# Summaries of River Accomplishments

## Blackstone-Woonasquatucket Rivers (MA/RI)

The Blackstone-Woonasquatucket AHR Initiative has brought awareness, partnerships, and resources to the 26 river communities in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Successes include: establishment of independent watershed councils with state recognition and local funding; inventories of riparian and wetland restoration projects in the Woonasquatucket; a "brownfields-to-greenfields" restoration project; two economic development projects in the Blackstone; several environmental restoration projects; and signage for communities and an asset map of local cultural, historic, economic, and recreational resources in the watershed. More than $8 million has been raised, with numerous partners sponsoring local matches and serving as stewards of their communities.

Groundbreaking for the Riverside Mills project to restore greenspace and stimulate investment along the Woonasquatucket River in Rhode Island.

## Connecticut River (CT/VT/NH/MA)

The Connecticut AHR Initiative and the Connecticut River Watershed Council have been highly successful at bringing focused federal government attention to the projects brought forward by the community partners of the initiative, to the four states that are part of the watershed, and to the valley's rural and urban areas alike. With the entire watershed and 396 towns and cities making up the designated Connecticut AHR, the number of local partners is substantial: 250 groups, communities, and agencies and 1,600 individuals, organizations, and businesses supporting the initiative. Success and progress with most of the 29 projects proposed in the nomination has created interest on the part of others to submit projects for the designation and for many to proudly claim the designation in their marketing and business endeavors.

Newly installed fishway at the Upper Mill Pond Dam is part of a watershed-wide program to restore migratory fisheries to the Connecticut River. *Photo: Courtesy of Chris Joyell, Connecticut River Watershed Council.*

Substantial progress has been made on local and watershed-wide projects, including river habitat restoration through removal of obsolete dams and construction of fishways, inventory and abatement of severe riverbank erosion sites, farm assistance to address nonpoint source pollution, creation of sustainable growth action teams, brownfield site assessment and redevelopment, heritage tourism, and a Connecticut River Partnership grant program. During the first 3 years, the Connecticut American Heritage River Initiative has leveraged over $4.1 million in government grants and technical assistance [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Economic Development Administration (EDA), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of the Interior, Department of Transportation, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)], representing over a 10:1 return on the investment.

## Cuyahoga River (OH)

The Cuyahoga AHR has helped galvanize local attention to the river. Cuyahoga River and AHR community actions have been featured in numerous newspaper articles, including the *New York Times, Cleveland Plain Dealer, Sun Times*, and *Akron Beacon Herald*. A state-of-the-river symposium, three watershed workshops, and over 100 programs were presented to local communities and organizations to promote the unique watershed and its history, water quality, and current opportunities. Funds have been raised from local foundations and businesses to begin shooting a Cuyahoga AHR video for the Public Broadcasting System.

The initiative has helped secure funding for a watershed interpretive plan, signing and displays, fish consumption advisories, wetland restoration, and watershed brochures. Grants have been obtained from federal and state agencies to help communities plan for wise growth, develop local watershed plans, form local watershed groups, produce GIS-based watershed maps, and conduct training on best management practices for rural road runoff for Northeast Ohio county and township road departments.

Assistance has been provided for the removal of an abandoned railroad trestle, development of studies for the removal/modification of the Kent and

A fresh snow on the Cuyahoga in the Cuyahoga National Park. *Photo: Courtesy of Steven Davis, U.S. Forest Service.*

Munroe Falls dams, and for a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) study to help improve aquatic habitat in the navigational channel. Numerous grant applications have been submitted and are now under review for watershed improvement, wetland inventory, land use planning, wetland restoration, and economic revitalization. Direct financial returns are over $900,000, and AHR partners have leveraged over $1.5 million, which represents over three times the cost of the program.

