Willamette Falls churns at the end of the Oregon Trail. Native Americans gathered here from time immemorial, and the falls powered the first long distance electric lines in the world. Multiple efforts are underway today to ensure that the legacy of this place is recognized and honored into the future.

Willamette Falls Heritage Area Coalition

Goal: To become a National Heritage Area that draws visitors from all over the world to Willamette Falls and the surrounding area to experience the end of the Oregon Trail and the stories, activities and gorgeous landscape that surrounds it.

Willamette Falls Heritage Area was recently designated as Oregon's first state heritage area. Heritage areas promote both heritage conservation and economic development. The coalition is currently conducting a feasibility study for national heritage area recognition which will be submitted to the National Park Service for approval, and then presented for Congressional designation.

Learn more at wfheritage.com

Willamette Falls Legacy Project

Goal: To provide public access to Willamette Falls for the first time in more than 100 years and to spur redevelopment of the 23-acre former Blue Heron Paper Co. site.

The project is a partnership between Oregon City, Clackamas County, Metro and the State of Oregon. Four core values guide the project, public access, economic redevelopment, healthy habitat and historic and cultural interpretation.

The first step to achieving the goal was completed in fall 2014 with the land-use zoning change that will allow for multimodal, mixed-use development of the site.

The project is starting the design process for a public riverwalk to bring people to the falls and catalyze redevelopment of the site adjacent to the falls.

Learn more at rediscoverthefalls.com

Willamette Falls Locks

Goal: To re-open the 1873 Willamette Falls Locks to allow boats, barges and paddlers to by-pass the 43-foot-tall Willamette Falls.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has managed and maintained the locks since 1915. In 2011, the Corps moved the locks to a "non-operational" status.

Re-opening the locks again ensures connected navigation up and down the river, fulfilling the river's designation as a National Water Trail and an American Heritage River for commerce, recreation and tourism. Each commercial barge eliminates the need for 60 semi-trucks. A study on the locks' economic potential also revealed a pent-up demand by recreational users.

Advocacy efforts are underway to repair and reopen the locks.

Learn more at bit.ly/1GnBYGp