

Participants

Invitations were sent via email to 235 individuals, and McKenzie River Trust received 123 RSVP's to the event. **The following organizations and groups were represented at the event:**

Beyond Toxics
City of Eugene
City of Springfield
Coast Fork Watershed Council
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde
Eugene Tree Foundation
Eugene Water and Electric Board
Freshwater Trust
Friends of Buford Park
Lane County: Planning and Public Works
Long Tom Watershed Council
McKenzie River Trust: staff, volunteers
McKenzie Watershed Council
Metropolitan Wastewater Management Commission
Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council
Mount Pisgah Arboretum
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Oregon Department of Forestry
Oregon Parks and Recreation Department
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Southern Willamette Prescribed Burn Association
Springfield Public Schools
Springfield Utility Board
The Nature Conservancy
University of Oregon
Upper Willamette Soil and Water Conservation District
US Army Corps of Engineers
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Wednesday Wheelers
Wildish Construction
Willamalane Park and Recreation District
Willamette Ignitions Network

Wednesday, January 28th
4pm-7pm (drop-in) at the LCC Longhouse

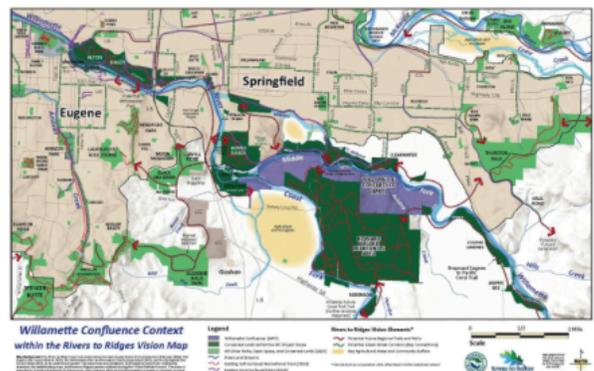
Please join McKenzie River Trust and partners for an evening of community collaboration as we come together to envision a vibrant future for the Willamette Confluence area and surrounding lands.

This drop-in event will orient you to the Willamette Confluence area and guide you through family-friendly activity stations where you can share your ideas as we come together to explore what it means to live alongside our rivers and how we can turn our values into action over the years ahead.

Staff members will be present throughout the event to offer guidance and share information about the broader engagement project, objectives, and ways you can learn more. **Light refreshments will be provided, and youth are welcome to join adults or create at an art station. This is a special invitation event. Please RSVP to help us plan for food and drinks.**

RSVP

Confluence: a coming or flowing together, meeting, or gathering at one point.



Engagement Process



The event was an open house, with a welcome table, food and drink, a children’s art activity, an orientation to the Willamette Confluence table, an interactive “challenges and opportunities” mapping activity, and a visioning board activity.

After people walked in and visited the snack table, they sat down to eat, socialize, and, surprisingly, many engaged in the children’s art activity.



[View all artwork →](#) [Kids Activity.png](#)



Mapping Outcomes

View all maps and comments provided by participants → [Maps with comments](#)

Participants were prompted to study both a regional map and a property-specific aerial map and “share opportunities and challenges.”



Topics highlighted in the fall interviews with key organizations were listed on the wall as conversation talking points, including:

Habitat diversity and restoration

- Riparian/waterways
- Oak savanna/upland prairie
- Mixed coniferous forest

Public access

- Restricted by easements
- Managing access for safety
- Opportunities for mobility
- **Getting there:** arriving by vehicle, transit, bike, or walking

Cultural practices:

- Opportunities for restoration, ceremony, and celebration

Water resources: drinking water, managing floods/filtration

People pressures:

- Most visited park in Lane County
- Unique features: geological/water/views

Many managers:

- Multiple organizations
- Sharing resources, equipment, and staffing

Fires and floods:

- Climate change and increasing disasters
- Reducing dangers, improving water quality

