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Call for Board Member Applications

Willamette Falls Trust seeks visionary board leaders to further its mission to restore and heal the sacred lands and waters of Willamette Falls. Help us create a model for collaboration that will benefit our communities and set a precedent for regional and national environmental stewardship.



Our Story

As the continent's second-largest waterfall by volume, Willamette Falls is a place where multiple stories and cultures converge.

For millennia, Native peoples have fished salmon and lamprey from the Willamette River and gathered foods and materials from its shores. Twentieth century industrialization that vitalized the regional economy at Willamette Falls created serious ecological and cultural damage to the area, limiting the domestic resources relied on by Native peoples and early settlers and restricting access for over 150 years.

Today, Willamette Falls Trust is a nonprofit, tax-exempt charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3), creating public access for everyone at the Falls. We are achieving this through inclusive collaborative efforts including delegated representatives from the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. These official Tribal representatives lead through our Tribal Leadership Committee to bring healing to this place of power.

We are proud of our focused collaborative efforts and strong commitment to public access, which includes restoration advocacy, deep community engagement, and the promise all future generations will have a meaningful connection to Willamette Falls.

We recognize that industrialization, neglect, and injustice over time have shaped our current reality. By fostering active Tribal participation in the reimagining of this sacred space, we ensure our development will reflect the diversity, complexities, and many interconnected stories at the Falls. This approach will allow current and future generations the opportunity to create a shared understanding, experience, and appreciation for the grandeur and beauty that is Willamette Falls.

Mission

Willamette Falls Trust's mission is to champion and sustain an exceptional Willamette Falls experience that offers year-round connection to the grandeur of the Falls, historic and cultural interpretation, healthy habitat, public open spaces, and elevates Tribal voices and interests in the Falls and its waterway.



Our Values

Rooted in years of culturally responsive community engagement and the perspectives and leadership of the Tribes connected to the Falls, we believe our values are central to systemic change that can heal our land, water, and people. Our communities' collective experience guides the work we do today and shapes the future programming and vision of this special place.

CENTERING INDIGENOUS VOICES

We recognize every place we walk on is Native land. As an Inter-Tribal organization, we believe in lifting the voices of Native communities, in telling true histories and once again stewarding the land.

ACCESS

By restoring access to culturally significant places, we foster a living connection to land for Indigenous communities, and design public spaces for gathering, learning and community building.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL IMPACT

We see ourselves as caretakers—not owners—of land for present and future generations. This power of intergenerational connection and wisdom guides us as we strive to build and support healthy, thriving, and inclusive communities.

NATIONAL LEVEL LEADERSHIP

Willamette Falls Trust provides a space for Tribes to make collective decisions under a unified voice and engage public partners in an innovative model that honors Tribal sovereignty, promotes self-determination, and creates equitable outcomes for all communities.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND RESTORATION

It is our inherent responsibility to protect our land and water in order to continue life on this Earth. Clean water, equal access to land, and a healthy environment is a human right. Our practices are led by Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge *, accrued through millennia of observation and experience. Through our restoration of the Falls, we address the interconnected impacts of the health of our environment and the viability of our future.

HEALING

We strive to heal the broken relationship between people, land, and communities, and build a sense of shared responsibility in restoring our natural world. While work to protect a place can be complex, this simple, intersectional value shifts a narrative of exclusion to one that acknowledges past trauma and makes space for shared creation.

*Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge is the ongoing accumulation of knowledge, practice, and belief about relationships between living beings in a specific ecosystem that is acquired by Indigenous people over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment, handed down through generations, and used in life-sustaining ways. This knowledge includes the relationships between people, plants, animals, natural phenomena, landscapes, and timing of events for activities such as hunting, fishing, trapping, agriculture, and forestry. It encompasses the worldview of a people, which includes ecology, spirituality, human and animal relationships, and more.



Inter-Tribal Collaboration

Inter-Tribal collaboration is leading the way for an unprecedented public project that will welcome people from near and far to gather together, restore, and protect the natural wonder that is Willamette Falls.

Willamette Falls Trust is forging a path forward and creating a model for how public spaces not only acknowledge and honor Tribes as stewards of the land for millennia but are guided by multiple Tribes and their deep wisdom and perspectives.

Our structures are grounded in culturally relevant practices. Tribal leadership, staff, and partners build our organizational values through a shared vision for a better future that heals the landscape and its many communities.

Story Highlight: Inter-Tribal Public Access Project

The Willamette Falls Inter-Tribal Public Access Project is a collaborative effort to restore public access to one of Oregon's most significant cultural and natural landmarks. Willamette Falls holds deep spiritual, cultural, and historical significance for Indigenous Peoples. This ambitious initiative is guided by a Feasibility & Cooperation Agreement between the Willamette Falls Trust and Portland General Electric (PGE), which enables the Trust to access PGE-owned property on Moore's Island west of the falls.

