

R River Care and Repair

~ FISH SURVEY continued from page 1.

With a generous contribution from the Spirit Mountain Community Fund, Willamette Riverkeeper conducted a survey from March of 2004 through February 2005. We sought to gather basic data such as: where people fished, what species they caught, on average how many fish they caught, how much they consumed, and if fish was being consumed by children.

Willamette Riverkeeper staff took to the river in our patrol boat nearly once a week during the survey period. We spoke with over 85 people fishing on the river, on bright sunny days and cold, rainy mornings alike. The survey took place along the banks of the river and with those fishing from boats from Swan Island to the Multnomah Channel. We surveyed anyone we found fishing, with the exception of those fishing for Spring Chinook (these are usually non-resident migratory fish and not as relevant to our survey).

Out of those surveyed, about half said they consume fish from the harbor area. Of these, 19 were fishing for sturgeon with the remainder fishing for crappie or bass. Those who indicated they ate the fish said they filleted, then either baked or fried their catch.

Nearly 50% said that they fish once a week and nearly all of the respondents were men. There were six children under six years of age that ate some of the catch that was brought home. The majority of respondents were aware of fish advisories posted for fish species.

The conclusions that we draw from this study is that we cannot forget the linkage between the health of fish and the health of people. While people are not down in the harbor fishing and consuming resident fish daily, some do indeed catch and consume fish from the harbor on a regular basis. Therefore potentially contaminated fish, that may cause negative health impacts in humans, are currently being caught and consumed.

Willamette Riverkeeper will continue to work to protect the health of fish and wildlife, and the people who consume them. Stay tuned in the months ahead for more information about our Portland Harbor Cleanup Program.

Consolidated Fish Advisories on the Willamette

The Oregon Department of Human Services recommends the following limits on consumption of resident fish from the Willamette River:

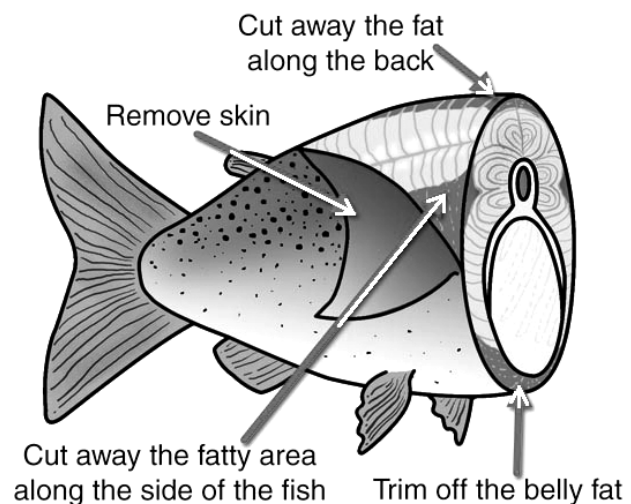
- Children 6 years of age or younger should not eat more than one 4-ounce fish meal every 7 weeks;
- Women of childbearing age, especially those who are pregnant or planning to become pregnant and breastfeeding mothers, should not eat more than one 8-ounce fish meal per month;
- Women past the age of childbearing, children older than 6 years and all other healthy adults may safely consume up to one 8-ounce fish meal per week.

In addition to limiting the amount of fish eaten from the Willamette River, all consumers should carefully clean, skin and fillet fish before cooking or eating them.

This advisory is due to contamination from mercury, PCBs, dioxins, and pesticide residues that have been found in resident fish.

Portions of these advisories also pertain to other areas in the Willamette Watershed including the Coast Fork Willamette to Cottage Grove Reservoir, Cottage Grove Reservoir, Dorena Reservoir, Columbia Slough and Cooper Creek Reservoir.

This information was taken from the DHS website, for more on fish advisories and contaminants visit the DHS website at <http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/envtox/fishconsumption.shtml>.



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Fund for the Willamette — a New Tool for Protection

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Recently, Governor Ted Kulongoski and U.S. Attorney Karin J. Immergut announced the creation of the Oregon Governor's Fund for the Environment. The Fund, to be administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, is dedicated to protecting and restoring water quality,

fish and wildlife habitat and plant resources; identifying sources of water pollution; and improving state and local enforcement of environmental and wildlife protection laws.

