This document is intended for review by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, their Tribal Council, the Authority Having Jurisdiction, potential development partners, and potential community partners.

Table of Contents

4 tumuwata - Coming Home
6 Site Context
8 Site History
10 Blue Heron Site Today
12 What Will Success Look Like?
14 Opportunity to Heal
16 Landscape of Falls
18 Need for Healing
20 Lifeways Inspiration
22 Site Uses and Program
24 Site Analysis
26 Site Concepts
28 Vision
32 Views

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"On August 15, 2019, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde purchased a 23-acre property at Willamette Falls known as Blue Heron. The property is located within the Tribe’s ancestral homelands and holds significant historical and cultural importance for the Tribe. The lands were once home to the village of the Clowewalla (Willamette band of Tumwaters) and the Kosh-huk-ohia Village of Clackamas people. They were ceded to the United States Government under the Willamette Valley Treaty of 1855. Following the Willamette Valley Treaty, tribal members were forcibly removed from Willamette Falls and relocated to Grand Ronde.

The Blue Heron property is a significant purchase for the Tribe. The acquisition ensures that the Grand Ronde Tribe has the opportunity to provide the cultural context of the Falls’ importance to all its neighbors and partners. The purchase allows the Tribe to reclaim a culturally important part of that homeland, allows the Tribe to tell the story of Willamette Falls accurately, and assures that tribal members will always be able to access Willamette Falls for cultural purposes.

The ownership of this property allows the Tribe to return to the role of stewards, and caretakers, of these lands all while rebuilding this special piece of the Tribe’s homelands in the Tribe’s vision.”

“We have returned to our lands here... We will look to our ancestors as we develop this area. The gathering of the people today makes it so special. It’s a very emotional day and shows how important this is, caring for the land and the water here again.”

Tribal Council Secretary Jon A. George

“This is a historic day for the Grand Ronde Tribe and our people...Since 1855, the government has worked to disconnect our people from our homelands. Today, we’re reclaiming a piece of those lands and resurrecting our role as caretakers to Willamette Falls – a responsibility left to us by our ancestors.”

Tribal Council Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy

“We have always been the caretakers of this area, I’m looking forward to continuing this work for the next generations.”

Tribal Councilman Michael Langley

“The healing of the falls, returning them to its people, walking on the rocks that our ancestors walked on – is all beyond words”

Tribal Councilwoman Kathleen George
The 23-acre site is centered between the city of Oregon City, the walamt Willamette River, and tumwata Willamette Falls. During the era of industry, the site, the river, and the falls were broadly inaccessible to the public. With the purchase of the property, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde have the opportunity to return public access and provide economic development to a historically important area for sustenance, commerce and culture.
Ermatinger was an ideal man to have running the Company’s stores in Willamette Falls, and to reside there in the little community which McLoughlin eyed so jealously. Francis was liked and trusted by the mountain men who had settled in the Willamette Valley. The missionaries, Wyeth’s men who settled there, and any number of adventuresome souls who encountered Ermatinger along the Snake River, remembered his courtesy and kindness. The old Doctor knew very well what he was doing when he pleaded with Francis to “carry through some important works at Willamette Falls.”

While Ermatinger faithfully followed McLoughlin’s instructions at Willamette Falls, he became increasingly conscious of the Doctor’s personal interests taking precedence over the Hudson’s Bay Company’s operating policies. It was painful Ermatinger. He had no love for the “Great People” as he often called the Governing Committee in London, and he was resentful toward the duplicity of Simpson. But Francis was a stickler for “morality” and when he saw a man he admired and loved like a father begin to exhibit signs of deviousness toward their mutual employer he was faced with a moral crisis of his own.

McDonald, p258-259

Dr. John McLoughlin was later relieved of his command, after which he retired from the Hudson’s Bay Company, and applied for United States citizenship.

