



# Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation

Winter Newsletter

November 2014

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## Lock Fest 2014 -- September 13

*Corps of Engineers staff were on hand to help explain to visitors the way the locks gates operate.*

### President's Message:

Throughout 2014, the Foundation continued its work to keep the closed Willamette Falls Locks in the public eye by: holding Lock Fest; fundraising and guiding development of a Locks Economic Potential Report; participating in discussions with the Corps of Engineers on mitigating the negative impacts the closure have had on the historical status of the Locks; and partnering with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, which has contracted with Darlene Hooley and Lisa Naito to champion repair and reopening of the Locks. **See the various stories on all of these efforts throughout this newsletter.**

Working with the City of West Linn, the Foundation has undertaken to restart the Grindstones Project, which involves assembling construction funding for "The Grindstones", the City of West Linn's first "Percent for Art" project. The Grindstones sculpture will incorporate three historic mill grindstones given to the City by the West Linn Paper Mill. It will tell the century-old story of how

paper mills turned trees from Northwest forests into paper products, a signature industry of the Willamette Falls area. The Grindstones will be installed at the Willamette River Greenway trailhead located in West Linn's Willamette Park.

Additionally, four Board members have participated in the city's advisory committee to develop concept plans incorporating our heritage sites in the Arch Bridge area. Three Board members are also members of the Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition and work there to obtain National and State Heritage Area designations for the Falls area.

The Foundation will continue with these and other projects that advance the mission of the Foundation: "Preserving and sharing the stories of human enterprise and the power of the great falls of the Willamette River". The Foundation's Board is a working Board as well as a policy setting board. We have no employees (one contracted administrative support person helps us for 10 hours a month).

The Foundation needs financial support from persons who appreciate the need to guard, preserve, educate and celebrate the rich industrial heritage of the Falls area. Your contributions enable our work as a nonprofit organization. We welcome your continued support and thank you very much. Anyone interested in any of our projects can join in implementing them. You do not have to be a Board member or attend board meetings to help. Let me know of any interest you may have ([mattisj@comcast.net](mailto:mattisj@comcast.net)) and see our new web site ([www.willamettefalls.org](http://www.willamettefalls.org)) for our current and past activities. We are excited about the Foundation's future and about being a part of the mix of private and public organizations educating people on the falls area's heritage and working to make it a place where both locals and visitors may recreate on its trails and waters, support its economic development, and preserve and appreciate its historic structures. *Jim Mattis, President*

## **2014 in review:**

**September's Lock Fest** attracted over a thousand visitors to a closed locks on an uncomfortably hot day, as the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation continued its tradition of a heritage festival to celebrate, educate and advocate for West Linn's historic Locks.

To those of you who joined us, thank you for attending, visiting the Locks Museum and witnessing our joint celebrations of the 141 years of Locks history and the 125th anniversaries of the T.W. Sullivan Hydropower Plant and the West Linn Paper mill. Congratulations to Eileen H., winner of the 4-person kayak trip awarded by the National Trust for Historic Preservation [the Trust]'s *Unlock the Locks* booth and ENRg Kayaking.

But Lock Fest was only the most visible sign of the continuing work being carried by the Foundation. We continue to rally public support for repairing and reopening the Lock and navigation canal at Willamette Falls, so that they can resume serving the many Willamette River communities waiting to use the locks again to bypass the falls for commerce, tourism and recreation.

## **Adverse Effects and Mitigation**

As announced in our Summer edition, the Foundation—partnered with the Trust—is making great strides in pushing the Locks onto the front burner with the Portland District of the Corps of Engineers [USACE], the canal's owner since 1915.

Thanks to our combined advocacy, this year the USACE belatedly launched a Section 106 Review, under the National Historic Preservation Act. Federal law requires any federal agency that

owns a property on (or eligible for) the National Register of Historic Places and that intends to take an action that might affect the historic value of that property, to conduct a 106 review. In the Locks' case, that is happening after the fact of the Locks' closure in the winter of 2011.

The 2014 review found that "adverse effects"—both to the physical structures of the locks and to their traditional navigation functions—had indeed been caused by the closure. The USACE is now moving to the next phase: the negotiation of commensurate mitigation of those effects. The first meeting to debate and deliberate mitigation strategies will be December 2, in West Linn, and the message from participating stakeholders to the USACE is clear: Repair and reopen. If you are a stakeholder with interest in participating in Sec106 and NEPA reviews, please contact Trust partner Peggy Sigler at [psigler@savingplaces.org](mailto:psigler@savingplaces.org).

