



# The Willow Creek Gazette

Celebrating  
Willow Creek's  
42<sup>ND</sup> Year

1975 - 2017

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Willow Creek Railroad Museum

Spring 2017

## Get Ready for New Season!!!

The winter has left lots for us to do this spring. The wet winter has sprouted thousands of little maple trees along the right of way. The weeds have also found the weather conducive to new growth. A spruce tree east of the car barn needs to be removed. Alan Shifley's car barn donation awaits installation.



## Willow Creek's Forty Second Year

Present day Willow Creek started in 1975, 42 years ago. This got me thinking about early railroad history in Oregon. In 1955 I made my first train trip. I still remember the small engine that was on display in front of Portland's Union Station, the "Oregon Pony". Whatever happened to this little engine? Try looking on the internet. It's now on display at Cascade Locks. This is appropriate because that's where it was originally located as the first steam powered railroad in Oregon. Oregon's first railroad powered by a steam engine was located at the Cascade Rapids (Between Bonneville and the present day city of Cascade Locks) where a portage railroad carried freight around the rapids where steam boats could not travel. The *Oregon Pony* was delivered in 1862 to replace the mule power used on the wood rail tramway.

Further inquiry revealed early Oregon had over **180 miles of narrow gage** railroad. Building a railroad in early day Oregon was difficult both physically and financially. Between 1877 and 1890 (only thirteen years) the narrow gage railroad had seven different corporate owners. Bankruptcies can be attributed to the sparse early day population which limited income from freight and passenger traffic.

The names of many early day Oregon railroad entrepreneurs are now memorialized in the names of cities and streets.

### Winter Storms @ Willow Creek...

It has been an unusual winter. More than normal wind, rain and snow. Salem has set record weather-year rainfall. Much clean-up will be required. Help with clean-up is always appreciated. It's hard to imagine now how hot and dry it can be in July and August.



winter snow.....



willow branches down at G-scale track



looking east on south side



old turntable is flooded



south side ditch where trees were removed



view to northeast toward ICP



view to the southwest from loading-lift track

Photos contributed by ERIKA GABBA

## Logging High-Line Yarder Display to Relocate

During steam-up for many years, Willow Creek has been fortunate to host a display of 1/8<sup>th</sup> scale high line logging on the east end of our yard. In the past year considerable changes have been made by removing the trees along the south side that the logging group has used to anchor one end of their high line. Unfortunately visitors were not able to view the demonstration close-up at Willow Creek. Viewing was limited to the east fence (70 feet away) near the entry to Powerland Heritage Park or from the north fence (50 feet away) behind the Parade Road bleachers.

Evan Burroughs, Show Manager, for Powerland contacted us in February with the following suggestion:

"I have been struggling for some time to figure out a way to pull more show visitors out to the Northeast corner of the property out by the Steam Crane, Trolley Barn and Logging display.

Do you think it would be reasonable to move Merv's scale logging demonstration out to that area, along the south edge of the water retention pond? I spoke to the Trolley guy's and Kevin Smith from the logging museum to see if they thought it would help draw people that way. Trolley suggested the north side of the road by the pond and Kevin thought it would be a really good idea.

I am thinking of adjusting the people mover route to extend out to the Trolley barn so it would take people right by his display."

In March Frank Lertora contacted the logging group's Merv Johnson with the following:

"At our recent Willow Creek Railroad Board Meeting we had a discussion about the Steam Logging Display. We reviewed an idea from Evan Burroughs, Steam-Up Show Manager. He has been trying to brainstorm ideas for drawing more visitors to the northeast corner of Powerland. Some of the benefits I thought of are:

- Better access for you for setting up the equipment.
- Visitors will be able to get closer to see the action.
- Option for longer yarding distance.
- Will provide more topography, not just a flat lawn.
- Will be near the logging museum."

Merv arranged to meet with Evan to view the proposed relocation site. They met and he agreed that the move would be beneficial. A location was selected in the grove of trees on the south side of the road to the trolley barn.

The Willow Creek's Board of Directors and members would like to thank Merv and the logging group members for the many years they have had their interesting display at Willow Creek.



Finely detailed miniature yarders load logs.



Proposed location near Logging and Trolley Museums.

## 2016 Signal Bridges to be Installed 2017

Willow Creek was fortunate to have the assistance of Mike Meyers and the students of Chemeketa Community College's spring term welding class in fabricating two new signal bridges. The students worked 8 weeks to complete the bridges. The two bridges contained one hundred and ten (110) individual parts to be cut and welded. One hundred and four (104) holes had to be drilled to provide access and passage of the electrical control wires.



