

Clackamas County Water Tourism Study

Purpose:

In spring of 2017 Clackamas County Tourism initiated a comprehensive study to determine if its water recreation assets are being used to their greatest economic potential.

Method:

The study included over 3 months of site visits to the County's water bodies and surveyed 1700 statewide respondents. The results represent the interests of 1.6 million water recreation enthusiasts and a detailed inventory of the County's recreational assets.

Overall Key Findings:

- Oregon's recreational waters are visited 80 million times annually by people looking to recreate.
- Clackamas County's recreational waters attract 1.5 million visitors annually, which result in 240,000 overnight stays.
- Clackamas County's water bodies are equally good or better than the State average for recreational value.
- The public's concern for water quality, habitat quality, public access, information, safety, user conflicts, and crowds are not significantly different in the County than the rest of the state.
- Water-based recreation generated about 12 million dollars in lodging reservations in Oregon in 2016, but Clackamas County captured only about 2% of this amount. Despite above average water assets, the County is attracting below average visitation to these waters due to a combination of physical access, water-recreation management, lack of awareness, and niche product development.

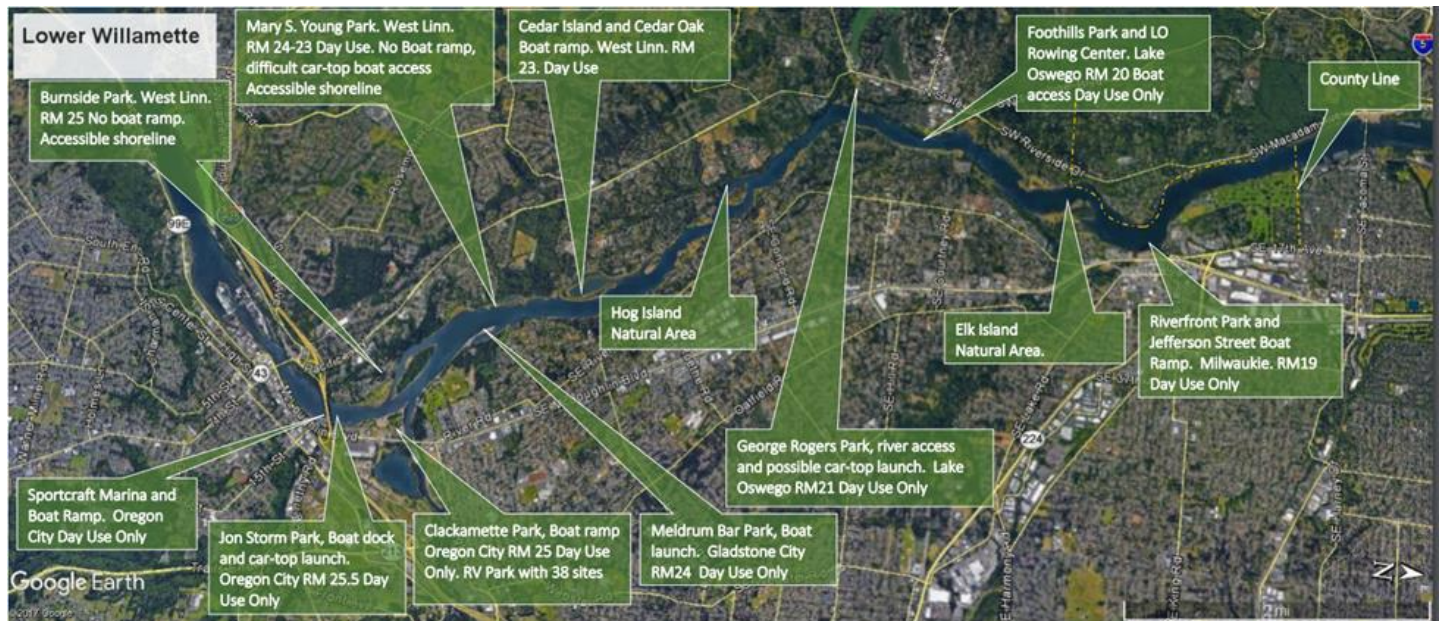
Location:

The Willamette River offers diverse water-tourism opportunities in Clackamas County and consequently the greatest potential for total visitation. The Willamette River flows from the Boones Ferry Boat Launch in the southern end of the county to the Milwaukie/Portland line on the north. These 22 river miles affords the recreationist the greatest diversity of water-based entertainment in the county. From motor boating and water skiing, to fishing and primitive camping on secluded islands the river provides abundant natural and cultural history.

Upper Willamette River Corridor



Lower Willamette River Corridor



Recommendations:

1. Improvements in Infrastructure
 - a. Wilsonville Memorial Park: Improve Day Use Area & Access
 - b. Improve Boat Ramp at Molalla River SP Provide Camping at Molalla River SP Canby - Additional campsites are needed throughout the county and this state park is an ideal location for them.
 - c. Provide Camping at Willamette Park, West
 - d. Remove (or improve safety at) low head Dam on
 - e. Improve Small Boat Access at Mary S. Young Park, West
 - f. Upgrade Clackamette Park, Oregon Pedestrian Improvements Riverfront Park, Milwaukie
2. Coordination of Community – Improve the “urban-river interface” by fostering and promoting the connection between each city and the Willamette River through infrastructure, policy, programs, and events.
 - a. Hiking Trails connecting Canby with the River
 - b. Connect West Linn Downtown with Willamette Park
 - c. Provide Public Viewing Access for Water Ski Club, West Linn
 - d. Create Gladstone Riverwalk
 - e. Car Top boat portage at West Linn
3. Improve the Experience
 - a. Create accommodation and activity packages at a variety of price points and abilities
 - b. Promote time spent bonding and creating memories while engaging in water recreation.
 - c. Develop a Primitive Camping Paddling Trail on Willamette River from Wilsonville to Milwaukie

Next Steps:

View the full 156-page report from Crane and Associates

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/122hp73833fpsog/Clackamas%20County%20Water%20Tourism%20Report%20F.pdf?dl=0>

To discuss the Water Tourism Strategic Plan, Development Grants, or relevant projects contact Samara Phelps 503-742-5910 or email samara@mthoodterritory.com.