Lt. Warre doesn’t seem to have included Francis Ermatinger’s house in this etching. It should be in front of the church with the steeple. From The White-Headed Eagle John McLoughlin, Richard G. Montgomery

The connection for the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde to tumwata Willamette Falls goes back to time immemorial. Their people have been above and below the falls for centuries. In the early 19th century, the incursion of this and many locations took place. Euro-American settlement expanded and the site became grounds for heavy industry; it would remain in that state until the 21st century. In 2019, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde purchased the property.
By the late 1800s, manufacturing industry was thriving at this site. The former landscape was slowly being filled in as large industrial buildings grew in size and in number. Over this time period, Oregon’s largest waterfall by volume diminished in its footprint and the industrial complex we know today began to take shape. The Blue Heron Paper Mill closed its doors in 2011 leaving behind the remnants of industry.

Today the Blue Heron site is a sprawling former industrial complex, comprised of dozens of buildings and structures. The site and land has suffered from decades of industrial use requiring environmental remediation. The existing buildings and structures were built for industrial purposes to a variety of building codes and construction methods. Some of the buildings and structures can be adapted and re-purposed cost effectively; however, many of the buildings would require environmental remediation, seismic upgrades and/or reconfiguration costs that would very likely exceed their financial value.

The importance of the walamt Willamette River to the Tribe is immeasurable. Yet, over 100 years of industrial use have left a site with severe environmental challenges including degraded native habitats, polluted soils and hazardous building materials, and limited shoreline resting places for migrating native fish. The lack of water flow in the upper lagoon has impacted water quality in the lagoon, and the hardening and filling of the shoreline has altered all native habitats with the exception of a few remaining native basalt outcroppings. Riparian habitat, migrating fish habitat, and water quality would all be improved through environmental rehabilitation of the site. The health of the walamt Willamette River, and its path to healing are inextricably linked to the Tribe’s core duty of Stewardship. This connection highlights the eternal responsibility for the Tribe to care for the river and this place.
What will Success Look Like at Blue Heron?
Elements of Success are Embodied in the Community Comments Below

We must restore the integrity and power of the place.
Honor and get back to our cultural history.
Tell the story of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.
Enhance economic viability of the area and to bring people there, this will further allow education of the culture/people.
Economic development to help future of little ones.
Sovereignty for us and for future generations. A return to the rocks and the river. Same place we walked and fished. Fish is integral to us and our lives. For the people to have fished there, it has affected and impacted their lives. Our lives will be in balance as Oregonians with return to the river.

Green, and sustainable buildings. Integrate solar energy.
[Success is] joy of wildlife at this site. And ancestral memories of these same wildlife: osprey, sea lions, ducks...
Clean water, safe salmon passage.
Return.
Access the falls. Feel the mist.
Caretakers of this area.

...we are tying our history to our today and to our future. We want to tell the story of that place, but through the Tribal lens.

The Process to Create Goals
The design team facilitated four workshops with the Tribal Council from July to October 2020. A dominant discussion topic throughout the workshop was the central idea of Healing – the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde people, spirit, the prosperity of the people and the place at tumwata Willamette Falls. The idea of Healing became the primary design direction for the team in considering the site’s landscape and potential for redevelopment. Restoration of the falls and the creation of a new place founded on a healed relationship to the river’s edge will increase property value, build market demand, and drive new economic development for current and future generations.
Opportunity to Heal

Site History

Developing a vision for the rehabilitation and healing of the site starts with understanding the site’s ecology and physical characteristics and determining which elements could be most effectively restored. tumwata Willamette Falls is important in the Tribe’s Ikanum, which tell of the formation of the falls when Meadowlark and Coyote stretched a rope made of hazel shoots across the River. The falls that ran over the basalt cliffs created a place that was astonishingly rich in sustenance, with Pacific lamprey and many species of salmon migrating past the falls and native plants growing along the River’s edge. The Clackamas and Clorewalla people were year-round residents at the falls. They were recognized as the stewards of this place and responsible for its management. Other Tribes came from throughout the region and were invited to fish, trade, and interact with the falls. The Tribe’s reinvestment in their ancestral homeland represents a cultural healing with the opportunity to tell the story of their ancestors at the falls and connect current and future generations to tumwata Willamette Falls and walamt Willamette River.
As told in the ikanum, the horse-shoe shaped basalt shelf that creates tumwata, more widely known today as Willamette Falls, once stretched, unencumbered from one side of the river to the other. The main flow spilled over the center of the falls, with seasonal spills during the winter months across the other portions of the falls including on the Blue Heron site. The importance of the falls has stood since its creation by Coyote and Meadowlark in the ikanum times. Euro-American settlement of the region chose to capitalize on the immense power of willamet Willamette River. Through harnessing the falling water to fuel the mechanical and industrial needs of subsequent waves of settlers at the cost of forcibly removing tribal members from their ancestral homeland.