April 28th 2016



September 4th 2016

Ernie Hellman excavated and installed the footing forms. Alan Shifley installed the conduits for the electrical wiring.



April 22nd 2017

Ernie is shown here tapping holes for installing wiring conduit connections. Noel Meyer fabricated cover plates for the electrical access holes and lent the uses of his tools to tap the screw holes in the bridges and columns.

## 2017 Powerland Schedule

### May 20-21, 2017 Craft Fair, Children's Activities, Farmers Market All Museums Open -- Free Admission

#### WEDNESDAY WORK DAY IS FAST APPROACHING!

The volunteer Wednesday Workdays will be starting up again on May 3rd. Harold P. will have the coffee pot and cookies ready for everyone that can make it to Powerland on Wednesdays. Lunches for these work days will *not* start until May 10th. There is a change of venue for coffee and lunch; we will gather on the west side of the campus in the concession booth south of the Country Store. Park on the road until the ground is less wet and not as prone to ruts.

#### POWERLAND HERITAGE PARK SCHEDULE 2017

Date	Event	Description
May 20-21	Powerland Heritage Park Celebration	Introducing Powerland Heritage Park, including craft fair
June 17	Vertically Challenged Car Club	Low riders, hot rods, lifted trucks, imports and more!
June 17	Brooks Then and Now	10am to 3pm at Brooks Historical Society
June 23-25	Branch 15 Swap Meet	37th Annual Swap Meet Variable hours, camping available.
June 24	NW Vintage Car & Motorcycle Museum All Comers Rendezvous	5th Annual All Comers Rendezvous 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
June 24	John Deere Auction	Annual Silent Auction held in the John Deere Museum from 9-3
June 28 - July 5	All American Vintage Trailer Rally	Open to all vintage trailers. Come see a piece of American history!
June 28 - July 5	Civil War Reenactment	Step back in time! (Formerly held at Willamette Mission State Park.)
July 29-30	The Great Oregon Steam-Up	Fun for the entire family. Train and trolley rides, steam tractors, steam sawmill and large engines. Threshing, blacksmithing, tractor pull, daily parade and lots more.
August 5-6	The Great Oregon Steam-Up	Fun for the entire family. Train and trolley rides, steam tractors, steam sawmill and large engines. Threshing, blacksmithing, tractor pull, daily parade and lots more.
August 18-21 Pending	Solar Event	Hosted by OERHS
August 25-26	Pacific Northwest Truck Show	2017 Brooks Truck Show. Over 200 trucks of all sorts of shapes, sizes and vintages

### Whistle Signal Comment

“I don’t remember where, but I read that the reason for the change from L-L-S-S to L-L-S-L was that locomotive engineers would generally hold the last “S” note until the locomotive was actually in the crossing. Generally this would result in a long note instead of a short note, and the rules were changed to reflect actual practice. I do not know the date when it was changed.”

	tion. If not answered by a train, the train displaying signals must stop and ascertain the cause.
(l) — — 0 0	Approaching public crossings at grade, obscure places, tunnels or snow sheds. To be prolonged or repeated until public crossing at grade is reached.
(m) — — — —	Approaching stations, junctions and railroad crossings at grade.
(n) — — 0	Approaching meeting or waiting

Comment contributed by : James Folk

### Alan’s Donation from the Willamette & Kings Valley RR to Willow Creek

Yesterday (January 28<sup>th</sup>) Tammy and I delivered to WCRR the last two of our turnouts, about 700' of aluminum rail, three signal footings, a bunch of wood blocks and some signal boxes. There is still another ~700' of rail that we will bring after I get it pulled up.

The rail is for the car barn leads first then whatever is left, plus the two left-hand turnouts, can either be used for the industrial lead or sold off as a fundraiser.



article contributed by Alan Shifley

**Just a reminder....**

**Willow Creek Due\$**

**June 2017 ~ May 2018**

It’s that time of year to renew our membership dues. The current dues expire the end of May 2017.

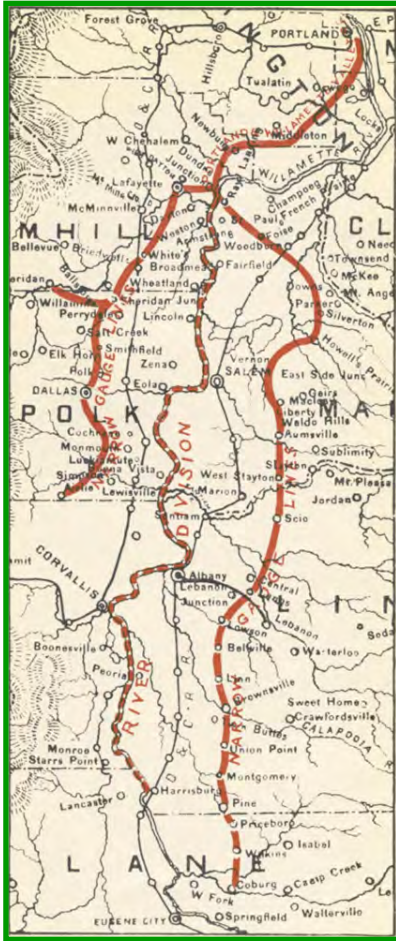
- Regular Member:           \$30.00**
- Associate Member:       \$20.00**
- Junior (18 & Under):     \$15.00**

