



With support from an Oregon Water Enhancement Board grant, McKenzie River Trust is guiding this year-long engagement process, which will include individual conversations, collaborative work sessions, large group meetings, surveys, and mapping. Key project

collaborators include Eugene Water & Electric Board, Friends of Buford Park and Mount Pisgah, Lane County Parks, Mount Pisgah Arboretum, Springfield Utility Board, and Willamalane Parks and Recreation District.

Community Engagement Process

The project team is committed to an engagement process that is:

- Meaningful: creates goals, strategies and actions crafted through a respectful, welcoming, and informative process.
- Accountable: responds to ideas, critique, comments, and praise
- Inclusive: communicates with individuals with a stake in the outcome of the process, including those who are not well represented within the decision structure
- Transparent: makes decisions public, explains the “why” behind decisions, and shares information in a timely manner
- Realistic: informs about constraints, opportunities and objectives
- Outcome-oriented: creates community-supported goals, strategies and actions

Decision Making

Properties within the larger project area are owned and managed by multiple private, public, and non-profit entities. While existing plans and regulations provide guidance for most of these areas, creating a vision for the Willamette Confluence provides an opportunity to think holistically about a large section of the river corridor.

Draft goals, strategies, actions and priorities will be developed, vetted, and revised through collaboration with community members, landowners, and project collaborators. Agreement between key collaborators on major actions is a primary goal, as implementation of shared goals will require collaboration from many entities.

The final document containing recommended goals, strategies, and actions will be produced by McKenzie River Trust and is non-binding. Individual property owners maintain their land, initiate projects, and navigate regulatory factors. The hope is that the document will provide guidance to funders, property managers, and landowners regarding future conservation, restoration, and development activities.

Equity approach

McKenzie River Trust works with the City of Eugene and Willamalane to provide limited-mobility programs to our community, and this project will continue that approach.

For Tribal partnerships, McKenzie River Trust is working directly with both Tribal governments and through the Upper Willamette Stewardship Networks Tribal Liaison to better understand the needs and interests of Indigenous communities in our area.

The project will incorporate climate change and equity as overarching considerations in our assessments and discussions. McKenzie River Trust took a similar approach in our 2020-2024 Strategic Plan, which utilized the following two assumptions as guideposts for goals and objectives: (1) Ecological systems thrive and are more resilient when species are diverse, rich, and adaptive to the dynamic processes connecting them, and (2) Human communities are vibrant and healthy when people participate in land and water stewardship and share in access to resources.

Project Collaborators

Individuals, groups, and organizations with a stake in the future of the Willamette Confluence and adjacent areas are invited to participate in the planning process:

Cascade to Coast Bird Alliance (formerly Lane Audubon)	Long Tom Watershed Council
City of Eugene Transportation, Planning and Development, and Public Works	McKenzie Watershed Council
City of Eugene Adaptive Recreation, Campbell Senior Center, and Riverhouse	Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission
City of Springfield Development and Public Works	MF Willamette Watershed Council
Coast Fork Willamette Watershed Council	Mount Pisgah Arboretum
Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians	Traditional Ecological Inquiry Program
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde	The Nature Conservancy in Oregon
Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians	Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs	Oregon Department of Forestry
Ducks Unlimited	Oregon Parks and Recreation District
Eugene 4J School District	Seavey Loop Neighbors
Eugene Water and Electric Board (EWEB)	Springfield School District
Food for Lane County Youth Farm	Springfield Utility Board (SUB)
Friends of Buford Park and Mount Pisgah	United States Geological Survey (USGS)
Lane Council of Governments	University of Oregon
Lane County Parks	Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District
Lane Independent Living Alliance	Upper Willamette Stewardship Network
	Wednesday Wheelers
	Wildish Companies
	Willamalane Parks and Recreation District

Organizations and groups that will use and/or support the Willamette Confluence area also hold a significant stake in the outcome of the project. These groups may represent walkers, hikers, cyclists, nature enthusiasts, native plant specialists, and water sports enthusiasts. The project will also invite communities who are traditionally underrepresented in conversations relating to natural areas and recreation, including people with limited mobility, communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with English as a second language, youth, and low-income community members.

Project Materials

Basic introductory materials to communicate the project goals and processes will be clear, concise, and include non-technical language. Materials will include a 1-2 page summary and project area map and a community engagement plan. Meetings will be wheelchair accessible and on request, the project will make a concentrated effort to accommodate disabilities and share the project with people who do not speak English.

Communications

Project communications will focus on timeframes when community and partner input is important to the decision process. The following methods will be used by McKenzie River Trust communications staff:

- Email updates (a paragraph in the McKenzie River Trust e-news)
- Meeting invitations (primarily email)
- Social media posts
- Dedicated page on the McKenzie River Trust website
- Traditional media press releases

Community comments and responses

McKenzie River Trust staff will collect comments via email and the website and seek to respond within five working days. Responsiveness is one of the best ways to build trust and accountability and offers a chance to acknowledge what has been said and explain more detailed information to the interested person. The project team will also draft updates to the website to respond to frequently asked questions.

Project Activities

Community and partner engagement includes the following tasks and outcomes. The timeframes listed in parentheses below are estimates, and some tasks will overlap:

1. Develop outreach plan and review background documents (Fall 2025)

The project will share the draft Community Engagement Plan with project collaborators, gather input, and adapt as needed. To prepare background materials for upcoming meetings, the project will identify and analyze existing basin and area plans, maps, contacts, and related reports.

Outcome: community engagement plan and background materials

2. Understand key issues (Fall 2025)

Individual and small group conversations will identify core issues, opportunities, and suggest new participants to invite into the process. The interview summary will identify areas of agreement, disagreement, and key uncertainties, as well as potential synergies, conflicts, or tradeoffs for the project.

Outcome: key considerations and issues

3. Host welcoming and visioning event (Winter 2026)

The project will bring together a broad range of community members and project collaborators - individuals, agencies, utilities, Tribal entities, and organizations invested in project outcomes - to provide input on a 20-year vision for the area's future. In advance of the meeting, the project will distribute a survey to gather input on key questions. This task will include the broadest outreach for the project: participants and invitees will be added to the email update list and encouraged to track the process and connect again in Task 6.

Outcome: draft vision statement

4. Conduct listening sessions by topic (Winter/Spring 2026)

Small group listening sessions will delve deeply into areas of agreement, disagreement, key uncertainties, potential synergies, conflicts, or tradeoffs. The sessions will encourage participatory mapping and address topics such as: coordinated land stewardship, habitat restoration potential, recreation and transportation infrastructure, urban expansion and water systems infrastructure, community engagement, environmental education, and additional land conservation opportunities.

Outcome: draft goals/strategies/actions

5. Conduct workshops to identify priority areas (Spring 2026)

Conduct in-depth workshops to draft implementation actions in specific areas. Participants will review and provide feedback on the draft goals/strategies/actions, develop draft geographic priorities, and problem-solve topics with conflicting views.

Outcome: draft geographic priorities

6. Share final outcomes (Late Summer/Early Fall 2026)

We will gather together a representative range of community members and collaborators to review the final goals, strategies, and actions, including a series of maps that articulate a prioritization framework for restoration, acquisition, and public access initiatives on a 5-10-year planning horizon.

The final goals/strategies/actions and priorities report will be posted on the McKenzie River Trust website and shared with collaborators, involved community members, volunteers, and supporters. This final public-facing document will articulate the shared vision for the Willamette Confluence area and the conservation priorities and actions over the next 10-20 years.

Outcome: Final vision statement, goals/strategies/actions, and geographic priorities