In 1969, the Cuyahoga gained national attention as the "river that burned" when a spark from a passing train ignited surface oils and debris. Oil slicks, floating debris, raw sewage, and obnoxious odors kept people away from the river. Pleasure boating and fishing in the river were unheard of. Since that time, local communities, businesses, private citizens, and governmental and conservation organizations have worked together to clean up the river, protect natural and historic sites, and completely revitalize the downtown Cleveland riverfront. The river, which was virtually devoid of fish, now supports over 70 species. Violations of water quality standards are now rare. There are now five new private "stacker" marinas in the Cleveland area and pleasure boats crowd the entertainment district in the flats near the river's mouth.

## Detroit River (MI)

The Greater Detroit AHR Initiative has become part of the fabric of the local civic structure of the metropolitan Detroit area, as the city of Detroit and its southern neighbors become more interested once again in what the Detroit River has to offer their communities, especially recreation, history, economic growth and a restored quality of life. There has been extremely broad support for the Detroit AHR from the start: over 175 letters of support from local governments, business/industry, faith-based groups, citizens, and Canadian organizations were submitted with its 1997 nomination for AHR status. The current steering committee contains over 50 members from elected positions, non-governmental groups, chambers of commerce, private companies, and state agencies.

The Greater Detroit AHR Initiative has been highly successful at catalyzing numerous public-private partnerships for local projects, including 17 greenways projects, 11 "soft engineering" demonstration projects that reverse or prevent hardened shorelines (with a corresponding manual published online), six projects that help restore a

The Flat Rock-Rockwood-Brownstown East/West Connector is a 5-mile greenway trail that connects 4,800 acres of parkland in the Huron River watershed with the lower Detroit River and 4,000 acres of state game land. Construction of this $2.3 million keystone project began in 2002. *Photo: Courtesy of Ron Klingel, City of Flat Rock.*

980-acre historic island urban park called Belle Isle, and three projects that help restore historic Fort Wayne. Federal support has come from many agencies, including the Departments of Transportation and Interior, USACE, and others. Besides being designated as one of 14 American Heritage Rivers in 1998 by the President of the United States, the Detroit River received a Canadian Heritage River designation by the Government of Canada in 2001, making it the first international heritage river system in the world. Further, in 2001 the Detroit River was designated the first International Wildlife Refuge in North America because of its biodiversity and critical habitats. The Detroit AHR was featured prominently in celebrations for Detroit's 300th birthday in 2001. This river community is pinning its future on the revitalized riverfront and improved quality of life found in its AHR action plan. During the first 3 years, the Greater Detroit AHR Initiative has leveraged over $13 million, representing over a 20:1 return on the investment.

## Hanalei River (HI)

The Hanalei River is one of only two navigable waterways in Hawaii. Seventeen miles long and beginning at the wettest place on earth, Mt. Waialeale, the river runs through a verdant valley ending in one of Hawaii's most pristine estuaries. The designation as an American Heritage River provided the small community an opportunity to articulate its concerns and prioritize projects related to the preservation of ancient agricultural lands and globally valued recreational resources. Hanalei people gathered and, utilizing traditional "hui" consensus processes, developed a 5-year watershed action plan. Through the AHR Initiative, the Hanalei Heritage River Project enjoys the active partnership of many federal, state, and Kauai County agencies. Thirteen federal, four state, and six county agencies collaborate on a regular basis and assist the community in their effort to better understand the status of resources in the watershed and plan for protection and restoration where needed. More than a dozen local non-governmental organizations; six educational institutions, including the University of Hawaii; 15 local businesses; and many others agreed to cooperate and find ways to support our efforts. For example, businesses have contributed by providing supplies and equipment to implement several projects. Agencies donate regularly by working to transfer the Hanalei model effort to other communities throughout Hawaii.

Taro (kalo), the staple food of Polynesians, is the cultural-economic link of the Hawaiian people to their creation as kanaka maoli, native people. Taro, sibling of the first human, today provides the world with many nutritious products and a magnificent Hanalei agricultural landscape.

