



The Peshastin Lumber and Box mill has a rich and long history in the development of the Wenatchee River valley. It was originally constructed by E.L. Sawyer in 1928. It was a great source of pride and employment for those who lived in the Peshastin and Leavenworth area. From the 1930s to 1970s, most of the homes in the area were constructed with lumber from the mill. Due to a dwindling supply of logs all the mills in Chelan County were closed by the late 1980s. The Peshastin mill sawed its last log in November, 1988.

The property sat idle for several years. Ultimately it was sold by WI Forest Products to a group of investors from the Peshastin Hi UP fruit cooperative. After much deliberation, the Port of Chelan County purchased the 61-acre mill site in 2003 with hopes of creating a business park. But the port ultimately abandoned its plans because of the high cost of development and the necessity of establishing a second access to the site. The port declared the property surplus in December 2006.

Last summer the port actively sought purchasers for the property. As a first step, it decided to see if any group would want to purchase the 14 acres of pristine riverfront land that is almost three-quarters-of-a-mile long so that it might be preserved for public use. The asking price was \$460,000. It is the longest stretch of undeveloped low-bank waterfront remaining on the Wenatchee River from Wenatchee to Leavenworth.

The Complete the Loop Coalition (CTLC), the visionaries of the Wenatchee Loop Trail, stepped up to the challenge and signed an earnest money agreement to tie up the property until a holder for the property could be found and the purchase price secured. The vision for the property is simple: Preserve the waterfront in its existing primitive state and save it for walking, jogging, biking, bird watching, picnicking, fishing and other water sports for current and future generations. It would also serve as an important piece of a possible trail connecting Peshastin and Leavenworth in the future. Several meetings were held to encourage interested parties to participate and seek an entity with permanent staff and management experience to take ownership and keep the property clean and open to the public.

The enthusiastic fishermen of the Icicle Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers joined the effort. Similarly the Leavenworth Winter Sports Club (which has groomed a cross-country ski course on the property in the past) signed on. The Wenatchee Row and Paddle Club, the Chelan Douglas Land Trust, the Trust for Public Land, the Wenatchee Sportsmen's Association, American Whitewater and the Peshastin Community Council have also expressed interest.

We are pleased to announce the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has agreed to take ownership of the historic site, once the fund drive is successful in securing the property. While supportive of general public use of the land, they also see acquiring this property as a means to preserve the opportunity for bank fishermen to have river access, since so much private access has been closed to the public. To assist this effort the Port District has agreed to provide funds to assist in the operations and maintenance for the first five years.

Here is the really terrific news: At the initial meeting of interested parties, the CTLC announced that an anonymous donor has pledged \$50,000 to jump start the fund raising. At the same time, Dr. Eliot Scull announced a challenge matching gift of \$100,000 to encourage others to join this significant effort. In a sense, we are potentially a third of the way to our goal!

If you agree with us this unique land belongs in public ownership, and are interested in contributing time or resources to this project to save this incredible three-quarters of a mile of pristine waterfront, contact Trout Unlimited at 509-888-0970. View our website, [SavePeshastinMillWaterfront.org](http://SavePeshastinMillWaterfront.org), to see a slide show of the property and become familiar with the proposal, and hopefully make an online gift. We will be distributing brochures at local shops and public places. We have 15 months to reach our goal.

If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, please make checks payable to

Trout Unlimited - Peshastin Mill, 103 Palouse St. No. 14, Wenatchee, WA 98801.

Or you may make online at [SavePeshastinMillWaterfront.org](http://SavePeshastinMillWaterfront.org).

*Bob Parlette, a Wenatchee resident since 1972, is an attorney, fruit grower and visionary for the Complete the Loop Coalition. Rollie Schmitten is a former Cashmere city councilman, port commissioner, state legislator, and state and federal director of fisheries. Bob Stroup is a retired educator of 38 years, and past president of the Icicle Chapter of Trout Unlimited.*