- Floodplain, flooding
- Wildlife corridors
- Artificial wildlife structures, additional “rough logs, brush piles, logjams.”
- Concern regarding outcomes, for example, “what will happen with fill?”
- Protect key **species**: turtles, beavers, steelhead
- Explore **land swap** with OPRD
- **Invasive species** control along the Springfield riverbank: Yellow Flag Iris
- **Fish** hatchery or rearing ponds, stream access for salmon and steelhead
- Desire for more **public access**:
 - ADA Fishing opportunities
 - Access from water to shore (both at/near the Willamette Confluence and from Springfield)
 - Paddle/drive-in primitive camp
 - Difficult to manage limited access
 - Continue to focus on underserved communities
 - Wildlife viewing platform



Vision Board Outcomes

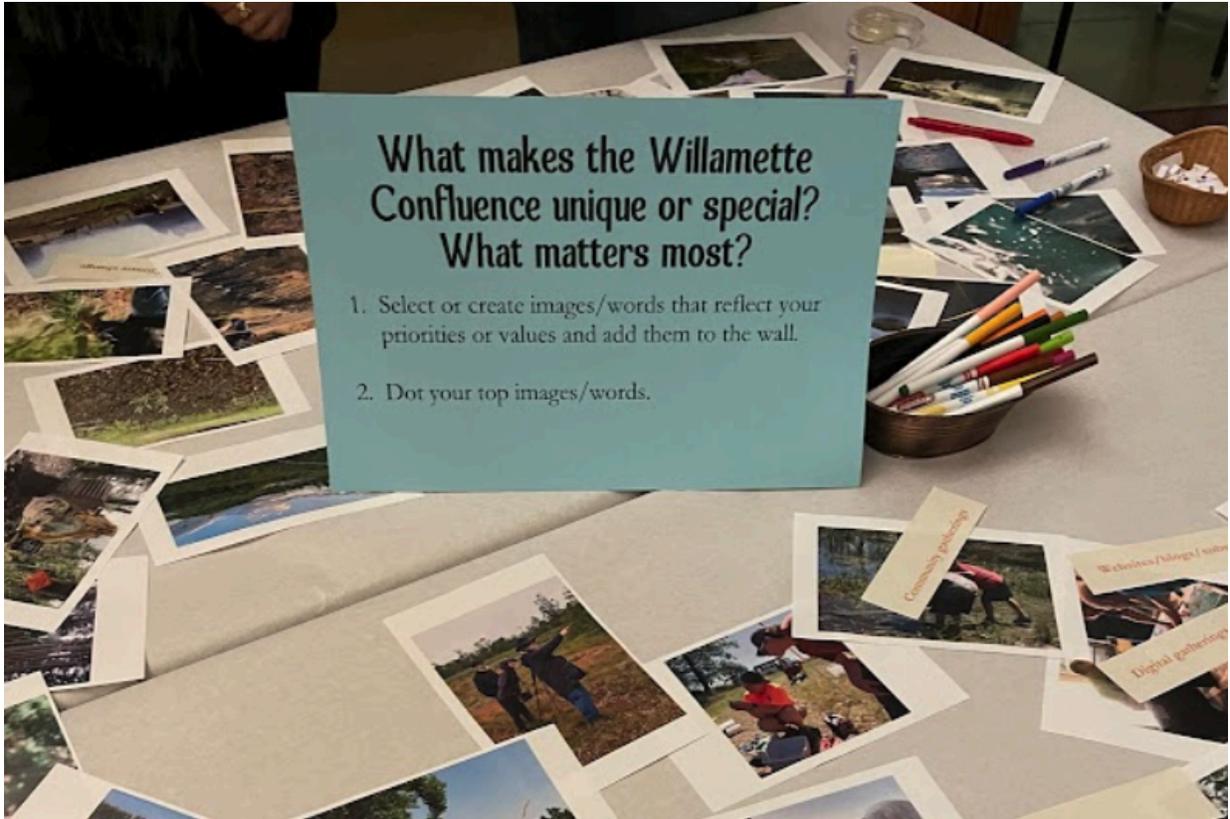
View detailed photos of the vision board → [Vision Meeting Outcomes](#)

Participants were given the prompt: *"Vision the future, what we hope for, value or want to move forward. Represents intentions, feelings, priorities, and possibilities."* The intention of the activity was to capture shared language and visual representations that surface shared values across diverse participants.