The project envisions spaces that foster cultural exchange and community gathering. Planned features include viewing platforms, pathways, and facilities for educational and cultural events—all developed with input from Tribal leaders. Since 2015, Willamette Falls Trust has worked diligently to increase public access, with nearly \$40M secured to support this transformative effort.

“Creator had provided places for us to gather our food, and to take care of our families. Willamette Falls is one of those special places,” says Davis “Yellowash” Washines, Yakama Nation, Chair of Willamette Fall Trust Board of Directors.

Oregon Senate President Rob Wagner, a strong advocate for the initiative, praised the Trust's leadership, “Willamette Falls is an iconic environmental and cultural treasure for Oregon. We look forward to working together to restore public access and build stronger, healthier relationships for future generations.”

Through collaboration with Tribal leaders, state officials, and local communities, the Willamette Falls Inter-Tribal Public Access Project seeks to create a space where history, culture, and nature converge—offering a place of reflection, education, and healing for generations to come.

Read more about our collaboration commitments on our website at willamettefallstrust.org/collaboration.



Why Serve on the Board of Directors?

Mission. You will join a board dedicated to actively and directly supporting a mission to restore and steward a significant landmark in the Pacific Northwest, give back to the natural environment so vital to our region and country, and ensure the benefits of this work are shared equitably. Serving on the board is an invaluable opportunity for personal and professional development, as well as a chance to work alongside a team of diverse, accomplished board members and leadership staff. It is also a unique opportunity to learn from, connect with, and support Tribal Sovereignty, land trust experts, community members, and other partners and allies.

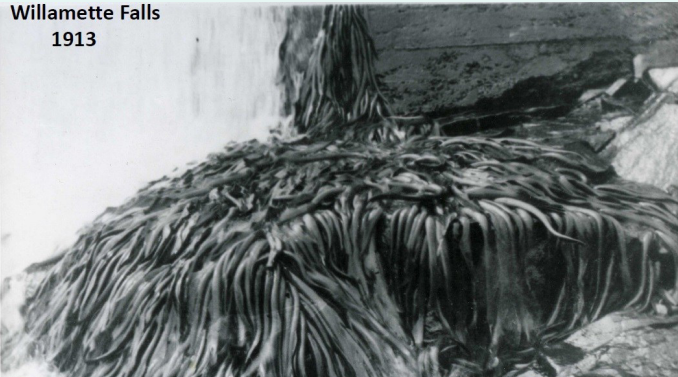
Commitment. Willamette Falls Trust honors Tribal Sovereignty, Indigenous voices, and Indigenous stewardship, with a deeply committed board and staff advancing work that uplifts the land and people. Together, we foster a model of collaboration and leadership to drive collective impact and transformative change.

Impact. We have an extraordinary opportunity to secure public access for future generations, ensuring this vital resource remains accessible to all. Few sites like this exist in North America, making our efforts even more crucial.

What We Are Looking For

Willamette Falls Trust seeks a cohort of board members with a mix of the qualifications below. We welcome applicants from diverse backgrounds who bring fresh perspectives and unique skills, have a deep commitment to the Trust's mission, and bring expertise, connections, and a collaborative spirit to strengthen the organization's strategic vision and sustainability. We seek individuals who can help mobilize resources, foster partnerships, and navigate complex regulatory and community dynamics. If you are passionate about Willamette Falls and the surrounding region, are interested in environmental stewardship and believe your voice adds new depth and resonance to our governance and opportunities, we encourage you to apply, even if your skills are not fully represented in the listed criteria.

Willamette Falls
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As a Willamette Falls Trust board member, you must be:

- **Mission Driven:** Personally invested in the long-term success of the Trust and its impact on the community. Serve as a thought partner who provides high-level strategic oversight to drive the Trust's mission forward.
- **Collaborative:** A team player who values learning from others and modeling collaboration.
- **Culturally Competent:** Respectful and knowledgeable of Indigenous Peoples and diverse cultural heritages, with a keen learner's mindset.
- **A Connector:** Skilled at building and leveraging networks to advance organizational goals. Strong verbal and listening skills, with the ability to collaborate effectively and build relationships with diverse constituents.
- **An Inclusive Leader:** Actively promote inclusion in decision-making and governance practices, cultivating a culture of belonging and mutual support.



Desired Qualifications

- **Prior Board Engagement Experience:** Proven governance experience, ideally with a foundation or nonprofit board.
- **Fundraising Expertise:** Able to engage in fundraising efforts, build donor networks, and support capital campaigns.
- **Strategic Planning:** Experience with organizational planning, goal-setting, and sustainability.
- **Public-Private Partnership Development:** Understanding of partnerships involving public agencies and private investors.



