

Correction: Umpqua River Ownership

The 2007 “Public Use of Oregon’s Rivers and Lakes” brochure contains incorrect information about Oregon’s ownership of the Umpqua River. The Umpqua is Oregon-owned from its mouth (at River Mile 0.0 at Winchester Bay) to the head of tide (at approximately River Mile 28 near Scottsburg).

The old brochure incorrectly stated ownership to the confluence of the north and south forks at river mile 111.5.

A new printable waterway brochure is coming soon. For now, the [Public Use of Waterways webpage](#) has current and correct information. **Please recycle the old brochures.**

Enjoying the Umpqua River

From river mile 0 to 28

- This section of the Umpqua River was declared Oregon-owned in 1976.
- The public has the right to use Oregon-owned waterways for navigation, commerce, recreation, and fishing. The beds and banks of these waterways may be used to the line of ordinary high water, typically where shrubs, trees, and other plants begin to grow. See the [Public Use of Waterways](#) webpage for more details.

Beyond river mile 28

The below information is based on a [2005 Oregon Attorney General Opinion](#) addressing the public’s right to use a waterway if Oregon’s ownership has not been determined.

- The public has the right to use a waterway that is “navigable-for-public-use,” which means a waterway long, wide, and deep enough for a boat to move through. Generally, the Umpqua River is navigable-for-public-use.
- The public may:
 - Use these waterways for navigation, commerce, recreation, and fishing.
 - Use the bank of a waterway that is navigable-for-public-use if the use is “necessary” to the lawful use of the waterway. For example, going around an obstruction, retrieving a paddle, or providing first aid.
- Waterways that are not navigable-for-public-use are generally closed to the public unless the landowner gives permission. For example, small tributaries of the Umpqua River may not be long, deep, or wide enough for boats to move through.

The Department cannot provide any additional guidance on use of waterways that have not been determined to be Oregon-owned. For more information on how waterways are determined to be Oregon-owned, visit the [Public Use of Waterways web page](#).

Contact Us

Please feel free to contact the Department of State Lands with questions about ownership or use of the Oregon-owned portion of the Umpqua River: Proprietary Specialist Blake Helm, blake.helm@dsl.oregon.gov; 971-701-1507.