[Note: In October, Louis Landre, Locks Project Manager for USACE, presented a well-received history of the Locks at Museum of the Oregon Territory. Look for him to repeat this presentation at the Wilsonville Library in the near future.]

### **Locks Economic Potential Report and New Champions Onboard—**

On a separate but equally important track, since September--when ECONorthwest completed a Locks Economic Potential Report for the Foundation--Sandy Carter and Trust partner Peggy Sigler have been going back to supporters who funded the study, thanking them and presenting the Report. They have appeared before the Oregon City Commission, the West Linn City Council, the Wilsonville City Council, and Metro Council, and are scheduled to deliver their thanks and summaries of the findings to the Clackamas County Board of Commissioners and the Tourism Development Council in coming weeks. And sitting in the audience at each of the presentations have been former Congresswoman Darlene Hooley and Lisa Naito, who have been hired by the Trust as lobbyists for the Locks. Hooley & Naito, since Rep. Hooley's retirement, have formed a political consulting firm that has notable access to decision-makers in Oregon. The two are knocking on likely doors with the report, in a push to take the reopening of the locks to the next level and identify a future owner and/or operating partnership. They have met with State Senator Richard Devlin, who has agreed to carry a bill to the Legislature in January establishing a legislative task force to work on finding new stewards and a future operating model for the canal and locks. They are also meeting with City Councils and Commissions up and down the river, County Commissioners and Metro Councilors, to get every jurisdiction that supports the reopening of the locks to say so in an official Resolution. That stack of resolutions will be presented to our Congressional Delegation and to USACE leadership.

The Trust has begun fundraising to extend Hooley & Naito's work beyond the initial six months to ensure that stable plans for the future of the Locks are in place

Here's some sample language from one of the draft Resolutions:

WHEREAS, in November 2011, the Willamette Falls Locks were placed into "non-operational" status and on short notice were closed to vessel passage based upon an engineering assessment that identified safety concerns of potential failure; and

WHEREAS, closure has placed a severe hardship on commercial, recreational, and tribal river users; and

WHEREAS, in March 2012, the National Trust for Historic Preservation declared the Willamette Falls Locks as one of the most threatened National Treasures, thereby providing added technical assistance; and

WHEREAS, in September 2014, ECONorthwest, under contract with the Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation, published the "Willamette Locks Economic Potential Report," providing information on potential operating costs and community benefits of reopening the Locks; and

WHEREAS, the Locks are a primary historic asset under applications being prepared for designation of the area at the Willamette Falls as State and National Heritage Areas; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED

1. The [insert government name] urges the Corps of Engineers to expedite the needed rehabilitation of the Willamette Falls Locks and reopen the Locks to general public commercial, recreational and cultural marine traffic.
2. The [insert government name] supports creation of a State Task Force to work with the Corps of Engineers to develop a plan for sustainable operations of the Willamette Falls Locks...



Peggy Sigler, Darlene Hooley, and Lisa Naito, at November Wilsonville City Council Meeting

**Urgent Space Needs**---The Foundation is still looking for office space. If you know of any possibilities, please let Jim Mattis know [mattisj@comcast.net](mailto:mattisj@comcast.net)

**WFHF has been on the Oregon Cultural Trust nonprofit listing since 2003. Go for the Credit!**

**WHO WE ARE**

We are partners, stewards and advocates of the culture and heritage at Willamette Falls. Our mission is: To preserve and promote awareness of the magnificence and history at Willamette Falls so that it will live in the minds and imaginations of people of all ages.

- Please send me your newsletter via  regular mail  email  Please notify me of regular meetings, the same way
- Please let me know about volunteer opportunities  Please contact me about a meeting, presentation or tour
- I would like to make a tax-deductible contribution:
- Up to \$50 Friend  \$50 to \$99 Supporter  \$100 to \$499 Benefactor  \$500 to \$999 Silver Partner
- \$1,000 to \$4,999 Gold Partner  \$5,000 and up Legacy Sponsor  \$\_\_\_\_\_ Corporate Sponsor
- I would prefer to be a Monthly Sustaining Donor at the \$\_\_\_\_\_ level.

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*Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation is a 501(C)(3) nonprofit Oregon corporation established for educational purposes and heritage preservation.*

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