Desired Specialized Experience

- **Partnering with Tribal Governments, Organizations, and Communities**
 - ◆ Demonstrated experience collaborating with Tribal governments and organizations.
 - ◆ Previous involvement in community development projects, policy advocacy, and building partnerships with Tribal governments and Indigenous organizations are highly valued.
 - ◆ Familiarity with federal, state, and local regulations impacting Tribal communities.
- **Environmental, Land Use, and Habitat Restoration:** Expertise in conservation, land trust operations, and restoration projects.
- **Capital Project Development:** Experience leading or advising on large-scale infrastructure or capital projects.
- **Utility Knowledge:**
 - ◆ Familiarity with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing, permitting processes, and utility operations.
 - ◆ Experience with investor-owned utilities, particularly in communications and utilities management.



Community and Network Connections

- Strong ties to the Pacific Northwest, including but not limited to local Tribes, underrepresented communities, fishing associations, and environmental groups.
- Ability to represent the Trust's interests at a national level, with connections to wealth and philanthropic networks.
- Relationships with higher education institutions.

You don't need to have...

- A professional background in conservation or land trusts.
- Prior nonprofit board service.
- Significant philanthropic resources.

What We Ask of You

Board members will share responsibilities in the following key areas to maintain Willamette Falls Trust's good governance practices and to ensure its work is equitable and inclusive.



Expectations

- **Board Meeting Attendance:** Regularly attend and actively participate in board meetings, contributing insights, ideas, and expertise to discussions.
- **Committee Involvement:** Serve on standing and ad hoc committees as needed, lending expertise to areas such as governance, finance, investment, fundraising, or conservation.
- **Resource Development:** Assist in fundraising by leveraging personal networks, making financial contributions, and actively participating in fundraising campaigns and donor cultivation activities.
- **Community Outreach:** Serve as an ambassador of Willamette Falls Trust by actively promoting the organization, its mission and project, and advocating for support from a broad range of stakeholders.
- **Leadership and Human Resources:** Cultivate diverse board membership, select and support the President and ensure the organization's work and workplace are equitable and inclusive.
- **Strategic Planning:** Plan for the organization's short- and long-term future, including setting and reviewing strategic priorities and plans, and evaluating the organization's programs and operations to realize maximum efficiencies.
- **Financial Management:** Exercise fiduciary responsibility through financial accountability, overseeing budget development, approval, and review, and ensuring adequate oversight of properties and investments.
- **Operations:** Ensure operations and the organization's legal structure and administrative systems are adequate and appropriate. Approve standards and practices and review compliance.

- **Values Alignment:** Consistently model and support organizational values and collaborative approach.

Time Commitment

Board service will vary from month to month and person to person. However, the general time expectation for board members is five to eight hours per month, including meeting and event preparation and attendance. We recognize the value of your time, both personally and professionally, and have made a majority of our board meetings in a virtual format. Key commitments include:

- Monthly board meetings (virtual)
- Monthly committee meetings (virtual)
- Annual multi-day board retreat which includes our annual general meeting (in person)
- Occasional special requests
- Donor events and other special events attendance, as needed

Board members serve three-year terms and can serve two terms consecutively.

Giving Expectations

We ask that you actively participate in fundraising to the best of your ability. This includes routinely donating what you are able and prioritizing Willamette Falls Trust as one of your top three charitable recipients. We do not, however, have a required donation level for board participation, and we recognize the ability to contribute will vary based on personal circumstances.

In our commitment to ensuring the best candidates can join our board, we are open to exploring other giving models. We welcome your suggestions and innovative ideas for making philanthropy more accessible and meaningful for all members of our community.



Current Board Membership

In Fall 2019, the Trust formally requested Tribal representation to be appointed to the Willamette Falls Trust Board of Directors to guide the organization and support our philanthropic and programming visions. Our goal was to honor and elevate the Tribal nations that have stewarded this land since time immemorial. As of December 2020, we expanded our board with representatives from four Tribes.

Our Tribal Leadership is composed of representatives from the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon.

Current Board Members

- Aaron Barber-Strong, Secretary
- Alice Norris
- Annette Kendall
- Christine Lewis
- Davis “Yellowash” Washines, Yakama Delegate, Board Chair
- Chief Delvis Heath, Sr., Warm Springs Delegate
- Jim Manion, Warm Springs Delegate
- Jodi Bailey
- Julie Vigeland
- The Rev. Marianne Allison, Vice Chair
- Mary Baumgardner
- Pam Knowles
- Robert Kentta, Siletz Delegate
- Toby Patrick, Umatilla Delegate
- William Dolan, Treasurer
- Zeke Smith

Click [here](#) to learn more about our board members.