Administratively funded by the USDA Forest Service, governed by a hui of volunteers, and coordinated by elected staff, the Hanalei Heritage River Program has enjoyed enthusiastic support from all partners. With in-kind community matches exceeding direct funding, the impact of the initiative in Hanalei is exemplified by the program's ability to convene conversations between partners with real results. The value of this leverage cannot be measured in monetary terms. The community is heard and helped as it strives to steward resources and economic diversity.

One of the major ongoing projects is the highly successful citizen-based water quality monitoring program, with U.S. Geological Survey leadership, which has identified significant fecal coliform contamination in the Hanalei; there had been limited monitoring of the river until this monitoring began. Extensive growth of the exotic hau bush along the banks of the Hanalei is also a problem, and the community has obtained a Five-Star EPA/National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant to study alternative removal techniques. The community continues to work on another key objective of the Hanalei AHR - improving communication between local taro farmers and federal and state officials whose programs could affect this cultural and sacred resource of Hawaii.

The Hanalei Heritage River Program was honored in February with an invitation from NOAA to travel to New York City to speak at a United Nations preparatory meeting for the 2002 Earth Summit in Johannesburg. Hanalei's community-based program and water quality monitoring projects were presented as "real time" sustainability models.

The Hanalei Heritage River Program does not measure its successes in dollars, but rather in traditional terms of building consensus and its ability to support those actions appropriate to this special place and its heritage.

## Hudson River (NY)

The Hudson American Heritage River Initiative in New York brings together an active local, state, and federal partnership that represents 15 federal agencies, seven state agencies, and over 300 local groups and individuals committed to one or more of the 40 active AHRI projects on the Hudson. In the past several years, New Yorkers have taken extraordinary steps to clean and protect the 315-mile long Hudson River, and the American Heritage Rivers Initiative ensures that federal attention as well is focused on this river of historic importance.

The Esopus Meadows lighthouse, on the Hudson River in Port Ewen, New York, was transferred from the U.S. Coast Guard into a public trust under the AHR Initiative. The lighthouse will be operated by a non-profit group as a museum and educational facility for the public. *Photo: Courtesy of Eric Scherer.*

The Hudson has received focused attention by the New York State and the federal governments in recent years. In 2002 alone, Governor George E. Pataki, the official AHR community partner, committed more than $2.8 million for high-priority projects to improve water quality within the Hudson River Estuary. This funding builds on the Governor's unprecedented commitment to revitalize the Hudson River while protecting and enhancing surrounding river communities. For example, since 1995, Governor Pataki has made the restoration and protection of the Hudson River a priority and has committed a total of more than $173 million in state funds for projects to implement the priorities of the Hudson River estuary management plan. The plan emphasizes managing aquatic resources, preserving open space, enhancing recreational opportunities, improving water quality, revitalizing the river's economy, and promoting stewardship through partnerships.

By serving as a facilitator to ease complexities of federal permitting processes, the Hudson AHR Initiative has helped to lower the costs to local governments (estimated at $610,000) for developing riverfront water-based activities. In another success, the Hudson River Navigator has assisted in the transfer of three federal properties (light stations) to state and local groups. The lighthouses and light attendant stations are key to local economic development and river access. Local estimates of their combined value exceed $4.5 million. Other ongoing AHRI projects are expected to attract an additional $4.9 million over the next several years. Additionally, the initiative has brought substantial non-monetary benefits to the Hudson simply by having a River Navigator coordinating federal activities on a daily basis with state and local partnerships. Through this innovative, collaborative approach, the Hudson River stands as a model for effective implementation of the initiative.

## Lower Mississippi River (TN/LA/MS)

Community partners in the Lower Mississippi River region continue to grow in all aspects related to the American Heritage River in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In Tennessee, the Memphis Riverfront Development Corporation, created to shepherd the renovation of the city's waterfront, has invested over $1 million to develop a master plan. The city of Memphis has spent approximately $7 million (including $1.7 million in federal transportation enhancement grants) for construction of a portion of a bluff riverwalk and restoration of historical riverfront cobblestones, and

Memphis has constructed a bluff riverwalk and restored historical riverfront cobblestones along the Lower Mississippi River.

is spending $100,000 for a master plan for the Wolf River greenway. Memphis has also allocated $2 million to acquire land along the Nonconnah River in conjunction with a USACE flood control project that will be the foundation for the Nonconnah River greenway.

