

# Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Working Group Meeting

Facilitated by U.S. EPA Regions 10 and 8 with support from Greg Frey, The Council Oak

October 22, 2020  
9:30 AM – 4:00 PM PST  
Webinar

## Attendees:

- Alan Kolok, University of Idaho
- Alex Danielsen, Hood River Watershed Group
- Alexis Baker, Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation (USRTF)
- Amy Boyd, Cowlitz Indian Tribe
- Andrea Sumarau, Siletz Tribe
- Andrew Gillespie, EPA ORD
- Andrew Swanson, Clackamas County and Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies
- Andy James, University of Washington Tacoma
- Ben Jarvis, ID Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ)
- Bill Weiler, Sandy River Watershed Council
- Brad Barnhardt, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement
- Brian Wolcott, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council
- Brittany Wendell, Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center
- Bryan DeDoncker, Clark County, WA
- Carl Merkle, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Carol Kriebs, Kootenai Tribe of Idaho
- Catherine Corbett, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
- Chauncey Means, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)
- Cody Desautel, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Colin Eaglesmith, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
- Dan Kent, Salmon Safe
- Dave McBride, WA State Department of Health
- David Farahollahi, USGS
- Dena Horton, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association
- Dianne Barton, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)
- Dorothy Sperry, Port of Portland
- Dorrie Sutton, City of Vancouver, WA
- Ed Gonzalez, Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center
- Elaine Placido, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership
- Elaine Snouwaert, WA Ecology
- Elena Evans, Missoula Valley Water Quality District
- Elena Nilson, USGS
- Gary Bahr, Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA)
- Giffe Johnson, National Council for Air and Stream Improvement
- Gilbert Drake, Natural Resource Conservation Service
- Hayley Schnae, University of Idaho
- Heather Hendrixson, Hood River Soil and Water Conservation District
- Ian Waite, USGS
- James Mc Ateer, QA/QC Solutions, LLC
- James Willacker, USGS
- Jan Boll, WA State University
- Jane Creech, WA Department of Ecology (WA Ecology)
- Jason Pappani, IDEQ
- Jay Davis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

- Jeff Merkley, U.S. Senator (OR)
- Jen Bayer, USGS
- Jennifer Morace, USGS
- Jessica Keys, Senator Jeff Merkley's Office
- Jim McKenna, OR Governor's Office
- Jim Medlin, WA Ecology
- Karl Rains, WA Ecology
- Karma Anderson, NRCS
- Katheryn Rifenburg, City of Albany, OR
- Keith Dublanica, WA State Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
- Keith Seiders, WA Ecology
- Ken Bailey, Orchard View Farms, OR
- Ken Clark, Nez Perce Tribe
- Keri Handaly, City of Gresham, OR
- Kevin Masterson, OR Department of Environmental Quality (OR DEQ)
- Kevin Scribner, Salmon Safe
- Kira Lynch, EPA Region 10
- Kirk Shimeall, Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development
- Kris Carre, EPA Region 10
- Krystyna Wolniakowski, Columbia River Gorge Commission
- Laura Robinson, Upper Columbia United Tribes
- Laura Shira, Yakama Nation
- Linda Anderson-Carnahan, EPA Region 10
- Logan Hollers, Senator Jeff Merkley's Office
- Lorri Epstein, Columbia Riverkeeper
- Margaret Drennan, WSDA
- Mark Peterschmidt, WA Ecology
- Matt Graves, Port of Vancouver, USA
- Michelle Mullin, EPA Region 10
- Milli Chennell, Bonneville Power Administration
- Monica (Nikki) Guillot, City of Vancouver, WA

- Nancy Munn, NOAA Fisheries
- Nanette Nelson, University of Montana
- Natalie Swan, Yakama Nation
- Noah Schmadel, USGS
- Ofelio Borges, WSDA
- Patrick Moran, USGS
- Paula Calvert, OR DEQ
- Rachael Pecore-Valdez, Saturday Academy
- Richard Dinicola, USGS
- Rose Longoria, Yakama Nation
- Roy Iwai, Multnomah County
- Ryan Braham, US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Scott Hauser, Upper Snake River Tribes
- Sherrie Duncan, Sky Environmental
- Sierra Higheagle, Nez Perce Tribe
- Steve Waste, USGS
- Tabitha Espinoza, CSKT
- Tamara Knudsen, Spokane Tribe
- Tim Counihan, USGS
- Tony Olson, EPA ORD
- Warren Colyer, Trout Unlimited
- Whitney Fraser, Lodestone Consulting
- Will Hobbs, WA Ecology
- Yvonne Vallette, EPA Region 10