Participants chose words and images from the table to populate the vision board during the three-hour event. Two staff members provided guidance to help people understand the activity and engage with the board. Some people choose to write or draw images. In addition to populating the wall with words and images, participants were asked to dot their top items on the board - "equity and access" and "indigenous knowledge" received the most dots, followed closely by the words "fire" and "elevating tribal sovereignty."

See Appendix A on Page 10 for considerations related to word choices, the priority dot exercise, and patterns of distribution.



Key Event Takeaways

View all → [Vision Meeting Outcomes](#)

- **Equity and access** to and within the Willamette Confluence property were a major focus for many participants.
- **Collaboration with Indigenous communities** and Tribal Governments is essential.
- **Experiencing the outdoors** and caring for land and water were widely agreed to be important values.
- **Habitat** recommendations are detailed and well understood.

Next Steps

The thoughts, ideas, and priorities shared during the visioning event and in the public online survey will be used to craft a draft vision statement and goals. Engagement will result in a shared vision and supportive goals, strategies, and actions to guide land stewardship, habitat restoration, conservation, education, and infrastructure investments in the Willamette Confluence area, as well as nearby parks and undeveloped areas along the river.

APPENDIX A: Visioning considerations, text, and priorities

Participants added text to the vision board by either choosing printed words or writing words on blank sheets. In addition, participants were given five dots each to identify key priorities on the vision board. The number of dots allocated to each of the main themes (CAPS below left column) is approximate because dots were scattered throughout the vision board. The top 3 subthemes are more accurate as those dots were specifically located on each subtheme. The dot emphasis showcases shared support for specific word and image concepts and descriptions.

THEMES and subthemes <i>printed on the wall of butcher paper</i>	Words on the table: Chosen by participants and added to the wall in black Not chosen by participants in brown New text added by participants in blue
HONORING CULTURES (Total approx 40 dots) Indigenous Knowledge (9 dots) Indigenous Communities (6 dots) Stories (3 dots) Sovereignty	Traditional skills Landback Plant foods Medicinal plants Fire opportunities Salal Camas processing Cultural gathering Treaty rights Tribal consultation Indigenous sovereignty Tribal sovereignty Co-stewardship Arts and crafts Basket making Ceremonies of grief and celebration (photo of skeleton) Listening sessions in which McKenzie River Trust, NGOs, civic, and agency folks listen to Tribes. Open space for tribal ceremonies. Have a gathering that invites Tribal ceremony. Honor Tribal ways of knowing. Work earnestly to

	<p>enable co-stewardship. Incorporate education and the history of tribes and Tribal conservation world views. Invite discussion of the sacredness of the Confluence. Hold events that allow for restorative cultural healing and gathering.</p> <p>Fire (arrows to and from) Floodplain regeneration.</p> <p>Medicine (writing on a photo of plants, and a photo of seeds).</p> <p>Have Tribes lead communities into the sacred space - build relationships with plants.</p>
<p>SHARING AND LISTENING (approx 10 dots)</p> <p>Collaboration (6 dots)</p> <p>Communications</p> <p>Indigenous Communities</p> <p>Creativity & Art</p>	<p>Public outreach</p> <p>Interorganizational training</p> <p>Elevating Tribal sovereignty</p> <p>Writing workshops</p> <p>Resource sharing</p> <p>Community gatherings</p> <p>Sculptures</p> <p>Digital gatherings</p> <p>Websites/blogs/Substack</p> <p>Facebook/Tiktok/Instagram</p> <p>Art and culture markets</p> <p>Music showcase</p> <p>Macro-micro community building.</p> <p>Create and manage limited public access from Pisgah so people can love, enjoy, and protect this amazing area. We need to know it to love it.</p>
<p>TEACHING AND LEARNING (approx 20 dots)</p> <p>Education</p> <p>Research</p> <p>Belonging and Identity</p> <p>Experiential</p>	<p>Professional trainings: environment, fire, etc.</p> <p>Native plant identification</p> <p>Field trips</p> <p>Youth involvement</p> <p>Watershed research</p> <p>Demonstration farms & forests</p> <p>Angler education (Esp. K-12)</p> <p>Growing future conservationists</p>

