

Advocates for Willamette Falls Heritage (formerly Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation)

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

Summer Newsletter — 2023

In case you didn't notice...

We have a new name!

Yes, it's true! We're still the same organization, just a 'rebranding' of sorts. For the story behind this name change, please read the President's column on page 3.

Mill A Demolition Begins

It is one of the most historic and complex structures on Moore's Island. Unused for over 20 years, PGE couldn't justify maintaining Crown Zellerbach's old sawmill and the adjoining structures so the process of dismantling it is now underway.

While some of the mill's asbestos abatement, siding and roof removal could be completed from shoreside, other buildings closer to The Falls are harder to access. The brick sections of the old hog fuel storage room and the wooden structures over the central shop, the debarkers and #2 grinder room are being removed via a barge-mounted crane. Fortunately, selected pieces of machinery and other artifacts within these areas have been set aside.



With failing roofs and dilapidated wood, it's easy to see why certain portions of Mill A have to be removed.



This crane barge is anchored in the forebay above of Mill A. Scrapped and salvaged items are barged upstream for off-loading shoreside.

According to PGE's Cultural Resources Lead **Kenny Gunn**, “The smaller Mill A artifacts have been already moved off the island and are being stored safely for future interpretation. Larger equipment such as grinders and other items will need to be offloaded using the crane and barge once we get further along and identify the best method for removing them.”

The WFHF has been closely involved with PGE in determining which equipment should be saved for future display.

This entire process of demolition and salvage is outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Oregon State Historical Preservation Officer.

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The MOA stipulates specific measures be carried out to document this project and retain site artifacts, as indicated with the following excerpts:

**PGE would develop and submit Oregon State Level Documentation on the history and significance of the Mill A complex, documenting the role of the mill in the papermaking process at West Linn, including narrative, mapping, current and historic images and other material, for submittal to Oregon SHPO standards.*

**PGE would fund and develop on-site interpretation at Willamette Park, just upstream from Mill A, to document the history of the mill and its role in the papermaking process.*

**PGE would commission third-party development of a high-resolution digital 3D model to document existing conditions at the Mill A complex. This would combine data from aerial drone, exterior and interior scans, creating a detailed, accurate and durable digital record of the resource. The 3D model would support virtual tours and modeling for both project planning and future interpretation.*

Kenny Gunn indicated that PGE will be completing this project over the next five years.

He states that, "PGE has already completed the state level documentation, 3D digital modeling, and the time lapse cameras are installed and capturing progress, which will be shared at a later date once the project is complete and the images are processed."

We will continue to provide updates and photos of this interesting albeit, sad, operation as Mill A and the south end of Moores Island is slowly transformed.

On a more positive note, Willamette Falls Paper Co. continues to produce high-quality paper products on the north end of the island!



With the sawmill's roof and siding removed, its metal skeleton has been exposed. This relatively 'new' section was built when the sawmill was modernized in 1952. Imagine all the logs that were processed in this building!



(above)

Looking upstream through the long-abandoned saws from the now open-air mill.

(left)

A last look at Mill A's employee locker room. With windows removed, a decaying floor and a failing roof, this room's days are numbered. If only those old lockers could talk...

two photos by Peter Schwartz

What's In a Name?

Quite a bit, as it turns out!

Willamette Falls Heritage Foundation is now the **Advocates of Willamette Falls Heritage!** We've updated our name to better reflect what we've been so successful at over the past decades and to alleviate the name confusion with other, newer organizations with Willamette Falls in their name. But we're still the same fine group of dedicated individuals working to promote and preserve the history of The Falls.

The strength of our organization has been, and continues to be, the persistent advocacy for preserving and celebrating the heritage at Willamette Falls. Our accomplishments include saving the Locks, preserving historic City Hall, the Grind Stone art installation, collecting and preserving mill and hydropower history, and our current project to save and display the local tugboat Lady B.

We've also modified our mission statement to better state our purpose:

"Preserving and sharing the stories of human enterprise and the power of the great Falls of the Willamette River."

The Advocates for Willamette Falls Heritage thanks you for your continued encouragement and support.

Troy Bowers
President AWFH



August Willamette Falls Canal Update

Summer has seen the appointment of two new members to the Willamette Falls Locks Authority: Oregon City Mayor **Denyse McGriff** and West Linn City Council President **Mary Baumgardner**. The appointments by Governor Kotek filled vacancies and leave only one additional unfilled seat on the eleven-member Authority, which is a State-created Public Corporation dedicated to the reopening, stewardship and future operations of the West Linn canal and Locks. Recruitment continues for the right person to bring strong maritime interests and experience to the group. Qualified individuals may apply at any time through the State Boards and Commissions webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/osbeels/theboard/pages/apply-for-board-membership.aspx>

Authority Chair and Metro Councilor **Christine Lewis** also announced the selection of **Reed Wagner** as the group's first paid Executive Director. Wagner has moved back to the Portland region and will initially be working halftime with the Authority. (For a look at some of Reed's recent skills and experience that qualified him for the Locks project, watch this youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9gLkVSqSEd4> .)

At the Locks, the Portland District Corps of Engineers was slated to begin construction upgrades and seismic refitting to the upper reach of the canal alongside the Guard Lock, the decommissioned Mill A and the historic T.W. Sullivan Hydropower operations. Work is predicted to be complete by the end of the year.

Sandy Carter
Willamette Falls Locks Authority Secretary/Treasurer
Advocates for Willamette Falls Heritage Board member

LADY B: *The Search for a Home Continues*

UPDATE!

Advocates for Willamette Falls Heritage project leader **Jim Edwards** and his team continues to pursue various options to save the LADY B from the scrapper's torch as the summer deadline to locate a home looms.

As of now, discussions are pointing toward securing a temporary storage location, even with the challenges and costs of having to move the boat twice.

We are encouraged by the enthusiastic public outreach we received from Restore Oregon. Additionally, when an agreement is reached for the rescue and movement of the boat to safe storage, we have the tentative financial support of the Kinsman Family Foundation.

In the meantime, the clock is winding down — but our hope is up! It is our great desire to have some fantastic news to include in our next issue!



The LADY B waits patiently along the banks of the Willamette in Wilsonville as talks continue to find her a new home.



Western Transportation's tug WESTERN METEOR works a paper barge below the locks. — Sept 1988



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

Help AWFH Keep History Alive:
Donate Now!

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