#### **EPA Columbia River Basin Team**

- Peter Brumm, EPA Region 8
- Lucas DuSablón, EPA Region 10
- Greg Frey, The Council Oak
- Lon Kissinger, EPA Region 10
- Krista Mendelman, EPA Region 10
- Peter Murchie, EPA Region 10
- Erik Peterson, EPA Region 10
- Vicky Salazar, EPA Region 10
- Mary Lou Soscia, EPA Region 10
- Nicole Taylor, EPA Region 10
- Michelle Wilcox, EPA Region 10
- Ashley Zanolli, EPA Region 10

**PowerPoint slides for the following presentations are available online:**

<ftp://newftp.epa.gov/region10/columbiariver/TRWG/Meetings/>

1. Opening Welcome/Introductions
2. Meet the Grantees Slides & Videos
3. USGS Citizen Science Monitoring Program
4. PFAS Around the Basin
5. Washington Department of Ecology local source control City of Vancouver
6. Using crowdsourced crayfish in education, engagement, and bio-monitoring relative to mercury pollution in the Spokane and Boise River Basins
7. Delivering education services during the current pandemic

## **1. Launch of Inaugural CWA Section 123 Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Grants**

Presenter: Mary Lou Soscia, EPA R10

Mary Lou presented an update of the inaugural Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Grants and congratulated the recipients for the first round of grant funding. Details on the grant program can be found at EPA's [Grant Program Website](#).

## **2. Grantee Introductions**

Presenter: Vicky Salazar, EPA R10

Vicky shared an [introductory video that provides an overview of the 2020 Columbia River Restoration Program grants](#). The fourteen grant recipients each gave a brief presentation to introduce their project and provide key highlights of the work supported by their grants. Grantees were grouped into the following categories:

- Pesticide Reduction
  - The [Clean Rivers Coalition, supported by Multnomah County](#) is supporting a multi-year behavior change campaign to reduce pesticides and toxics, and engage citizens, particularly in the Latinx community.
  - The [Washington State Department of Agriculture](#) will engage in a pilot Pesticide Stewardship Partnership and conduct monitoring, reduction, and collection of agricultural pesticides in the Palouse and Yakima River watersheds.
  - [Salmon-Safe](#) will expand efforts to implement water quality protection practices on agricultural lands across the Basin. The project will conduct outreach to more than 500 growers and encourage more than 60 to adopt Salmon-Safe certification practices.
- Monitoring/Sampling
  - The [University of Montana](#) will study mercury in the food web of Flathead Lake, Montana, to understand the impacts of invasive trout suppression, assess the implications on food pantries receiving lake trout, and inform future human health decisions.
  - The Yakama Nation will engage stakeholders in the 600-mile Columbia River Mainstem to develop a monitoring framework for various toxins in fish tissue, sediments, invertebrates, and water.
  - The Nez Perce Tribe will conduct monitoring in the Clearwater River Watershed for toxics, metals, and nutrients. A smaller study will investigate the presence of microplastics in fish and sediment. Data will improve the understanding of the health of tribal waters and traditional foods.