In Mississippi, the communities of Vicksburg and Natchez continue to work to obtain funding from numerous sources to restore their historical towns and waterfronts. Each city and its surrounding county have submitted a proposal to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) requesting to be added to the Lower Mississippi AHR designation.

The designated stretch of the Lower Mississippi in Louisiana runs from Baton Rouge to the Gulf of Mexico. The Woodlands Trail and Park located in Belle Chase, Louisiana, is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the natural environment in one of the region's last stands of bottomland hardwoods. Woodlands is collaborating with many partners including the National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Navy, Tulane University, the state, and local parish governments to bring their project to fruition. Eleven Louisiana parishes are AHR partners, actively restoring their cultural heritage by facilitating the restoration of plantation homes and riverfront communities, and by creating scenic overlooks and pedestrian/bike pathways that will connect the parishes, creating greater accessibility for the local communities and visitors alike. In New Orleans, the planning for a National Center of the Mississippi River is underway. The center will house research laboratories, classrooms, conference rooms, a major museum affiliated with the Smithsonian Institution, and a waterfront amphitheater. The city has also worked to obtain funding through the EPA, USACE, Xavier University, and Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality for a brownfield restoration project to provide much needed space for the expansion of Booker T. Washington Vocational High School. Support of these achievements by the American Heritage Rivers Initiative will only help to ensure the success of their growth and prosperity as river communities.

## Upper Mississippi River (MN/WI/IL/MO/IA)

The Upper Mississippi AHR Initiative encompasses over 50 individual river communities, including those in St. Louis and Hannibal, Missouri; the Quad Cities at Davenport and Bettendorf, Iowa; Moline and Rock Island, Illinois; as well as other medium-sized river towns in Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, and north to the Twin Cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, and many of the smaller river towns of this metropolitan area. There is a proposal pending at CEQ from seven additional river communities and the entire Mississippi Headwaters watershed in Minnesota to "opt-in" to the Upper Mississippi AHR designation.

Despite the fact that this AHR designation covers the most diverse collection of river communities, community partners along the Upper Mississippi

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board has completed the first phase of Mill Ruins Park, an urban archaeological park, including installation of trails, re-opening of the main trailrace that empties into the Upper Mississippi Rivers and excavation of the first section of historic flour mill foundations. *Photo: Courtesy of the Minneapolis Community Development Agency.*

River have successfully utilized the AHR Initiative in their efforts to form new partnerships, and these have resulted in numerous accomplishments.

Examples include the formation of a Twin Cities AHR Initiative plan of action that includes 19 river communities and over 40 river organizations working together in the Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. In Minneapolis, over 2,000 housing units are under construction; many historic buildings have been preserved and key park and trail projects completed. Construction is underway at the Minnesota Historical Society's Mill City Museum, a major interpretive center that has been designated by the "Save America's Treasures" effort. In Saint Paul, a new riverfront Science Museum of Minnesota, includes a Mississippi River Gallery created in partnership with NPS, and a new Mississippi River National Center is expected to open in 2003. In addition to the numerous local projects underway, work groups organized on issues of shared interest are beginning to achieve results and have increased the number of local partners involved in the AHR Initiative, including the planned development of a surface water management plan in partnership with the USACE.

One major shared effort is the planned re-creation of an excursion led by former President Millard Fillmore from the Quad Cities to the Twin Cities in 1854. Named the Grand Excursion 2004, this large-scale event includes related educational programming. It has provided additional momentum to local governments to complete riverfront projects to showcase the Mississippi River and the Upper Midwest to the rest of the country and the world.