<p>EXPERIENCING THE OUTDOORS (approx 35 dots)</p> <p>Sensing and feeling Equity and access (14 dots) Participation</p>	<p>Quiet Solitude Beauty Naturalness Peaceful Feeling safe Getting around: mobility options Getting there: biking, walking, transit, driving Volunteering Adaptive Seasonal Contributing Play in river with clean water Ways for people to enjoy the property Access to complement habitat protection Expansive wild space Permeability Connections (drawing of a bike bridge over river) Dog friendly options..woof Travelling through (arrows) Art (with photo of sunset, riverbank, sitting people)</p>
<p>CARING FOR THE LAND (approx 30 dots)</p> <p>Fire (8 dots) Habitat Resiliency</p>	<p>management fields were well represented at the meeting. Communities are to continue to reach out to include youth, people who identify as Indigenous, and Tribal representatives.</p> <p>Diversity Restoration Riparian/waterways Oak savanna/upland prairie At-risk species and habitats Prescribed fire Invasive species management Mixed coniferous forest Minimize human disturbance Climate change Working Lands Agricultural Lands Joy (on photo of a lily) More turtle logs Experience wild/keep them wild</p>

APPENDIX B: Willamette Confluence Interview Summary

The Visioning Event themes and ideas were informed by ten group interviews with 18 project collaborators in the fall of 2025. Approximately 35 individuals participated in the one-hour conversations held on Zoom between November 10th and December 2nd of 2025. Interviews were led by Elizabeth Goward and facilitated by Julie Fischer, Haley Case-Scott, or Kat Rola. A [public engagement plan](#) and set of guiding questions were provided to participants ahead of the meeting and adjusted during the meeting based on discussion and responses. Also included in this initial outreach was an in-person meeting hosted by the McKenzie River Trust staff for the Seavey Loop Neighbors. About 45 residents attended and shared their fears and hopes for the future of the area.

Questions shared:

- What is your vision for the future of the Willamette Confluence area, from your perspective as a professional in your field?
- Key challenges and opportunities in planning the future of the Willamette Confluence area?
- These are the draft topic areas for the listening sessions. Do you see major topics you would include on this list?
 - Land Stewardship & Habitat Restoration
 - Cultural Access & Co-stewardship
 - Community Engagement & Environmental Education
 - Recreation and Transportation
 - Infrastructure overlaps - water systems, urbanization
 - Land Acquisition within geographic scope

Interview notes were reviewed and summarized into bullets grouped under vision, challenges, and opportunities. Table 1 includes broad categories/key themes that arose from the interview review process and listening session topics that participants were asked to provide feedback on during the interview.

Themes and listening session topics that guided interview analysis:

Themes	Listening Session Topics
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaboration 2. Communication 3. Access 4. Conservation 5. Equity 6. Education 7. Resources 8. Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Land Stewardship & Habitat Restoration ● Cultural Access & Co-stewardship ● Community Engagement & Environmental Education ● Recreation and Transportation ● Infrastructure overlaps - water systems, urbanization up, down, and across the stream, etc. ● Land Acquisition within geographic scope

Interview Key Takeaways

Challenges

- **Access/Recreation**
 - Impacts of prohibited access: safety, trash, camping, cost of security firms, fence maintenance, etc.
 - Access requests and use by specific user groups: equestrians, anglers, runners, etc.
 - Multiple access points to the property make enforcement very difficult
 - Transportation: to/from Springfield, lack of transit service, concerns about impacts of traffic and infrastructure expansion on Seavey Loop.
 - Lack of public understanding/education regarding access
 - Recreation pressures from adjacent areas
 - Lack of connection between community members and the site over time: limited access means students unable to visit field trip work
- **Collaboration with the Tribes and Indigenous community members:**
 - Lack of access for cultural practices
 - Water quality issues: fisheries decline
 - Limitations to using fire

