



February 4, 2020

Sen. Beyer and Rep. McKeown
Co-Chairs, Joint Committee on Transportation
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, OR 97301

Support for HB 4150 – Establishment of the Willamette Falls Locks Authority

Co-Chair Beyer, Co-Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee,

Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory (OMHT), the destination management organization for Clackamas County, wishes to express its support for HB 4150. This legislation would establish a new public corporation to be named the Willamette Falls Locks Authority (WFLA). It will provide that entity with the powers and authority needed to manage the Locks in a manner that maximizes the commercial, transportation, recreational, cultural, historic and tourism benefits of the Locks for the citizens of Oregon. Operational Locks will achieve the long standing goal of restoring navigability to the Willamette River.

As a destination management organization, we are particularly attuned to the recreational and tourism value that an opened locks system would offer. In 2018, we commissioned Crane Associates, Inc., a sustainable economic development firm, to conduct a comprehensive study of water tourism assets in Clackamas County. The study estimated 15,708 lockages and revenues of between \$162,870 and \$304,305 annually from recreational use, based off an independent survey of 1,700 paddlers, motor boaters and anglers. Attached is a summary of findings pertaining to the recreational potential of the Locks with a web link to the final 156 page Water-Based Tourism Strategic Plan.

Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory is more than just a supporter of HB 4150 and the efforts behind it. We are an invested partner. In 2017, we secured \$100,000 in regional cooperative tourism program funds to help bring the project to where it is today. At its December 2019 meeting, our Tourism Development Council committed \$150,000 to support interim Phase 1 work that is needed to ready the Locks for reopening should the Legislature approve the creation of the WFLA and funding for Locks repair.

We realize that our contribution is a small piece of a large funding puzzle, but from an organizational standpoint it represents a sizable investment. One that we are happy to make if it helps make the Willamette River "one river" once again.

We respectfully request that you to join us and the other supporting partners of the Locks Project in making this goal a reality by supporting HB 4150.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samara Phelps". The signature is fluid and cursive.

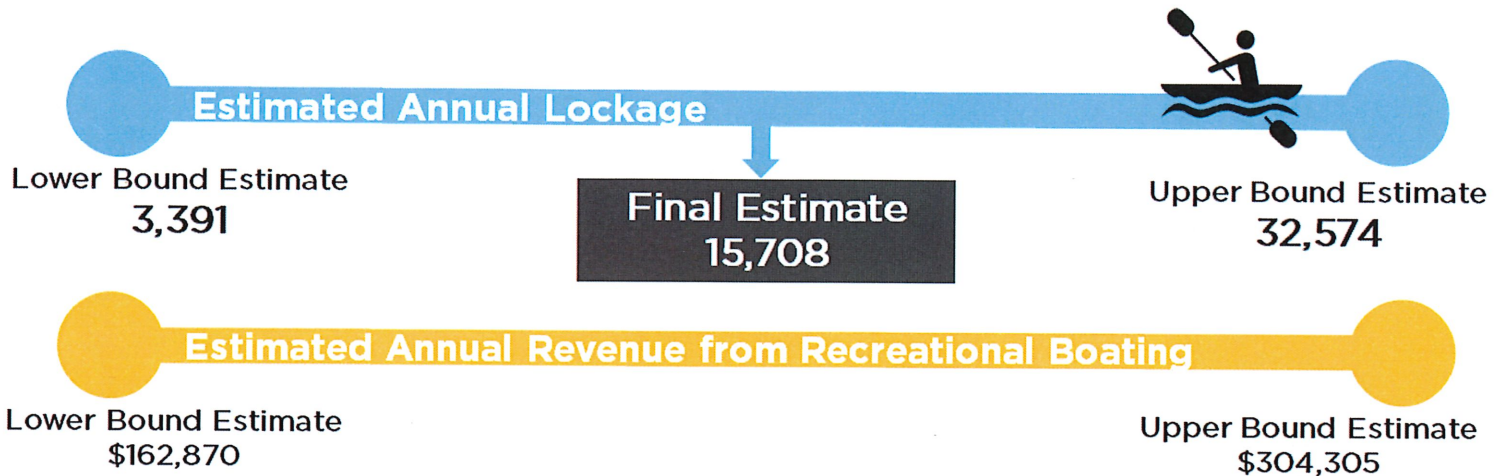
Samara Phelps, Executive Director
Oregon's Mt. Hood Territory

Willamette Falls Locks Summary

From the Clackamas County Water Tourism Strategic Plan 2018

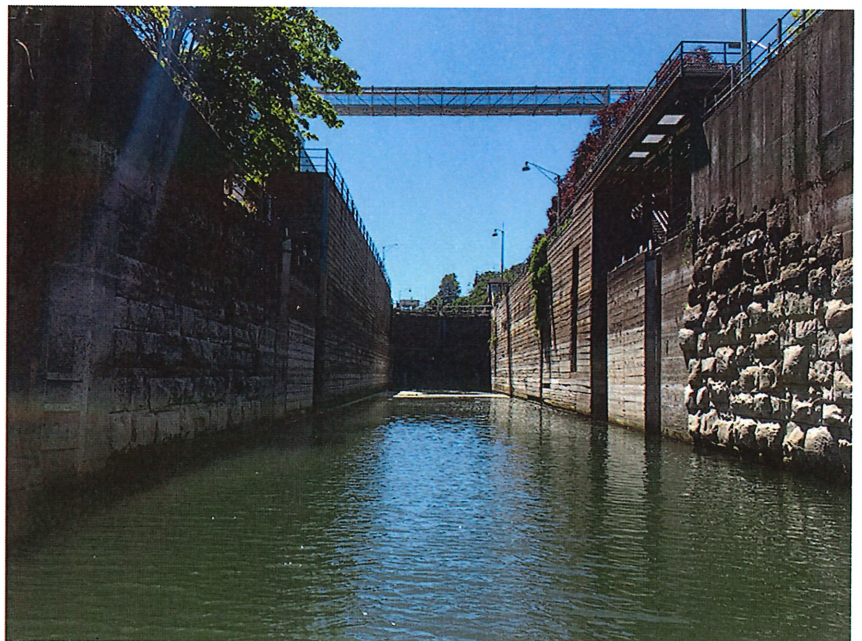
For the Clackamas County Water Tourism Strategic Plan, Crane Associates conducted an independent survey of 1,700 paddlers, motor boaters and anglers representing 1.6 million water-based recreationists. This is a statistically significant sample with 95% confidence. This is the only known study to survey potential recreational locks users directly.

Market Demand for Locks Usage by Non-Commercial Recreational Boaters



This survey was not intended as a complete detailed market analysis of the demand of lockage. For the purposes of this study a lockage is one water craft through the locks.

Crane Associates estimates 15,708 trips through the locks. This estimate is considered conservative because it excludes the 55% of respondents that were undecided. When the locks are open, a portion of the undecided respondents will use the locks. This forecast is higher than in other studies that rely on historic usage. Past demand is not an indicator of future preference. Previously the locks experience was impacted by inconsistent operation of the locks and industrial use of the river. Future locks use will reflect the growing demand for outdoor recreation and a higher quality recreational experience.



For more information and to view the full report:

Visit MtHoodTerritory.com/water-tourism-strategic-plan