The Fund is established with an initial contribution of \$2 million as a result of the criminal prosecution of Panamanian shipping company Evergreen International, which pled guilty to 25 criminal charges. Five of the alleged crimes occurred in Oregon. The United States and Evergreen reached a plea agreement that requires the company to pay \$25 million – the largest criminal fine ever imposed on a defendant in a vessel pollution case.

The US Attorney's Office for the District of Oregon helped prosecute the Evergreen case and directed a portion of the fine to create this new fund for the state. The United States Coast Guard, the Environmental Protection Agency Criminal

Investigative Division and the Washington Department of Ecology also played a critical role in the prosecution of Evergreen.

“The Fund for the Environment demonstrates the kind of results we can deliver when all levels of government partner together on behalf of the citizens of Oregon,” said Governor Kulongoski standing with Oregon U.S. Attorney Karin Immergut. U.S. Attorney Immergut said, “We must require criminal polluters to help protect the environment in the communities where they committed their crimes. The Governor's Fund for the Environment will give us a way to ensure money from criminal fines can be spent locally on environmental projects.”

The grant amounts will vary each year based on the interest earned on the principal and new funds deposited through criminal fines and additional private and public donations. The estimated grants in the first year total approximately \$200,000. The initial grants in the first year will be dedicated to Willamette River issues.

The Governor stated, “This fund will also help us move forward on my Willamette Clean-up Initiative by helping support the on-going efforts of non-profit organizations, watershed councils, soil and water conservation districts and local communities who join me in making this a priority for Oregon's future.”

Willamette Riverkeeper believes that this fund will serve as an important tool to help protect and improve water quality and habitat on the Willamette and its tributaries.

NW Natural Agrees to Remove Tar Body from Portland Harbor

Over the years, Willamette Riverkeeper has been a vocal leader in working to get the Portland Harbor clean-up through the federal Superfund process.

As part of this process, last year NW Natural, a major utility in Oregon, agreed to take an “early action” with an area near-shore to one of their properties that has a large tar deposit on the river bottom. In spite of this commitment, their progress was slow over the past year, and then a few weeks ago they began to balk at the notion of removing the tar.

In June, after a lot of public pressure, including that of WRK, NW Natural agreed with the US EPA to proceed with the clean-up of the tar body. They have proposed an improved “silt curtain” that will enclose the area, to ensure that as the tar is pulled up from the river bottom, the mixture of sediment and tar cannot travel to other parts of the river nearby, and contaminate additional acreage.

Willamette Riverkeeper believes that this option can work, and that we need to stop discussing this issue ad nauseam, and not let the perfect be the enemy of the good. This option will get the tar out of the river, and will result in one less mess that needs to be cleaned up in the Willamette River.

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POLLUTION IN PRACTICE

– Part 2 of a Series –

“Mixing Zones Debated”

In the last several months, there have been active efforts in the Oregon Legislature regarding Mixing Zones. You may recall that Mixing Zones are areas near industrial and municipal pollution discharge points where the effluent is allowed by the Oregon DEQ to exceed State Water Quality Standards by a significant degree.

Based on the review of many of these permits by Willamette Riverkeeper (NPDES permits are reviewed every 5 years, or at least they are supposed to be) we have noticed a prevalent use of these Mixing Zones across the Willamette system. As a result, we believe that harmful blends of pollutants, including toxics, are discharged into the Willamette and its tributaries. These pollutants can be harmful to wildlife and fish, and may be built up in river sediments.

At issue is whether the State of Oregon should allow the exceedance of water quality standards, and allow large areas of the river to bear the brunt of “diluting” the pollution in these “mixing zones.”

In our view, the Clean Water Act was not put into place to allow the discharge of waste in this form, rather it was put into place to ensure that our rivers were kept clean, and that they were not there as simple “conveyances for waste,” as one industry person put it some years ago.

This issue has been debated in the Oregon Legislature, with several bills, including SB 555 and 532 seeking to diminish the use of Mixing Zones. Senate bill 555 phases out mixing zones over a period of years, and SB 532 makes dischargers place buoys, or signs, in or adjacent to the mixing zones to inform the public of their presence.

Willamette Riverkeeper believes that we must address this arcane loophole in the Clean Water Act, and that the State of Oregon should hold itself to a higher standard, in the metaphorical sense of course.

