

Willamette River Festival – Art & Stormwater Tour Project

Heritage Arts Grant Application Questions

1. Willamette Riverkeeper, as directing entity of the Willamette River Festival, is partnering with the Willamette Resources and Educational Network (WREN), Lane Arts Council, Willamalane Parks & Recreation, the City of Eugene, Boys & Girls Club Emerald Valley, and Lane STEM to create a series of art installations by Springfield, Eugene, and Fern Ridge students at or nearby natural and human-engineered water filtration systems as a part of this year's week of events. These art installations will be a feature of the self-guided tours participants of the Festival will enjoy as they learn more about how we keep our groundwater and rivers clean.

The key art installation this grant request will support is the Booth Kelly Trailhead site. The goal for this installation is to build a series of floating platforms on which 3-D art installations made of willow branches, natural dyed fabrics, and other organic materials will be featured. These art installations will be created in early August by campers at Willamalane. Teaching artist Alex Ever (they/them) of Lane Arts Council will teach students natural dye, organic sculpture, and about the local natural environment as they guide students through a collaborative art-making experience.

The team is currently making great progress in conversations with the City of Springfield to get full approval for the floating platforms at the Booth Kelly Trailhead. In the case that the floating platforms are not approved at this site, our work will shift toward an art installation on the bridge at the entrance of the trailhead, using similar materials to create a dynamic visual experience for those crossing the bridge or viewing the trail from the main parking area.

2. The Willamette River Festival is a community-driven event. It presents an opportunity to reach thousands of people across our watershed community with the message that local businesses care about our river. The stormwater art tour will feature stops that highlight projects at local businesses designed to alleviate storm water pollution. The tours will also feature naturally derived art installation pieces and portray an artistic interpretation of what the river means to summer camp students. The purpose of each tour is to deepen the connection of citizens to our local waterway through an exploration of these stormwater projects, as well as be a celebration of natural art and Native stories. We feel that building awareness about the importance of clean waterways will empower those participating in the tours to take steps to minimize their personal impact on the rivers and to help spread a message of stewardship. By partnering with local artists, businesses, Native peoples, and summer camps, this project can provide an avenue of expression and celebrate unity and diversity while demonstrating the power of community conservation through the lens of our waterways.

3. The art projects will incorporate traditional knowledge and stories of Native peoples and expose students enrolled in specialty art camps at Willamalane to these traditional practices. Marta Clifford and Theresa May, part of the steering committee for the Willamette River Festival, will be guiding these practices along with the Native Strategies group at University of Oregon

and the Oregon Folklife Network. Each tour route will incorporate stops where participants can scan a QR code leading to a webpage with information about the featured artwork, water system, or natural area. Tour providers acknowledge traditional land use and practices in the tour content by connecting participants with Native stories and historical land management practices. The tour content will include narratives about the Mill Race history and restoration, pre-Euro-American settler history, how the Kalapuya People managed the land and history of the storm water facility design, and the history of Dorris Ranch.

4. This art installation is intentionally placed in a highly public location that is wheelchair accessible and regularly trafficked in order to reach as many community members as possible. The pond at the Booth Kelly Trailhead is an essential part of our local clean water system. Highlighting its importance to the health of our community is a top priority. Pairing a self-guided educational tour, along with the high impact and excitement of student art will help us draw more community members to the local trails while adding beauty and interest to an area so many already enjoy.

One of the greatest benefits of this program is the opportunity for local youth to make and showcase their art. Participants in the Willamalane summer programs, ranging in age from upper elementary to middle school, will get to see their creative choices translated into a collaborative art piece that numerous community members will witness. Our target audience includes summer camp youth, their families and friends, lovers of the Willamette River and its many watersheds, and the general public seeking safe opportunities to get outside and engage with the community this summer.

5. Willamette Riverkeeper is intentionally collaborating with experts in our community to contribute to the Willamette River Festival, who understand the parks systems, public art, and youth programming. WREN is an educational and programmatic leader whose mission is dedicated toward fostering new partnerships in watershed sciences. They understand how best to draw attention, excitement toward this project by engaging the local community to take part in celebrating our river. Lane Arts Council has provided high-quality arts education, dynamic arts experiences, and effective art installation programs for over 45 years across Lane County. This organization along with the lead artist, Alex Ever, are the ideal partners for making a youth-created art installation at this scale a success. Willamalane Parks and Recreation is a Springfield leader for summer and after school youth programming. Their collective team of coordinators, educators, and programmers gives us great confidence in recruiting, engaging, and inspiring our youth participants.

Since 1996, Willamette Riverkeeper has proudly served as the eyes, ears, and voice of the Willamette River. The legacy of the Willamette River Festival is one that many local community members look forward to every year and that we are working diligently to grow and expand. This art installation project is a key effort in the continued growth of the Willamette River Festival.