Over subsequent decades, the settlers re-directed water flows to power mills, covered the basalt cliff with businesses, industrial buildings and residences, and obscured large portions of the original landscapes from sight. Street alignments, slopes, and in some cases building locations have all been influenced by the flow of above and below surface water across the site. Even with much of the native basalt clad with pavement, buildings and fill, there is still evidence of water and native stone remaining on the site today. For example, there are places underneath buildings and near the old Woolen Mill foundations where water and native basalt are still visible.

Superimposing an understanding of the site’s physical history on the conditions (building, drainages, etc.) observed today provides some guidance as to where and how restoration of the site’s natural qualities will be successful. By observing accessible basalt bedrock, an impression of original channels and avenues of water flow remains in place under existing buildings and imported fill. Here there is great potential to uncover and restore the basalt landscape, to re-introduce the presence of water on the site and to re-establish native plantings. In the northern portion of the site, closer to downtown Oregon City and above the flood zone, there is relatively modest benefit of landscape restoration. This area appears to have good potential for mixed-use development that can visually and physically connect to restored landscape areas along the river.

Visible water next to the Woolen Mill foundations is evidence of the existence of water and stone below the surface of the site.
Need for Healing

Site Ecology

With Healing as a guiding principle to this vision concept, restoration of the site environment and ecology is central to the vision for Blue Heron. Years of heavy industrial use have left the land disconnected from the Willamette River, harming the environmental quality. Peeling away the industrial layers that have covered the basalt cliffs and channels of the falls will restore portions of the site’s former topography and provide multiple benefits to the ecosystem through its restoration.

Currently there are very few places for native salmon to stop and rest outside of the main river channel given the hardened river’s edge of the site. Re-establishing the undulating character to the river’s edge and exposing the basalt channels that lie beneath the existing buildings and pavements will provide multiple off-channel alcoves and create quiet resting places for migrating salmon and lamprey. The restored basalt channels will also provide opportunities for restoration of the unique riparian basalt habitats and riparian vegetation that are important for the health of native fish, bird, amphibians, and mammals. Ideally, some of these channels could eventually be connected to future water flows through the lagoon and dam, restoring the water flow through the site and improving the water quality in the lagoon.

Concept Diagram describing the reclamation of industrial land (shown in grey) at Blue Heron. Development is envisioned to occur in both a more urban, city-like setting (shown in beige) as well as in a more natural, restored environment (shown in green) oriented around the river’s edge and the restored topography of the falls.

Current Conditions

Restorative Conditions
This place provides significant opportunity for telling the Tribe’s story and increasing the tribal community’s connection to its ancestral home at the falls. The site’s redevelopment will provide a great canvas for presenting the history and living identity of the Tribe. Through the use of materials, patterns, colors and symbolic elements drawn from the layered and rich artistic traditions of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, both the landscape and the buildings can physically demonstrate the Tribe’s identity and character. In addition, through incorporating elements that demonstrate resiliency and self-sufficiency throughout the site, like green streetscapes that could improve water quality and sustainable building technologies that generate energy, the redevelopment can demonstrate values consistent with Tribal culture and identity.
Today, the site is a sprawling former industrial complex. Tomorrow, it could offer a signature restored riverbank incorporating several former falls channels, native species of vegetation and new spaces for gatherings, ceremonies and events. After Restoration, a new place focused on the Wamät Willamette River and Wùmätà Willamette Falls will create new demand in the market for space at the site attracting uses such as offices, hotels or institutional/education to lease space in buildings at the falls. Other uses could include:

