



Travis Williams

Willamette Riverkeeper and executive director

I dream of a vibrant and healthy Willamette River system. Let us find our way to a naturally functioning floodplain from south to north. Let us continue to increase public lands along the river, hearkening back to the original intent of the Willamette Greenway Program (hatched in Eugene!).

Let us protect and enhance our cold, clear waters that feed the river system, and let us successfully grapple with our history of contamination, and be wise enough to deal with the array of emerging contaminants that can impact the health of both people and wildlife — such as flame retardants.

I can only hope that people will continue to connect with the Willamette and other local rivers in greater numbers, and realize the beauty and wildlife that can be experienced. May they come to know names like Sam Daws Landing, Camas Swale, Tripp Island, Buckskin Mary, Norwood Island and many more. Every middle school student in our area should spend at least one night on a river trip on the Willamette, connecting science curriculum to the Wild Willamette.

Let us reduce the impact of our infrastructure, enabling native fish to pass upstream and down in far greater numbers. This means we must create better fish passage at the U.S. Army Corps dams on the McKenzie, Middle Fork, North and South Santiam, and other tributaries. At some point in time, perhaps we can consider the useful lifespan of some dams and remove them when they have served their purpose.

Let us clean up the 10-mile Superfund site in Portland, nearly 170 river miles from Eugene and Springfield. Every migratory fish that leaves the southern Willamette Valley has to pass through that area, which today holds pollutants such as PCBs, heavy metals, the breakdown products of DDT and more.

This river is there for all of us. Many people have worked hard over the decades to protect its water quality

and to restore its habitat. We have a chance in the next 20 years to take a final leap forward for the river that will result in huge gains for healthy habitat, clean water and our connection to the river.



Kevin Matthews

Community advocate

I dream of the Willamette River Headwaters, the great sweep of rugged watershed valleys across East Lane County, from the Mohawk and McKenzie to the Middle Fork, South Fork and around to the Long Tom, rising along the Cascade ridge and tumbling down to Willamette Valley bottomland, recognized as the precious, connected and productive biogeographical province that it is.

Once again the headwater creeks will teem with wild salmon, spawning in the shadows of grandmother trees, as our forestry and farming become clean and gentle enough to coexist robustly with the natural bounty of this Oregon.

East Lane County will be celebrated, visited and cared for passionately, with people of all sorts renewed in the spirit and beauty of our great outdoors, among ancient woods renewed in the vital work of rebalancing our atmosphere.

Doug Quirke

Director, Oregon Clean Water Action Project; Environmental & Natural Resources Program research associate, UO School of Law

When the Clean Water Act became law in 1972, it provided for a “temporary” permitting system for point source discharges of pollution, and included a goal of eliminating all discharges of pollution to waters by 1985. Today, we have close to 1,000 permitted discharges between the upper reaches of the Willamette Basin and the Portland area (i.e., not even including the Portland area).

My dream for our rivers is that the government agencies that are supposed to serve as trustees for our waters will make that 1985 goal a real part of the conversation in fulfilling their fiduciary duties to present and future

generations. We also need to do a much better job of providing for those in our community who have the least, many of whom end up in camps on the banks of our rivers.

Last (but certainly not least), we need to get a handle on climate change. Anything we do in the way of protecting our rivers (or forests, or endangered species, etc.) will very likely be futile over the long term as a result of climate change. Here in Eugene, the vast majority of our electricity comes from non-greenhouse gas emitting sources (not that we all couldn’t stand to reduce our electricity consumption), and most of our carbon footprint comes from goods and food (58 percent) and transportation (31 percent). Are you really being the change you wish to see in the world when you’re flying somewhere for a vacation (flying has a carbon footprint similar to driving a Hummer), or buying the latest iThing? Even a Prius is doing the same thing as a non-hybrid, albeit at a slower rate: converting each and every 6.3-pound gallon of gas into 20 pounds of CO₂.



Randall Bonner

Coastal Conservation Association member, angler and outdoor writer

Personally, I think it would be great to develop more local fishing opportunity. Our only stocked trout pond, E.E. Wilson, is within view of the dump and an already awful place to fish that now requires a parking pass from Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife to access a half-mile-long trail to the water. There’s not an abundance of game species on the Mary’s River, and in spite of the successes from watershed council projects seeing new returns from salmonids, the Calapooia is over-run with pikeminnow and undersized smallmouth bass that consume everything in their path. The Luckiamute rivers are bait restricted, and none of these waters have hatchery-supported harvest programs to provide fishing opportunity. If it’s possible to bring Coho back to Crystal Springs Creek in Westmoreland Park in Portland, dreams of fisheries closer to town aren’t so far fetched. ■



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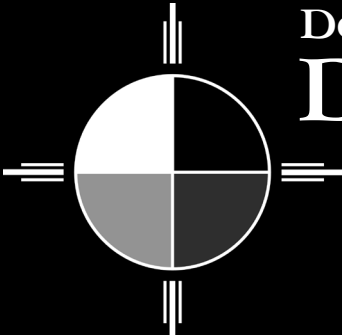
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