

# TUALATIN RIVER FAST FACTS:

- Our headwaters can be found in the east slopes of the Oregon Coast Range, a little west of Cherry Grove. The river starts at River Mile 79.3 in the mountains, and meets the Willamette River in West Linn. That's River Mile 0 for the Tualatin, but around 28.5 on the Willamette. The Tualatin River is 79.3 miles from start to finish, and it's the northernmost tributary to meet the Willamette.
- Rain water is the primary source for the river, not snow. In the winter, flow ranges from 2,000-3,500 cubic feet/second (cfs) with peaks of 7,000. The peak flow during the February floods in '96 was 30,000 cfs.
- In the summer the river typically flows at 150 cfs. Up to 50% of the summer flow can be attributed to water from treatment plants, and is maintained by releases from Hagg Lake or sometimes by releases from Barney Reservoir on the upper Trask River.
- The elevation drop in the lower Tualatin is 1 inch per mile, which is why the river is so good for paddling. In contrast, the elevation drop in the upper Tualatin is 72 feet per mile. The water is brown-ish in the lower Tualatin because of many small suspended soil particles.
- Four known waterfalls exist on the Tualatin: Little Lee Falls (RM 69.42), Lee Falls (RM 71.01), Haines Falls (RM 73.28), and Ki-A-Cut Falls (RM 77.0).
- The Tualatin River Watershed drains through 712 square miles through 6 counties including: Washington, Yamhill, Multnomah, Clackamas, Tillamook, and Columbia. The Chehalem and Parrot Mountains form the southern border of the Tualatin River Basin. More than 350,000\* people get their drinking water from the Tualatin River. Dams on the river include Scoggins Dam, and the Lake Oswego Corps. Diversion Dam.
- There are 34 named tributaries of the Tualatin. Most of them are creeks including: Fields, Tate, Wilson, Shipley, Pecan, Athey, Saum, Hedges, Fanno, Chicken, McFee, Burris, Christensen, Butternut, Golden, Rock, Beaverton, Davis, Dairy, McKay, Gales, Carpenter, Dilley, Johnson, O'Neil, Scoggins, Wapato, Black Jack, Hering, Roaring, Lee, Patton, Sunday, & Maple. Dairy Creek is the largest subbasin, draining 231 square miles.

# TUALATIN RIVER HISTORY & WILDLIFE:

- Columbia River basalt flowed through what is now the Tualatin River Basin millions of years ago. As the Juan de Fuca tectonic plate shifted, sediment was scraped off and mixed with basalt to form the Coast Range.
- 12,000-15,000 years ago (during the last Ice Age) the Clark Fork of the Columbia River was dammed by a huge glacier in Montana. As the climate warmed, 500 cubic miles of water broke free and drained, displacing 50 cubic miles of soil from eastern Washington into what is now the Columbia River Gorge. The floodwater eventually flowed through the Willamette River and drained into the Tualatin Basin, settling into the watershed we know today. These events, known as the Bretz Floods, reoccurred every 50 years for 2,000 years.
- The first known human inhabitants of the Tualatin Basin were the Atfaliti Indigenous Peoples. After the area was settled, historic uses of the river included logging, trapping, farming, and steamboat traffic. Current uses in the watershed include water treatment, drinking water, outdoor recreation, logging, mining, farming, and irrigation. 93% of the land is now privately owned.
- Common plants and trees you might see along the river include: Oregon ash, vine maple, Pacific dogwood, Western hemlock, white oak, Western red cedar, bigleaf maple, Douglas fir, Oregon grape, black cottonwood, and filberts. Keep your eyes out for non-native plants too, like Himalayan blackberry, scotch broom, reed canary grass, purple loosestrife, English holly, and English ivy.
- While some of these animals are good at staying hidden, we have a lot of wildlife in the Tualatin River Basin! Look for beavers, rough-skinned newts, mink, river otters, long-toed salamanders, crawfish, Pacific tree frogs, painted turtles, red-legged frogs, and Western pond turtles. We have lots of different fish in the Tualatin River, including Pacific lamprey, coho salmon, cutthroat trout, bluegill, yellow perch, sculpins, and threatened winter steelhead. There are also many birds including our green heron mascot, but we suggest grabbing a guidebook for those.

THE INFORMATION LISTED ABOVE WAS PROVIDED BY THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE, PUBLICATIONS, AND ORGANIZATIONS: ROB BAUR, SUE MARSHALL, AND RICK BANTON (TUALATIN RIVERKEEPERS); TUALATIN RIVER WATERSHED COUNCIL; TUALATIN RIVER NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE; JOINT WATER COMMISSION, TUALATIN VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT; GLIMPSSES OF THE TUALATIN RIVER (CLEAN WATER SERVICES); TUALATIN RIVER CANOE TRAIL INTERPRETIVE PAMPHLET (PACIFIC UNIVERSITY); LAND OF TUALITY (WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY).  
INFORMATION WAS ORIGINALLY COMPILED IN 1997 AND UPDATED FOR ACCURACY IN 2020.