### Site Uses and Program

**Tell The Tribe’s Story**

**HOSPITALITY**
- Hosting

**RESTORATION**
- Riverbank Restoration
- Growing Native Plantings
- Habitat Restoration
- Scientific Study & Research

**CTGR USES**
- Hosting
- River Access
- Gathering Spaces
- Tribal Spaces

**PUBLIC**
- Riverwalk
- Education
- Hotel/Event Space
- Restaurants/Brew-Pub
- Retail/Shopping
- River Access

**PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT**
- Office
- Research
- Higher Education Facility
- Non-Profit Org Offices
- Housing

Through Healing and Restoration, the Economic Value of Site Increases

Through Healing and Restoration, the Economic Value of Site Increases
Site Analysis

Existing

- Bluff is a Physical Barrier, Visual Barrier, and Reverberates Sound
- 99E/McLoughlin Blvd is a Barrier, Introduces Sound, and High Speed Traffic
- Rail Line is a Barrier, Introduces Sound
- Existing Natural Areas are Inaccessible
- Existing Buildings Block Connection with willamette River
- 99E/McLoughlin Blvd is a Barrier, Introduces Sound, and High Speed Traffic
- Willamette River
- Loud with Traffic
- Limited Access to Nature
- No Visual Connection
Site Concepts

Potential

Major Proposed Design Moves

1. GATEWAY: Mark the entry to indicate a new district.
2. COMMERCIAL SPINE: Develop a new streetscape and design new buildings to activate the space.
3. VEHICULAR ACCESS: Create Railroad Ave as service road for access down the Site.
4. CULTURAL GATHERING AREA: Create an area closer to tumwata Willamette Falls for Tribal functions and ceremony.
5. CENTRAL GATHERING SPACE: Create a large new riverside open space for events, socializing and celebrations.
6. RESTORATION: Improve the ecology of the river and reintroduce the riverbank’s natural forms.

Site Concept Diagram

Potential Ecological Restoration

Green Indicates Areas with Potential for Ecological Restoration

Economic Value Increases as Riverbank is Restored

Edge near Rail Line
Suitable for Cars, Parking and Utilities

Property Value Increases as More Parcels Front the Restored Riverbank and tumwata Willamette River

With Building Removal, New View Corridors are Provided Orienting the Development to the River

Site Concept Diagram Potential Ecological Restoration

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Property Value Increases as More Parcels Front the Restored Riverbank and tumwata Willamette River

With Building Removal, New View Corridors are Provided Orienting the Development to the River
Redevelopment of Blue Heron will be focused around an enhanced riverbank featuring a series of restored channels reflecting the historic pathways of water from the falls. New open spaces will be created adjacent to the channels — smaller spaces at the northern end of the site and a large gathering space south of the former Mill O site. The site will offer space for 250,000–300,000 square feet of new buildings, ranging in size from one to five stories and able to accommodate uses including office, retail, residential, institutional or hotel. Main Street is extended from downtown Oregon City into the site, gradually evolving from vehicle access at 3rd Street to pedestrian and bicycle oriented as one progresses south toward tumwata Willamette Falls and the trail to Canemah. The plan makes space for a new pedestrian and bicycle bridge over the railroad and 99E, linking the site directly to other properties on the bluff.
Above. Existing condition. View looking south from 99E and Main Street

At Right. Perspective sketch demonstrating a redeveloped Main Street looking south.
View from Woolen Mills Foundation

Above. Existing condition. View looking north from Woolen Mills Foundation

At Right. Perspective sketch demonstrating a restored channel of the falls, re-use of the Woolen Mill overlook, and public gathering space.
View Looking south towards tumwata Willamette Falls

Above. Existing condition. View looking south from above towards tumwata Willamette Falls.

At Right. Perspective sketch from above looking south towards tumwata Willamette Falls.
Above. Existing condition. View looking north lagoon towards site.

At Right. Perspective sketch from lagoon looking north.

View Looking north from Lagoon