

PORTLAND HARBOR

Natural Resource Trustee Council



Why Restore Portland Harbor?



A Historical Perspective

For at least 10,000 years, the lower Willamette River has been central to the lives, traditions, and economies of the people who live here. The river provides food, serves as a transportation corridor, supports a robust economic center, offers recreational opportunities, and is of cultural and spiritual value. Historically, Portland Harbor provided habitat for healthy populations of salmon, lamprey, bald eagle, mink, and many other creatures.



What We See Today

For over a century, industries and public entities have released dozens of harmful contaminants into the river. Portland Harbor was declared a Superfund site in 2000 because the levels of contamination are a threat to human and ecological health. In 2004, a fish consumption advisory was issued to warn children and women of childbearing age not to eat resident fish from Portland Harbor because they are contaminated by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and pose a risk to human health. The advisory recommends healthy women beyond childbearing age and healthy adult males consume no more than one meal per month of resident fish from Portland Harbor.

Looking Towards the Future

Restoring Portland Harbor will contribute to the long-term sustainability of Portland and the lower Willamette River. Restoration will nurture resources that are vitally important to the ecosystem, cultures, and economy that make this area such a special place to live. The Portland Harbor Natural Resource Trustee Council (Trustee Council) is working to restore natural resources in Portland Harbor so that current and future generations can fully enjoy the benefits of a healthy river ecosystem.

Did you know?

Portland was referred to as the “filthiest city in the Northern States” by *The Oregonian* in 1889, largely because we used the Willamette River as an open sewer.

These days Portland is consistently ranked as one of America’s best cities. We’ve come a long way, but there is more work to do.

How Will Portland Harbor Be Restored?

The goal of restoration is to return injured natural resources to the condition they would have been in if no contamination had occurred. Some of the things that restoration may focus on include:

Natural Resources

- Fish, like salmon and lamprey
- Mammals, like mink and river otter
- Birds, like osprey and bald eagle
- Water
- Sediment

Benefits Provided by Natural Resources

- Recreational services, like fishing and wildlife viewing
- Biological services, like flood storage and habitat
- Cultural services, uses, and values for tribal members

Restoration projects will be selected from a variety of options identified in the Trustee Council's restoration plan. Other projects may also be proposed by the Trustee Council, the public, or by the polluters who are responsible for the contamination. The Trustee Council is committed to making sure that restoration occurs in the lower Willamette River where it can provide the most benefit to the fish, wildlife, and human communities that were injured by contamination.

Those responsible for the releases of hazardous substances will pay to repair the harm they caused. Restoration projects will be overseen by the Trustee Council and will include monitoring, maintenance, and stewardship to make sure that the public is fully compensated for the injuries that occurred in Portland Harbor.

Challenges of Restoration

Restoration in the heavily developed Portland Harbor will be challenging. In addition to ecological value, each potential restoration project will also be evaluated for cost, feasibility, and other constraints which could impact its success. The Trustee Council seeks to balance effective restoration with cost-effectiveness. Although Portland Harbor is an industrialized, working waterfront, there are opportunities to restore habitat in a meaningful and cost-effective way. Through a restoration plan, environmental impact assessment, and public involvement, the Trustee Council will make sure every project is carefully examined so that the public and natural resources receive the most benefits possible.

Next Steps

The timeline for implementing projects depends on the speed of legal processes in which the Trustee Council is involved. If those responsible for contamination settle quickly, then projects can be implemented sooner. The restoration may not be fully implemented until the cleanup is complete. You can still help right now by learning about the Trustee Council's work and helping us spread the word about how important it is to restore Portland Harbor.

For more information, visit the Trustee Council's website:

www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/Contaminants/PortlandHarbor/



Did you know?

Restoration also contributes to a healthy local economy. Habitat restoration creates an average of 17 jobs for every million dollars invested. This rate of job creation is much higher than that in many industrial sectors.

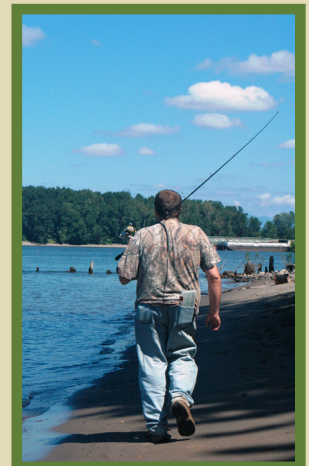


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