

# CORE VALUES for RE-IMAGINING WILLAMETTE FALLS

Willamette Falls is one of the nation's most beautiful and historic natural wonders. The largest waterfall in the Pacific Northwest, Willamette Falls was long an important cultural and gathering place for Native American Tribes. Lewis and Clark made many references to the "Falls of the Multnomah" and the tribe that lived there.

The Falls sit at the end of the Oregon Trail, and throughout the late 1800s this was the heart of a thriving frontier city. This became the site of energy generation for Oregon's early industries, including the state's first paper mill and the world's first long distance electrical power transmission line from the Falls to Portland.

The Blue Heron Paper Company, which closed its doors in 2011, was the last in a succession of businesses that contributed to a strong working waterfront in Oregon City. The 23 acres formerly occupied by the mill are for sale, with purchasers interested in the site.

Oregonians now have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to re-imagine Willamette Falls and its surroundings as master planning for the Blue Heron site gets underway. You can help define how this area is transformed for economic redevelopment, public access, healthy habitat, and historical and cultural interpretation.

A successful master plan will rezone the site and will reduce and remove barriers for redevelopment. Finding the right balance between certainty and flexibility for the public and a future owner will be driving goals for the framework plan. Early catalyst projects will be critical to maintaining momentum for the site's eventual transformation.

Project partners have identified four interrelated core values that will help guide the vision and redevelopment of the site.



### Public Access

Ensure access to the Falls and places for people to gather



### Economic Redevelopment

Provide jobs and prosperity



### Healthy Habitat

Maintain, restore and protect the unique ecosystem of fish, wildlife and plants along the river



### Historic & Cultural Interpretation

Provide opportunities to connect to history as well as current cultural practices related to the Falls

## PROJECT PARTNERS

The State of Oregon, Metro, Clackamas County, Oregon City, and the Trustee (and/or Buyer) of the Blue Heron site.



[www.rediscoverthefalls.org](http://www.rediscoverthefalls.org)



# Historic & Cultural Interpretation

July 2013



# Key Facts

## Native Americans have gathered at the Falls for generations

Numerous tribes have historic ties to the falls. The site is Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde ceded lands and redevelopment will need to consider usual and accustomed access for the tribes. The annual lamprey harvest is a significant ceremonial ritual for many tribes. Petroglyphs on the site are a testament to the importance this location played in centuries of cultural history.

## Historic uses

The property has been occupied by industrial uses since 1829 including a lumber mill, a flour mill, a woolen mill, a brick operation and a long history of paper milling.

## Opportunities to reuse historic structures

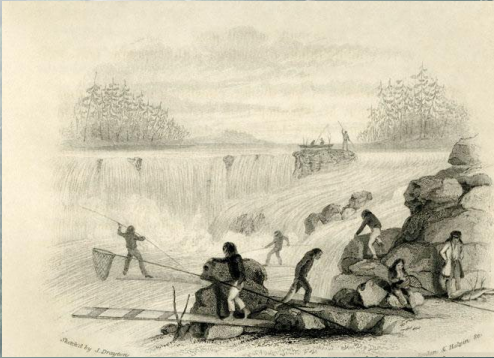
Over 600,000 square feet of vacant industrial space cover the site in 57 buildings that are in varying states of condition. The site and many of its buildings have been determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Significant costs would be incurred to bring buildings up to current code requirements but there are funding sources available for historic buildings.

## Layers of interest

Boilers salvaged from WW2 battleships were used in the mill and remain on site. Historic iron waterwheels and remnant foundations could be highlighted in future redevelopment.

