

Salem's Riverfront Park

One Park, Many Sights



Tribute to former Governor Tom McCall

Bounding the historic downtown district to the west is Salem's Riverfront Park. Breathtaking views of the river combine with opportunities for outdoor concerts and community events in this picturesque setting. Here visitors will find Salem's Riverfront Carousel, with its 42 hand-carved wooden horses and two "Oregon Trail" wagons. A community project from its inception, all of the horses were hand-carved and hand-painted by volunteers who contributed over 80,000 hours to bring this project to life. Ranked among the nation's best carousels, Salem's Riverfront Carousel appeals to young and old alike as they experience one of childhood's most memorable pleasures.

On the south end of the park is the Eco Earth Globe, a stunning piece of art created out of tile icons made by local artists and students that reflect the world's diversity on land and water. This sphere was originally a large pressurized tank used by Boise Cascade Paper Mill to hold acid that cooked wood chips into pulp. After the mill ended operations, City officials requested the ball to be left there for the possibility of future projects. What came about is the now well-known attraction in the park near the river.

Oregon Trail Pioneers were drawn to settle in Salem by its proximity to the Willamette River, fertile soils and mild climate – with the added bonus of spectacular scenic beauty. Located on the river is the Willamette Queen Sternwheeler, an 87-foot twin paddle-wheeler that departs year-round from Salem's Riverfront Park. The Willamette Queen provides an opportunity to experience travel on what once was the state's main transportation thoroughfare – the river. Take a turn at the wheel and earn your certification as "Junior Riverboat Captain."

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Photos below, l to r: Salem's Riverfront Carousel; Willamette Queen Sternwheeler; A.C. Gilbert's Discovery Village; Eco Earth Globe.

