

[Submitted by Don Francis 11/30/2011]

A Recent History of the Willamette River



1864: Portland's First Sewer



Portland's first sewer was a covered wooden trough that ran down to the Willamette River. This simple system collected sewage from homes and businesses and carried it directly to the Willamette.



1895: Pipes Convey Bull Run Water to Portland



1927: Portland City Club declared the Willamette River “ugly and filthy” with “intolerable” conditions.”

<http://www.ohs.org/the-oregon-history-project/narratives/this-land-oregon/people-politics-environment-1945/pollution-in-paradise.cfm>



Foe of Filth

“Will R. Lewis, foe of filth, donned this gas mask to demonstrate his disdain for foul odors encountered by himself and others of the sewage committee on a pollution inspection cruise of the Willamette river yesterday.”

*Morning Oregonian, Aug. 5,
1936*

Battles River Pollution



Will R. Lewis, foe of filth, donned this gas mask to demonstrate his disdain for foul odors encountered by himself and others of the sewage committee on a pollution inspection cruise of the Willamette river yesterday.

1938: Aerial Photo of Sewer Discharging into Willamette River



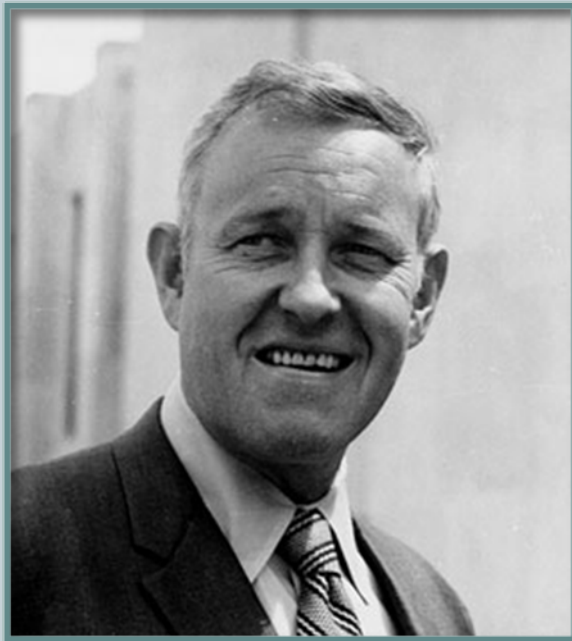
1938: Citizens Pass Referendum Creating Water Quality Standards and Establish Oregon State Sanitary Authority.



