

Rosenthal, Garrett. *Upper Willamette River Basin: Industrial Wastes Study*. Eugene, OR: Lane Council of Governments, February 1978. (Reviewed by Alletta Brenner)

This report provides a comprehensive examination of water quality in the upper Willamette Basin, in and around the Eugene/Springfield area during the late 1970s. While focusing primarily on industrial contributions to water pollution, it gives a thorough explanation of all the major waterways—their condition, and their relation to the Willamette River. With numerous maps showing industrial sites responsible for discharges, both point source and non-point source, and outlines of the individual regulations and permits to which each is subject. In particular, it outlines the composition of these discharges respective of each of these sites. Included in the report is also some discussion on general human impact, ranging from run-off from roads and parking lots, to discharges from sewage treatment plants and non-point discharges from residential areas. Significantly, the report discusses the impact that future growth of the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area will have on water quality, and use.

The most important element of this report, may be that it shows that even with fairly stringent water quality codes and regulations (and most notably, just a few years after the river was declared clean), there remained significant water quality issues in the tributaries of the river, including both organic and chemical wastes. Much of this pollution appears to result from run off from streets and industrial sites (non-point sources) making the problem more difficult to locate and ameliorate. Despite this difficulty, the report provides several major recommendations for the improvement of water quality, including the creation of more extensive riparian, settling basins, and lagoons, which help filter pollutants from the water before it reaches the river. Others include the separation of contaminated storm flows away from sensitive water areas, the development of alternate use and or recycling programs for some industrial discharges, better sewage treatment (already addressed in the new plant in development), and closer analysis and monitoring of water quality.

Critique:

This report provides an excellent tool for understanding the water quality issues that affected the Willamette Basin in the years soon after the enactment of major water quality legislation and “clean up.” Created and published by the local authorities of Lane County, in cooperation with both the DEQ, and local community groups, and funded by an EPA grant, this report provides some interesting insight into the ways these different groups cooperated on these issues. Likewise, centered from a government standpoint, it gives a good picture of the political and economic concerns surrounding policy, in particular those involving urban growth. Based upon predictions for the year 2000, many of these policy recommendations may also provide some insight into the accuracy of such forecasts, and whether or not these strategies have been successful in locating and mitigating water quality problems. Another useful aspect of this report is in its detailed account of the various industries of the Eugene/Springfield area at the time, the types of emissions they made, and in what ways they were controlled. Again, these may be used to make a comparative analysis for the industries and policies of today. Overall, I found this report to be a very useful source of information.

[return to info sources page](#)

[return to home page](#)