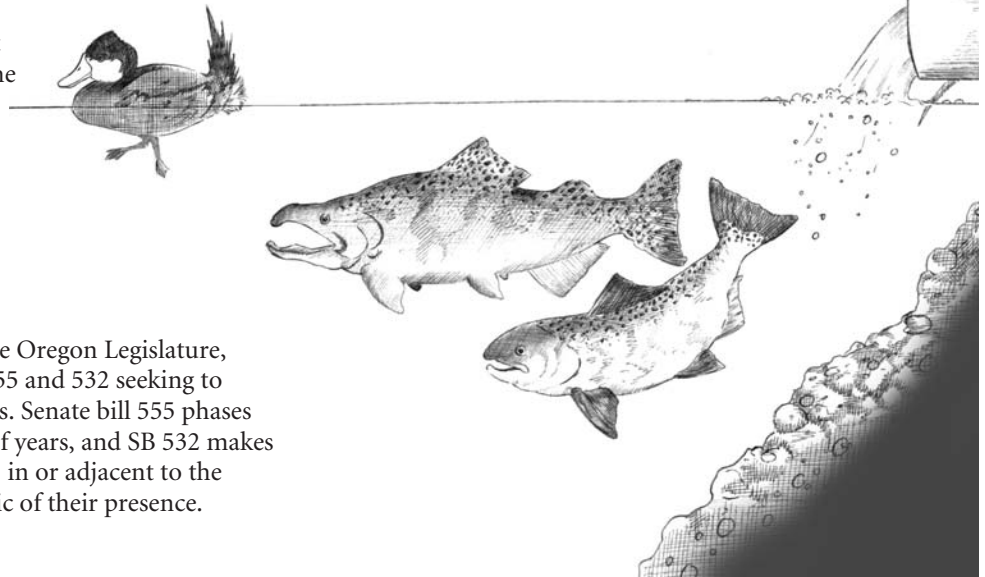
There is no excuse today for the Willamette River to be diluting mercury, copper and other constituents that

may well be present in the river system for years to come. This point source pollution is something that is known, and something that we have the capacity to deal with. We have enough work to do on the non-point source pollution front, with runoff from our streets and yards, and our farms and freeways, to continue to

allow these areas of the river to significantly violate water quality standards.

Stay tuned to the Willamette Riverkeeper website at www.willamette-riverkeeper.org for more information on this important issue in the weeks ahead.

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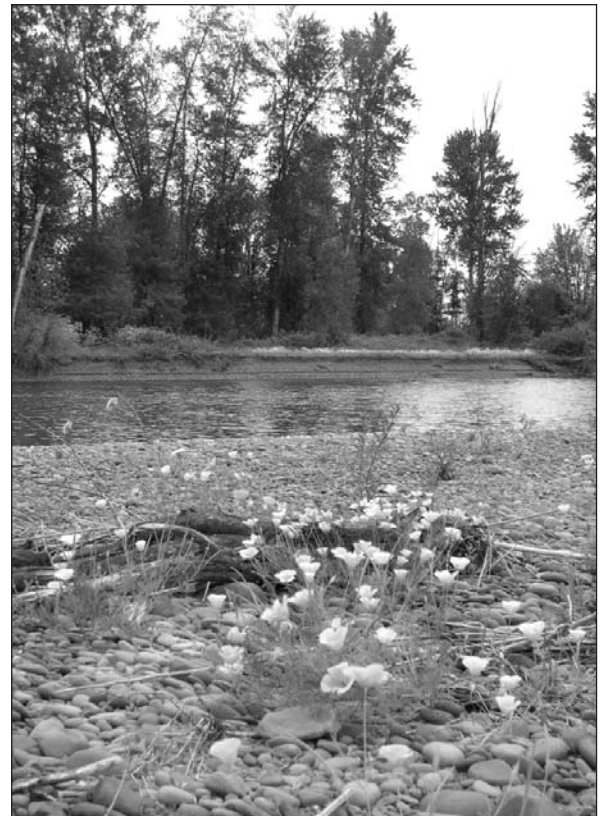


Willamette Riverkeeper launches new website!
Check it out at www.willamette-riverkeeper.org



*Now is a great time to become a
Willamette Riverkeeper member.*

For more information visit us at
www.willamette-riverkeeper.org
or call 503-223-6418



California poppies along a gravel bar of the Willamette River.