To Apply

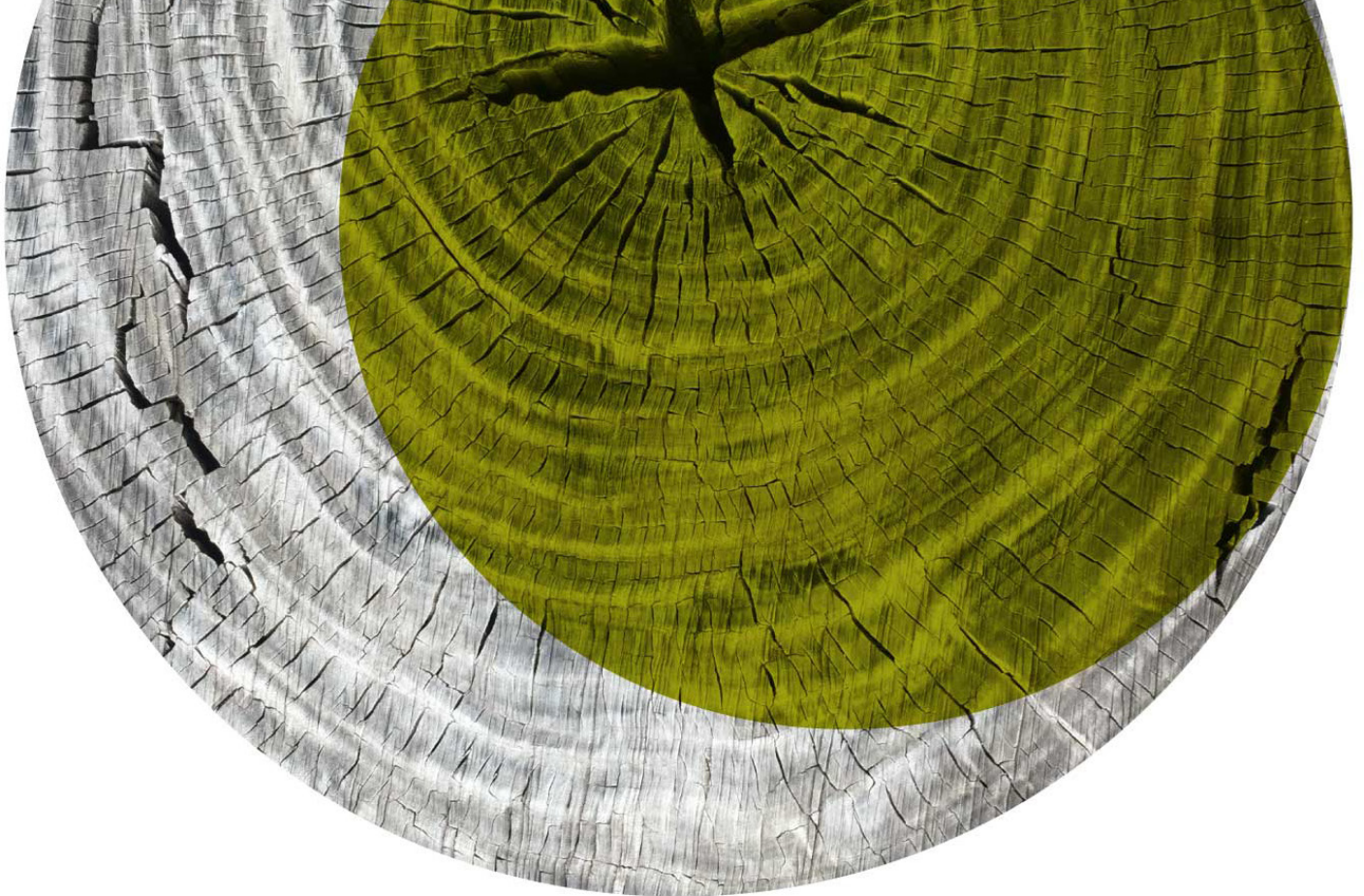
We welcome your interest, no matter your prior connection to the Trust. Local, regional, and national candidates who reside in, work in, or have deep ties to the Willamette Falls region and who are available for virtual board meetings and an in-person annual retreat are invited to apply. We look forward to welcoming you as an integral member of our leadership team.

Visit potrerogroup.com/willamette to apply. Submit your resume along with responses to the application questions. In your responses, please highlight your experiences that align with the position's criteria and how you anticipate making unique contributions to the organization and board.

Additional Information

More information on Willamette Falls Trust can be found at willamettefallstrust.org.

For additional information regarding this opportunity, please contact Cleveland Justis at cjustis@potrerogroup.com.



Potrero Group is honored to coordinate this search on behalf of Willamette Falls Trust. We support innovative leaders and organizations making a difference in the world by providing rigorous strategy and business planning, organizational effectiveness, and nuanced search services to mission-driven organizations. We are committed to equitable and inclusive practices in all of our work.

To join our mailing list and be notified of future opportunities, please visit

PotreroGroup.com