- Safety concerns: personal, trash
- **Communications:** lack of collaboration between organizations in relation to information, education, volunteer opportunities, and staff training
- **Conservation**
 - Fire danger, management, collaboration, staff training, and safety
 - Impacts of a potential increase in public access
 - Decisions regarding the amount of riparian conservation to pursue
- **Water resources**
 - Stormwater impacts
 - Increasing water temperatures
 - Impacts of potential riparian restoration in relation to channel migration (SUB intake)
- **Regulations:** Easement restrictions
 - Impacts to Tribal involvement
 - Limitations on future opportunities
- **Resources:** Financial
 - Budget cuts
 - Limited staff capacity

Opportunities

- **Access/Recreation**
 - Increase access for the public and/or specific communities such as youth, neighbors, volunteers, people with disabilities, and other communities who are under-represented in the outdoors.
 - Design strategies for “controlled access,” similar to Green Island
 - Address climate change through augmenting bike/ped/transit connections
 - Address access in broad terms: financial, cultural, physical, cognitive
 - Increase public understanding, education, and awareness regarding access impacts, easement restrictions, etc.
 - Provide access for utility infrastructure
- **Collaboration**
 - Formalize partnerships that benefit multiple organizations
 - Share staff and resources among area organizations: communications, training, staff, marketing, and capacity building.
 - Expand the role of Tribal governments in land access, education, and management
 - Support cultural practices such as plant gathering (camas, hazelnut,

- weaving grass), controlled burns
 - Increase water quality and fisheries
 - Maintain a safe and accessible environment for cultural practices, education (trails, restrooms)
 - Focus on habitat improvements
 - Observe over time and adapt to seasonal changes in the land
- Use an equity lens for process and decisions
- **Conservation:**
 - Pursue projects that provide co-benefits across fire resiliency, floodplain restoration, source protection.
 - Support riparian shade work to help utilities meet regulatory thermal obligations
 - Collaborate on fire management and prescriptive burning
 - Develop more restoration volunteer programs to provide both access and education
 - Utilize NOAA, USGS, the Willamette Confluence land management plan and other studies to guide long-term planning
 - Focus on process and stage-based restoration, in collaboration with the watershed councils
- **Education:**
 - Enhance educational and outreach programs due to the site's proximity to population centers; focus on opportunities without conservation impacts.
 - Tell the multiple stories of people and rivers: Indigenous, Black community
 - Tailor curriculum modules to the site's unique features
 - Expand community service projects and research on the site
- **Water resources:**
 - Explore opportunities to reduce flooding and improve stormwater protection
 - Improve the health and longevity of the river intake site

Vision

- **Access/Recreation:**
 - Use the concept of permaculture zones as a model to think about the different areas and entities:
 - Arboretum - Zone 1 - a ton of human activity, festivals, dogs on leash, high impact on the land

- HBRA Park as a whole - Zone 2 - less concentrated access, come and go, stewardship focus, restoring habitat, IVM, balance of people and stewardship with science and research processes
 - WCP - Zone 3 - conservation-based, focus on creating a space for the land and animals. People coming in are on a tour basis as invited guests, but all activities focus on prioritizing the land
 - Develop opportunities for meeting spaces and educational facilities (education, outreach, cultural gathering spaces)
 - Create public access to water features: ponds, rivers
 - Maintain 1-3 miles of trails for mobility devices and develop accessible restrooms, boat ramps, benches, and fishing platforms
 - Build a pedestrian bridge or utilize a ferry to connect with the Springfield bike path
 - Schedule open access days for students and families to enjoy the land and share projects
 - Maintain the property to stay safe, beautiful, and accessible for all
 - Address climate change through active transportation strategies and infrastructure (bike/pedestrian improvements to/from WC property)
- **Collaboration:**
 - Foster strong collaboration and sharing of staff and resources among MRT, Friends, Arboretum, watershed councils, and other collaborators
 - Collaborate with the Tribes on future plans, including access and conservation work:
 - Accessible place for cultural practices
 - Community support for prescribed burns
 - Habitat management to support healthy fisheries
- **Conservation:**
 - Restoration projects for habitat protection, water filtration, and riparian shade work
 - Collaborate with water resource management goals and infrastructure.
 - Co-conservation with the Tribes
 - Focus on riparian and oak restoration
 - Increase student-led restoration projects, community service, and youth engagement
- **Education:**
 - "Honor the unique and special nature of the confluence: the Willamette River is the lifeblood of the Western Oregon population, it is a coming-together,

