiscal support for the Commission. Informal survey of meeting attendees showed strong loyalty to the pledges of support received in 2020. This support is needed to hire an Authority Director in the period before the locks can reopen and generate its own revenue.

The appointment process has extremely tight timelines. The Governor must appoint the members of the new Authority in December for graduated terms of up to four years that begin in January. Suggestions were solicited by Oregon Solutions staff to be fed into a subgroup tasked with brainstorming potential candidates. It will bring a slate of recommendations to the October 27th meeting for discussion and approval of final nominations. During the new public corporation's first six months, the Commission will provide support and assistance as the Authority organizes as an independent entity. The Commission then sunsets at the end of June 2022



Sandy Carter is a long-time WFHF Board member and is the Co-Vice Chair of the Willamette Falls Locks State Commission.



Mill A's central section

This view shows the wooden, mid-section of Mill A. The various roof sections that cover these wood buildings are the ones that are failing.

The center of the photo shows the old conveyor that supplied hog fuel to the steam plant. Grinder Room 2 is to the left, the drum debunkers are at the base of the conveyor; the sawmill portion is to the right and next to the Sullivan plant.

Mill A's Future Discussed

The WFHF was contacted by PGE in October for feedback on the future of Willamette Falls Paper Co.'s historic Mill A. The central portions of the building are suffering catastrophic roof failure above the drum debarking machine and portions of the mezzanine area above the grinding room.

PGE has now completed its structural engineering study of the building and will move to deconstruct and decontaminate areas that contain lead paint and asbestos. The company must remediate safety and environmental issues as well as the structural hazards.

A public process needs to take place when historic properties will be changed or demolished. Three virtual workshops are planned so that interested heritage organizations can review mitigation strategies and priorities for potential preservation actions. The workshops will discuss how the stories and artifacts of Mill A might be preserved and shared with the community under Section 106 of the National Historical Preservation Act.

Sandy Carter, Jody Carson and Dan Butler participated in the first of these workshops on October 19th.

This issue was printed on **Willamette Falls Paper Company's** revolutionary *new* paper called **reHarvest**. The company generously donated this product which is manufactured right here at the West Linn mill. The Foundation is committed to promoting their locally-produced and environmentally sustainable paper.

Heritage Community Loses a Dedicated Leader

By Jim Mattis

The Heritage Community lost one of its most vigorous and creative advocates when **Siobhan Taylor**, the longtime executive director of the Willamette Falls & Landings Heritage Area (WFLHA) Coalition died this summer after a battle with brain cancer.

Siobhan’s indomitable spirit, among other things, led to championing the restoration of West Linn’s Historic City Hall — a project the city is now moving forward with, thanks to her stewardship. The restored facility, again due to Siobhan’s leadership, will be the venue for a regional Multicultural Center to be created and managed by the Coalition.

As the Coalition’s longest serving Executive Director, Siobhan helped expand the organization’s network of partners, worked to have the 56 river miles of the Willamette Falls and Landings area designated as a national heritage area, created the coalition’s “Heritage Talks” program and several other initiatives that has resulted in the Coalition acting like it already has the designation.

As **Jon George**, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Tribal Council Secretary and Coalition Board member wrote: *“Cancer took you from this world, but your memory will live on through all the lives you have touched.”*

Siobhan’s family set up the WFLHA Siobhan Loughran Taylor Building Fund designated to advance the restoration and vision for reuse of West Linn’s Historic City Hall.

Her husband, **David Taylor**, continues to serve as Treasurer on the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation Board.



Siobhan Taylor
(photo courtesy of West Linn Tidings obit)

Opportunity, Priority, Focus, Perseverance

Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation has championed awareness and preservation of our economic heritage at The Falls for well over twenty years. Our vision stressed the importance of this history and the need to protect the future of our past. It has yielded real results through leadership and collaboration with stakeholders at The Falls. This leadership stimulated City, County, State and Federal government as well as regional industry, property owners and the public to prioritize historic resources for the beneficial use and sharing this rich history for generations to come.

Preserving the functional use of the locks continues to move forward with the Oregon Legislature and Governor passing legislation to establish a Locks Authority. The Governor will seat the Authority in the next several months, which will enable the jurisdictional transfer of the locks and to fund essential repairs. The Authority will then oversee an operational management of the locks.

WFHF continues to actively participate in preserving the locks through our role on the Locks Commission. The locks success is a direct result of WFHF identifying the opportunity, making it a priority, and then working with focus and perseverance to manage the protection of this treasure.

WFHF is also working on other similar key interests, including historic West Linn City Hall. We appreciate your generosity and support that allow these efforts to continue.

Please donate to help us save the future of our past!
Thank you, Troy Bowers



Troy Bowers,
President WFHF



Willamette Falls Locks, 1880 (photos courtesy of the Clackamas County Historical Society)

Did you know...?

You Can Reduce your Taxes *and* Help Support WFHF!

The Cultural Trust Tax Credit is a unique way to fund cultural activities in the state into perpetuity. Oregonians who pay state income tax will get the credit back – dollar for dollar – on their tax return. It costs you nothing! A tax credit reduces what you owe the State of Oregon. It's a much greater savings than a deduction, which only reduces the income on which you are taxed.

For example, if it appears you owe \$200 in Oregon taxes but you made a \$100 contribution to the Cultural Trust by Dec. 31 of that tax year, your final tax bill will only be \$100.

To qualify, you need to first make a donation to one or more of the 1400+ groups on their website. Then make a matching gift to the **Oregon Cultural Trust** at culturaltrust.org or mail to: 775 Summer St. NE, Suite 200, Salem, OR 97301.



**The Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation
depends on the support of people like you to
drive our mission!**

**Help WFHF Keep History Alive:
Donate Now!**

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