At the Port of Dubuque, Iowa, efforts to reshape the riverfront are focused on establishing a national campus that is devoted to learning about and exploring the Mississippi River. Their $188 million America's River project features the Mississippi River Discovery Center, a 68,000-square-foot interpretive center with aquariums and interactive exhibits; the River National Conference and Education Center; the Grand Harbor Hotel; and the Riverwalk, complete with a riverfront amphitheater, boat docks, and hiking/biking trails.

Other partnerships are successfully working in the Quad Cities and St. Louis metropolitan areas, where work is focused on community redevelopment, green space, preserving cultural sites, and educational outreach. Many other participating river communities have also attracted resources to help them achieve significant accomplishments. For example, Great River Greening, a major reforestation program, has planted 26,000 trees and shrubs, and nearly 12,000 wildflowers, and restored nearly 47 acres of prairie along the river.

The upcoming bicentennial of the Lewis & Clark expedition is spurring new river projects in the St. Louis metropolitan area of Missouri and Illinois. Non-profit and governmental agencies are working in partnership to create the Confluence Greenway, a 200 square-mile corridor along the Mississippi that conserves and restores significant open space as the foundation for an extensive network of recreational trails linking the area's many sites of natural and historical importance.

Over the last 3 years, community partners have successfully leveraged well over $100 million in support of these projects; however, this support represents only a small part of the total needed.

## New River (NC/VA/WV)

The New River AHR Initiative and the New River Community Partners have been highly successful at advancing numerous proposals

New River Community Partners—in partnership with New River State Park, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the North Carolina Division of Water Resources—has secured funding for three state park projects that will result in major stream bank stabilization and repair, the addition of prime migratory bird habitat, and a workshop on stream bank stabilization techniques targeted toward private landowners. *Photo: Courtesy of New River State Park.*

borne out of their 1999 Watershed Work Plan that includes over 335 proposals in 21 counties in North Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia. These 335 proposals fall within six major categories: historic and cultural preservation, economic revitalization, natural resource protection, education and training, agriculture, and transportation and trails. Notable ongoing successes include: the Ashe County Courthouse Renovation, the Blue Ridge Telecenter, the New River Sustainable Agriculture Initiative, a hazard mitigation plan for the New River watershed, the Todd projects, and the New River Blueway project. During their first 3 years, the New River Community Partners have assisted community partners in leveraging over $20 million in federal, state, local, and private funds.

## Potomac River (MD/VA/WV/PA/DC)

The Potomac AHR Initiative has been an effective way to help local governments, private groups, and businesses help themselves to regenerate the ecology and economy of the watershed. Through its community partner, Friends of the Potomac, the focus in the Potomac basin, "the Nation's River," has been directed at local citizens, initiatives, and decision-making. Working in partnership with its 200-member organizations and playing an important catalytic role, the Friends of the Potomac has used federal recognition to secure financial, technical, and information services to educate citizens, build local capacity, broker federal resources, celebrate water quality and living resource improvements, and recognize exemplary local and private sector achievements. Specifically, the Friends, with assistance from federal agencies, has:

The Leadership Potomac class at the Fairfax Stone, the source of the Potomac River. *Photo: Courtesy of Dasha Kimmelman of the Friends of the Potomac.*

- Established a Potomac River Center that currently houses five watershed-based organizations and provides a gathering place for watershed groups throughout the basin (NPS, General Services Administration);
- Developed a watershed-based "Leadership Potomac" training program (EPA);
- Assisted more than 1,000 community leaders through 12 community partner workshops;
- Held an annual Nation's River Bass Tournament;
- Helped to launch a watershed-wide heritage tourism initiative;
- Published a monthly newsletter that goes to 500 watershed leaders;
- Recognized 20 local Potomac initiatives; and
- Secured more than $2 million in federal grants and over $100,000 in private funds.

Moreover, since the Potomac was designated an American Heritage River, the Friends effort has leveraged an additional $6 million in grants and services to watershed communities.

