

Boudin, J. "Protecting and Restoring the Willamette River." Last updated 10/20/2003. Oregon Department of Environmental Quality. (Reviewed by Elizabeth Parsons)

This fact sheet, provided by the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), gives an overview of the Willamette River's history, sources, uses, problems, and current restoration efforts. According to the sheet, the Willamette valley contains important forest and farmland. People use the water of the Willamette River for industrial and agricultural purposes, for drinking water, and for recreational uses (such as fishing, sailing, and swimming). A hundred years ago, the river was used as a sewer and all-purpose dumping location. The water was too polluted for people to safely swim in or work near, let alone consume. In the 1950s waste water became subject to regulations, and since then treatment and cleanup efforts have increased. The river has recovered somewhat from its former toxic state.

However, chemicals used in agriculture, construction, and in households are still being washed into the river. Studies of fish living in the river have shown mutations and toxin levels unsafe for human consumption. Several organized efforts are underway, attempting to decrease pollution in the Willamette River. The Oregon Plan is an effort on the part of government agencies, businesses, and individuals to reduce the toxic runoff to the river. The DEQ establishes Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) of chemicals and pollutants in order to set regulations on how much of each substance is allowed to be present in the water. Cities must obey federal regulations regarding the way stormwater is directed to the river. The DEQ is currently establishing a Groundwater Management Area around the Willamette River to monitor chemical levels in the groundwater (which replenishes the river waters). Cities are also updating sewage treatment facilities. At the end of the fact sheet they provide a brief chronology of events in the historical restoration of the Willamette River.

Critique

This fact sheet is perfect for someone approaching the problem of Willamette River pollution with no prior knowledge. Although it doesn't focus on human health effects, it mentions several pertinent facts, such as the historical health effects and the present-day risks of eating Willamette River fish. It is published by a reliable source, the Department of Environmental Quality, and has links to web pages about different cleanup programs. It doesn't provide a lot of new information for someone researching health effects in depth, but it summarizes many different aspects of the river's history and condition in layman's terms.

<http://www.deq.state.or.us/wq/willamette/WRBFactSheets.htm> Accessed on 4/1/2004.

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Willamette Basin Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)

Fact Sheets and Overview Maps

- **Draft Willamette Basin TMDLs Fact Sheets**
 - [Proposed Bacteria TMDL for Willamette \(October 2004\)](#) (PDF, 34KB)
 - [Proposed Mercury TMDL for Willamette \(October 2004\)](#) (PDF, 35KB)
 - [Proposed Temperature TMDL for Willamette \(October 2004\)](#) (PDF, 88KB)
- **Draft Willamette Basin TMDLs Overview Maps**
 - [Bacteria TMDL Overview Map \(December 2004\)](#) (PDF, 574KB)
 - [Mercury TMDL Overview Map \(December 2004\)](#) (PDF, 801KB)
 - [Temperature TMDL Overview Map \(December 2004\)](#) (PDF, 938KB)

Subbasin Overview Maps:

 - [Lower Willamette](#) (PDF, 310KB)
 - [Clackamas](#) (PDF, 325KB)
 - [Middle Willamette](#) (PDF, 393KB)
 - [Upper Willamette](#) (PDF, 629KB)
 - [North and South Santiam](#) (PDF, 676KB)
 - [Coast Fork, Middle Fork, and McKenzie](#) (PDF, 426KB)
- **Other Willamette Basin TMDLs Fact Sheets**
 - [Protecting and Restoring the Willamette River](#) (PDF, 54KB)
 - [Middle Willamette River Fish Consumption Study](#) (PDF, 130KB)

(PDF) Requires [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#)

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