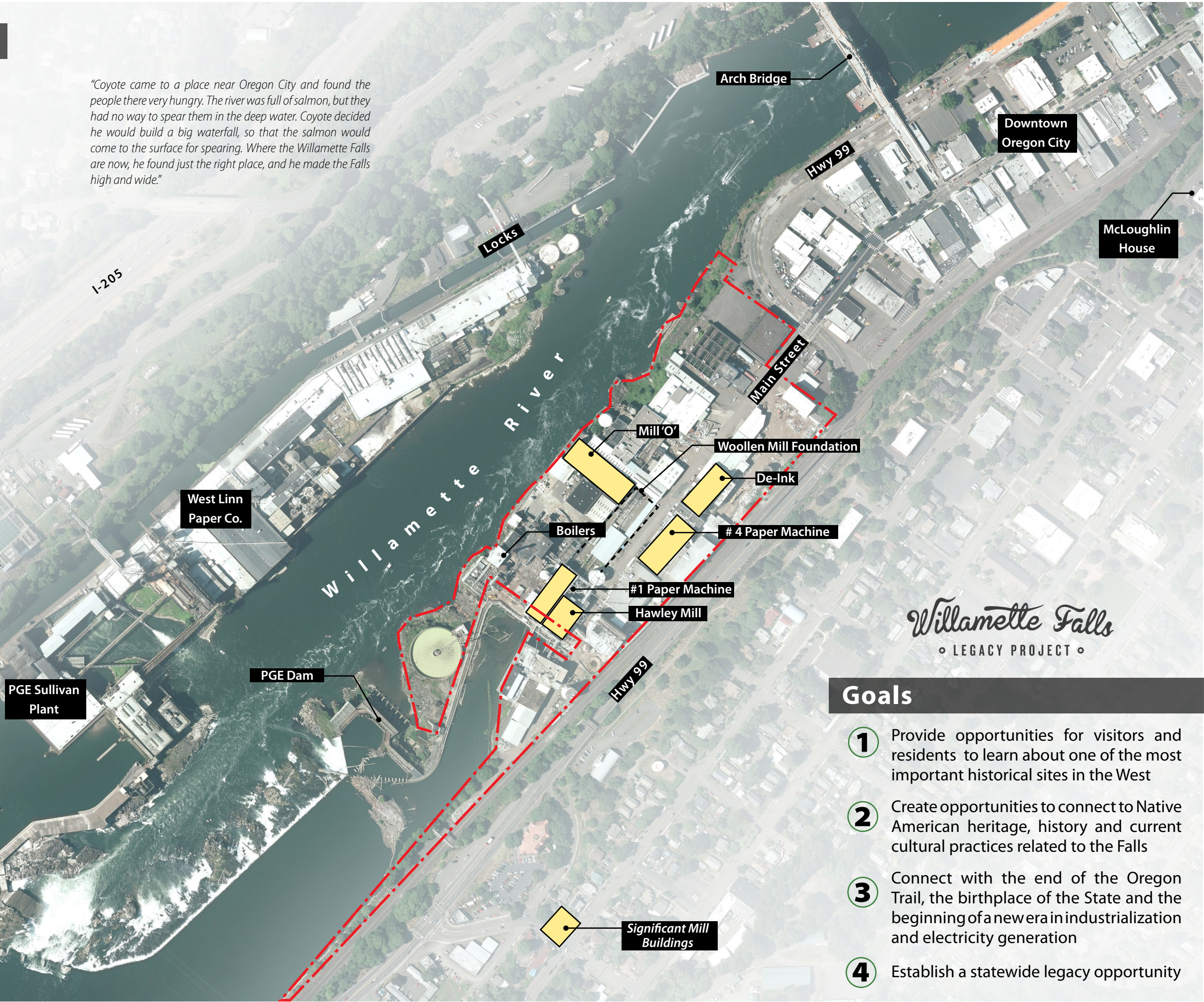
## Salvage

Much of the paper-making machinery and related infrastructure on the mill site has been removed as part of a salvage contract.



Fishing at the Falls, 1887

"Coyote came to a place near Oregon City and found the people there very hungry. The river was full of salmon, but they had no way to spear them in the deep water. Coyote decided he would build a big waterfall, so that the salmon would come to the surface for spearing. Where the Willamette Falls are now, he found just the right place, and he made the Falls high and wide."



# Goals

- 1 Provide opportunities for visitors and residents to learn about one of the most important historical sites in the West
- 2 Create opportunities to connect to Native American heritage, history and current cultural practices related to the Falls
- 3 Connect with the end of the Oregon Trail, the birthplace of the State and the beginning of a new era in industrialization and electricity generation
- 4 Establish a statewide legacy opportunity