Payment may be mailed to:



Willow Creek Railroad Business Office  
 2627 N. Willamette Blvd.  
 Portland, OR 97217- 4117

## A Glimpse of History: Oregon's Narrow Gauge Railroads



In the late 1800's Oregon had over 180 miles of narrow gauge railroad. At the time, before the 1913 Oregon Highway Department\*, roads were little better than trails. Local farmers wanted a better way to transport their crops to market. The navigable Willamette river which drains the valley was an available avenue for steamboat transportation, but wagon roads leading to the river were muddy bogs in the winter and dusty ruts in the summer.

### Westside Branch - Dayton, Sheridan and Grand Ronde Railway Company

On the west side of the Willamette river farmers of Yamhill and Polk counties had been waiting many years for promised railroad construction, when, in 1877, a narrow gauge scheme was proposed, to extend from steamboat landings at Dayton to Sheridan, a distance of twenty miles. The line was partly financed by "freight orders" or "script." The railroad was to redeem the local farmer's cash construction pledges, "script," to start construction by rendering an equivalent value of railroad service. The track was poorly constructed and not ballasted. Speed did not exceed twelve or fifteen miles an hour. The equipment consisted of two Baldwin locomotives and a number of flatcars, from which passenger coaches were improvised. The rails weighed twenty eight pounds to the yard. When farmers used their "script" to pay freight bills, the railroad had insufficient cash income to pay bills due and the railroad was forced into receivership. Scottish investors took control of the railroad. The railroad was conveyed June 2, 1879, to a company representing the new investors, *Willamette Valley Railroad Company*, and the old company was dissolved. In 1879-81 a branch to Dallas in Polk County was completed. The west side branch of the road was extended from Dallas to Monmouth in June, 1881, and to Airlie in the following September. The company directors in Scotland had ordered extension of the line from Dundee to Portland, but it was not completed until much later.

### Eastside Branch - Oregon Central Railroad Company of Salem

Ground was broken for the east side branch at Silverton, April 19, 1880. The line was opened from Ray's Landing, on the Willamette River, near Saint Paul, to Silverton via Woodburn, October 4<sup>th</sup>, of that year; to Scio, November 4<sup>th</sup>, and to Brownsville, December 28<sup>th</sup>. The line reached Coburg in July, 1882.

### Competition: Oregon and California Railroad (The O & C)

Ben Holladay of the O & C was also building railroads from Portland south toward California on the east side of the Willamette. It also had a west side branch via Forest Grove to St. Joseph north of McMinnville. Seeing the competition of the narrow gauge, the O & C line was extended south to Corvallis. The control of the narrow gauge was relinquished to Henry Villard's O & C. Under Villard, the narrow gauge was reduced to feeder status for the O & C. Villard's *Oregon Railway and Navigation Company* continued to operate the lines until 1884. When Villard's empire collapsed, the narrow gauge was taken over by the *Southern Pacific* in 1890. *Southern Pacific* converted the narrow gauge lines to standard gauge starting in 1893. The once independent lines now under *Southern Pacific* control lead to the eventual abandonment of portions of the old narrow gauge route.

History of the narrow gauge railroad in the Willamette Valley (1919) by Leslie M. Scott  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_the\\_narrow\\_gauge\\_railroad\\_in\\_the\\_Willamette\\_Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_narrow_gauge_railroad_in_the_Willamette_Valley)



The dashed line on the above map also shows the Willamette river steamboat route. The upper picture shows the narrow gauge railroad at Dundee. The lower picture shows the SP portion of the former narrow gauge line at Arlie in 1909 after it was converted standard gauge. The rail car in the picture at Arlie was operated by the *Monmouth & Independence Railroad* to provide passenger service from Arlie to Monmouth then to Independence where *Southern Pacific* passenger connections were available. Small portions of the old alignment still exist as standard gauge.

\*The only counties with paved sections of roadway by 1916 were Multnomah, Clatsop, and Jackson counties.