people have been living here a long time, drawn to this area, long cultural history, stories to be told, something special at this place. Unique in that it is not developed.

- Honor the stories of the many cultures that have settled along the Willamette. Including people who identify as Indigenous or Black.
- Increase public education and community service work.
- Create an education and field training hub
- Develop signage or narration with detailed trail descriptions
- Broaden the concept of learning outdoors, including education, art, reflection, and storytelling
- Foster a sense of belonging for students and visitors that makes them feel like the land is a part of their town and identity
- **Water resources:**
 - Focus on projects that benefit emergency services, such as flood reduction and stormwater protection
 - Protect drinking water infrastructure

Key Quotes

- *Connect urban life and wild spaces*
- *It was a really poignant moment for students that they live adjacent to these vast wild places and were able to contribute important information to care for that place (recollections of a field trip).*
- *Students gain a sense that “this is a part of my town, and it gets to be a part of me too.”*
- *Its accessibility, proximity to the community, and safety make it an ideal location for students to participate in projects that benefit their own experience and the property as well.*
- *As an Oregonian, habitat protection feels special. The area is unique, especially considering its proximity to urban areas.*
- *Need for metrics that reflect quality experiences, not just numbers*
- *If they can’t go anywhere, they go everywhere.*
- *Concept of the forbidden fruit: If you forbid access, it entices people.*

- *The most beneficial thing we could provide our (Springfield) community is the ability to walk to the Howard Buford Recreation Area.*
- *Access in the service of creating a community ethic of stewardship. People engage and learn, with supervision.*
- *Cool opportunities for larger floodplain projects.*
- *Flip the notion of recreation, make restoration a recreation activity, this goes hand-in-hand with river access.*
- *Don't overpromise and be aware of the potential conflicts that arise from trying to satisfy a variety of interests. Not everyone in the restoration community has the same concern about protecting drinking water infrastructure.*
- *This is a very inaccessible location for a large part of the population.*
- *The Willamette is the lifeblood of the community, people have been living here a long time, drawn to this area, long cultural history, and an important piece of the western Oregon puzzle, there are stories to be told and something special about this place.*
- *What does it mean to be a river community, to be connected through these waterways and systems? What did it mean in the past? What could it mean in the future?*
- *Accessible boat ramp - somewhere, anywhere! It is really lacking in our area. It is a need, and it will get used.*
- *Make sure that Tribal input is not just received but taken into account in the planning*
- *Confluence is a unique property with a wide range of habitat types within the Upper Willamette. It feels like a giant classroom.*
- *For areas managed by the Tribe, we have a strong preference for fire. We do use mechanical control as well, but fire is the preference. Chemical is last resort for the Tribe.*
- *Bring people out and understand their interest. Build interactions on the land. Food plants, medicine plants, weaving plants. Opportunities for interaction throughout the seasons.*
- *Need to build cultural conditions to enable people to feel safe and like they're not taking a risk.*

- *Re-establishing plant communities in a place that was destroyed by gravel mining for decades...*
- *The habitat that is coming back is amazing. I hope that stays the over-riding mission. Don't lose sight of what that land is purchased for. Make it better and better.*
- *I am concerned about camping illegal activity, though none of the activities spill over to our land. People have done a great job, but we are concerned about funding. Helping you survive so that you can be good stewards of the land. Find ways to help each other..Neighbors helping neighbors.*
- *We are concerned about traffic speed and the safety in getting in and out of driveways.*