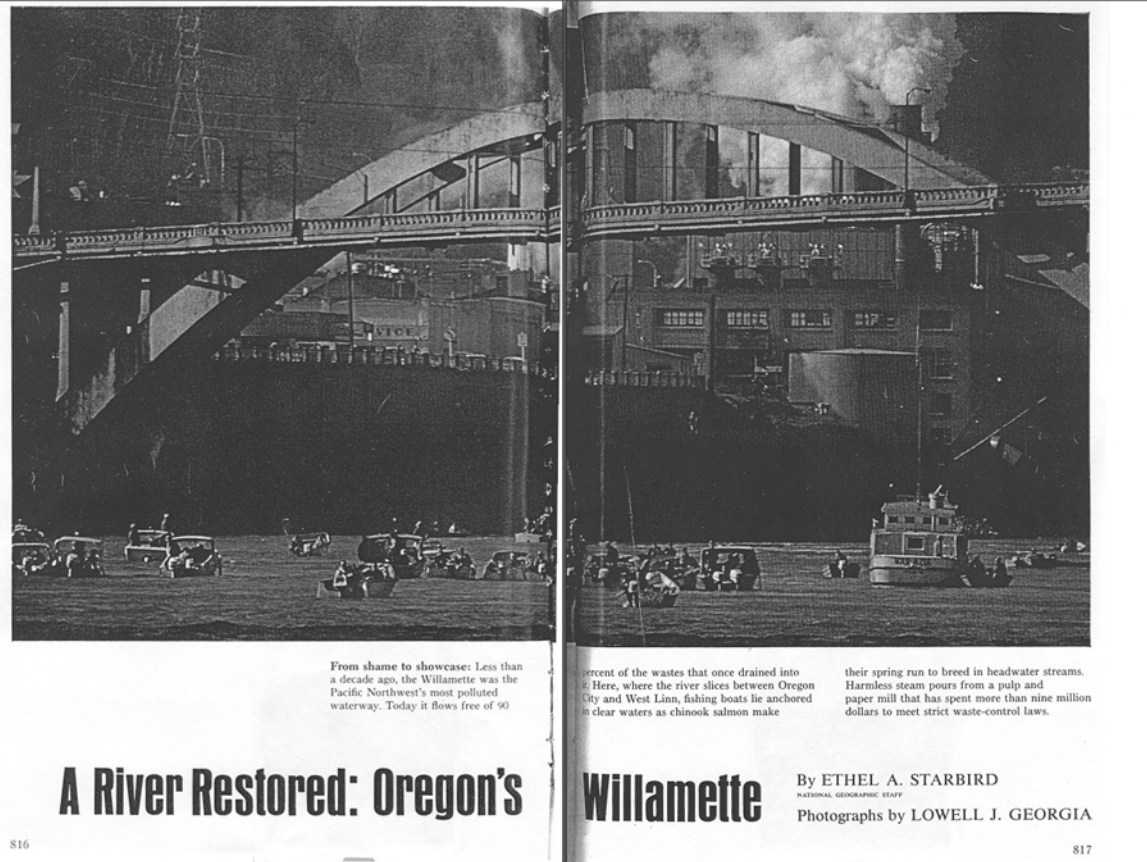
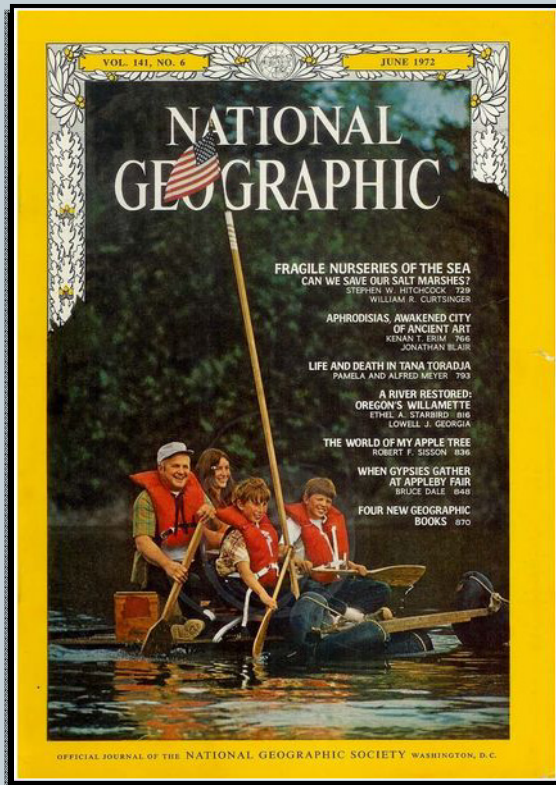
1952: Dedication of Columbia Blvd Wastewater Plant.



1962: Tom McCall & *Pollution in Paradise*



1972: National Geographic Cover Story



*1974: Harbor Drive was torn up and construction of a waterfront park began.
In 1978 it was completed and dedicated. The park was renamed
Governor Tom McCall Waterfront Park in 1984.*



1991: City of Portland Sued for Sewer Overflows



Northwest Environmental Advocates

Our mission is to work through advocacy and education to protect and restore water and air quality, wetlands, and wildlife habitat.

NORTHWEST ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES, an Oregon nonprofit corporation, and NINA BELL, individually, Plaintiffs, v. CITY OF PORTLAND, Defendant.
CV No. 91-339-PA

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF OREGON
1991 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 19157; 22 ELR 21347

December 13, 1991, Decided
December 13, 1991, Filed

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY: [*1] As Amended January 8, 1992.

Plaintiffs Northwest Environmental Advocates (NWEA) and Nina Bell, NWEA's Executive Director, bring this action against defendant City of Portland under the Clean Water Act (CWA), 33 U.S.C. §§ 1251 - 1387. Plaintiffs seek to end defendant's discharge of raw sewage and other wastes into the Willamette River and the Columbia Slough, a tributary of the Willamette.

2011: Portlanders Celebrate Sewage-free Waters