## Rio Grande (TX)

Communities from El Paso to Brownsville came together to nominate the Texas portion of the Rio Grande as an American Heritage River. The Consortium of the Rio Grande, or CoRio, membership was drawn from 25 cities, seven counties, and other local organizations along the river whose jurisdictions cover 2 million people. The AHR nomination was spearheaded by a 150-member citizens advisory committee, which developed CoRio's primary objectives. Various regional and local non-profits are also furthering the goals of CoRio's primary objectives and those of the Rio Grande AHR. For example, the Rio Grande Institute is assisting communities in disaster mitigation and capacity building, securing support from FEMA and EDA. Like the Detroit AHR, the Rio Grande runs along a U.S. border, and the Rio Grande Institute is working bi-nationally to develop grassroots strategies for Rio Grande watershed protection.

Among specific successes, El Paso is directing its energies toward creation of a 42-mile Rio Grande Riverpark, with support from the NPS, connecting

significant sites along the river corridor through a series of trails, cultural destinations, community parks, and historical markers. A Housing and Urban Development project in El Paso has provided elderly housing in Socorro. The NPS has provided funds for land acquisition and construction of the Palo Alto Battlefield Heritage Center near Brownsville, securing matching state and private foundation grants. Brownsville is actively pursuing a resaca (oxbow lake) restoration project and creation of a linear park with USACE support. Laredo is working toward fulfillment of its

In winter, up to 5,000 ducks and other waterbirds use the wetlands at Rio Bosque Wetlands Park along the Rio Grande in El Paso, Texas. *Photo: Courtesy of the University of Texas at El Paso.*

vision for the El Portal riverfront project, also with USACE support. This project seeks to make full use of the Rio Grande as an economic resource (commercial development and tourism), while also emphasizing the ecological, geological, cultural, historical, and recreational values shared throughout the river communities.

So far, community partners have been successful in leveraging over $9 million in local, state, and federal dollars to assist them in completing many important projects designed to fulfill the objectives and reflect the honor associated with the Rio Grande's designation as an American Heritage River. The designation has been instrumental in building a renewed spirit of partnership among participating communities along North America's fifth longest river. The cities of El Paso, Brownsville, and Laredo have been key participants in a dynamic effort to seek economic revitalization while also protecting the natural environment and preserving the river's vast cultural and historic resources.

## St. Johns River (FL)

The AHR Initiative has fostered stronger ties among communities along the 310-mile run of the St. Johns River and increased interest in the river's history, culture, and natural resources. The St. Johns AHR is guided by a steering committee composed of 26 members, including one member of Congress, five county commissioners, and two mayors. Three river basin advisory committees (Upper, Middle, and Lower) advise the steering committee; each advisory committee has two county commissioners and membership ranging from 20 to 26 members. The Lower St. Johns River Basin Advisory Committee also has four mayors, including the Mayor of Jacksonville, John Delaney, who is the official community partner of the St. Johns AHR.

One of the most important accomplishments has been the rise of a river-centric network of people interested in improving the health of this beautiful resource by cooperating with each other on projects of mutual interest, and increasing stewardship among nearby communities. Other examples of significant projects and resources leveraged include:

The St. Johns River Eco-Heritage Web site serves as a source of information about significant activities and sites along the St. Johns River, and is a unifier of the 310-mile long watershed. *Photo: Courtesy of St. John's Eco-Heritage Corridor Committee.*

- The St. Johns River Eco-Heritage Corridor keystone project ($150,000),
- Purchase of flood-prone wetlands adjacent to the river and wastewater treatment plant improvements ($27.2 million),
- A 2-year water quality study ($240,000),
- An educational video about the St. Johns River ($250,000), and
- A project to remove exotic species along the Lake George shoreline ($22,000).

With the river network now in place and greater interaction among agencies, public officials, and local communities, the coming years promise to bring to fruition a number of projects that have only been dreamed about to date.

## Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna Rivers (PA)

The Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna AHR Initiative has made great strides to elevate the watershed to new levels of economic and environmental prosperity. The AHR Initiative has worked on numerous successful projects including: (1) developing a nationally recognized environmental master plan of the region using state-of-the-art geographic information system technology; (2) creating CityVest, a non-profit community development corporation, which has now raised more than $2 million to revitalize blighted residential and commercial properties in the downtown urban centers of the watershed; (3) securing additional federal funds to reclaim abandoned mine land and reduce acid-mine drainage, repair combined storm and sewer overflows, conduct real-time water quality monitoring on the Susquehanna River, clean tributaries of the Susquehanna River, and upgrade wastewater systems; (4) enhancing public access and recreational amenities along the Susquehanna River; (5) formulating a tax-credit bond proposal to finance the purchase, restoration, and reclamation of land and water in the entire anthracite fields of Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Converting the blighted Sterling Hotel back into a commercial and residential activity center once again is a keystone project of the Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna AHR Initiative.

In the first 3 years of the Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna AHR Initiative, federal funding in the watershed has increased by more than $15 million for these and many other economic development, environmental protection, and cultural/historical preservation projects.

These accomplishments have been achieved by working closely with numerous community partners, including Wilkes University, Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor, Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce, Earth Conservancy, Susquehanna Economic Development Agency, Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Riverfront Parks, Lackawanna River Corridor Association, Friends of the Nescopeck, Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, Congressman Paul Kanjorski, Congressman Tim Holden, and the Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation. The Upper Susquehanna-Lackawanna AHR Initiative has also received tremendous support from the government leaders in Lackawanna, Luzerne, Columbia, Montour, Northumberland, and Schuylkill counties and over 50 cities, townships, and boroughs.

## Willamette River (OR)

The success of the Willamette AHR Initiative has been based on locally driven and designed solutions, local support, and partnerships. The community partner for the Willamette AHR Initiative is an Oregon state organization, the Willamette Restoration Initiative (WRI). Working together with WRI, the Willamette AHR Initiative has built partnerships with federal support from NOAA, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, EPA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and NPS that include:

- Working with five cities, several counties, and other interested groups to plan a potential regional river corridor system;

Bike path along the Willamette River facilitates recreation and a connection with riverbank habitats. *Photo: Courtesy of the City of Eugene.*

- Helping regional federal agencies implement a technical assistance program to support local watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts;
- Supporting informational and educational activities throughout the basin; and
- Providing funding for local needs and supporting local restoration projects.

Recently, the Willamette AHR Initiative worked with local partners to host the first convention of Willamette River Cities in May of 2002 to discuss interactions with the river. The River Cities 2002 conference explored methods and tools for reconnecting cities with the Willamette, bringing together Willamette Basin elected officials, landowners, natural resource planners, community development specialists, and parks and public works officials. It created opportunities to build a basin-wide perspective on the visions, activities, and issues at work along the river and developed networks that can help further river-related goals. In the summer of 2002, the Willamette AHR Initiative began a series of watershed tours to expose decision-makers to the many exciting restoration activities in the basin, and also to acquaint them with local issues and needs.

Recent funds generated by the Willamette AHR ($410,000) were four times the costs of the program for fiscal year 2001. Projected multi-year funding ($1,298,000) is 13 times the cost of the program.

## Acknowledgements

In September 2002, the AHR Initiative lost an important leader with the death of Mr. Peter W. Stroh. Peter Stroh provided national and local leadership through chairing the Executive Committee of the Greater Detroit AHR Initiative. He exemplified the principles of the AHR Initiative and this report is dedicated in his memory. Peter Stroh's enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment to the AHR Initiative will live on through the work of community and business partners.

The AHR Initiative 2002 annual report was coordinated by John Hartig, Detroit River Navigator with the U.S. Department of Transportation, and Bess Gillelan, Director of the Task Force on American Heritage Rivers with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

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