- The University of Washington Tacoma will use mass spectrometry to conduct sampling for contaminants of emerging concern along the Columbia River between Portland and Wauna, Oregon.
- Stormwater Toxics Reduction
  - The Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Resource Center will deliver training to businesses in the Portland Metro Area to encourage the use of safer chemical alternatives in the landscaping and automotive industries.
  - The Washington State Department of Ecology will provide consulting on good housekeeping practices, pollution prevention assistance, and spill kits to small businesses in the Vancouver, Washington, Metro Area.
  - The Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership will install 20 small rain gardens in Columbia County, Oregon, and Cowlitz County, Washington, to reduce zinc and copper runoff from industrial facilities with galvanized metal roofs.
  - The City of Vancouver will conduct monitoring along the Columbia Slope sub-watershed to identify contaminant sources and inform the type and location of future stormwater treatment infrastructure.
- Working with Community Members to Address Toxics
  - The University of Idaho will use community volunteers to collect crayfish in the Spokane and Boise River Basins. Crayfish will be collected and analyzed for mercury which will improve understanding of the extent and impacts of mercury pollution.
  - Columbia Riverkeeper will work to educate more than 20,000 students and community members about actions they can take to reduce and prevent pollution in the Columbia Gorge.
  - Cascade Pacific Resource, Conservation & Development will work with several partners in the Upper Willamette River Watershed to encourage voluntary stormwater infrastructure improvements and conduct outreach to local businesses and BIPOC-led organizations.

For more information and a description of the grant projects please see this [Fact Sheet on 14 Grantees with Project Descriptions](#).

### **Columbia River Basin Restoration Working Group – Brainstorming Session**

Presenter: Greg Frey, Council Oak

This brainstorming session solicited individual opinions about how to make the Working Group successful in both the short- and long-term. Meeting attendees observed that data collection is a common element of the grant activities and other toxics-related work in the Basin. Attendees asked where that data goes and how it can be accessed by others to leverage project results. Meeting attendees were also interested in how to best tell their stories. One suggestion was to utilize Story Maps with interactive geographic information system (GIS) data. There was a suggestion to create several subgroups, including: a Monitoring workshop, a Community Engagement subgroup, an IT/Info Sharing subgroup, and a Story Map subgroup. Individuals were asked if they would prefer one full day meeting or two half days for the next Working Group meeting – most attendees preferred the option for two half-days.

### **3. USGS Citizen Science Monitoring Program**

Presenter: Collin Eagles-Smith, USGS

The Dragonfly Mercury Project is a citizen/community science program for monitoring mercury (Hg) risks to ecosystem and human health. The project's goals are to increase understanding of Hg contamination, increase science literacy, and inform resource management decisions. Dragonflies were

selected because they are widespread in the U.S., demonstrate high site fidelity (tendency of an organism to stay in or habitually return to a area), can inform fishless waters, and are easily sampled. USGS builds field kits and sends them to the National Park Service network, who work with community groups to collect samples which are analyzed by a USGS laboratory. Interactive data and figures are shared publicly in a [Story Map](#). For more information please visit the [Dragonfly Mercury Project Website](#).

#### **4. PFAS Around the Basin**

Presenter: Andrew Gillespie, EPA

Andrew gave an overview of Per- & Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS). Possible sources of PFAS in the Columbia River Basin include: AFFF (firefighting chemical) training/use areas, industrial plant discharges, unlined landfills, land applied biosolids or other industrial wastes (e.g., pulp and paper). The EPA has an [PFAS Action Plan](#) with research component including three research areas: analytical methods, ecotoxicology, and biosolids. For drinking water, EPA has two PFAS methods, [method 537.1](#) and [method 533](#), that can capture 29 PFAS at lower levels than previously achievable. In addition, [Method 8327](#) can be used for non-potable groundwater, surface water, and wastewater. Andrew gave a demo of the PFAS Analytic Tool – contact [anderson-carnahan.linda@epa.gov](mailto:anderson-carnahan.linda@epa.gov) for access to the tool.

#### **5. Best practices for working safely during the pandemic**

Presenters: Elaine Snouwaert, Ecology; Alan Kolok, University of Idaho; and Ofelio Borges, WSDA

*Washington Department of Ecology local source control City of Vancouver*

Elaine presented changes her grant project have made due to Covid-19. Ecology partners with 22 local municipal organizations. They strive to help and give guidance, so their partners can do field work while the organizations themselves set final decisions. In order to adapt, they have held virtual partnership meetings and shifted work towards “things we always wanted to do but didn’t have time” called Unique Program Element Projects (e.g., BMPs for outreach materials and sector specific checklists).

*Using crowdsourced crayfish in education, engagement, and bio-monitoring relative to mercury pollution in the Spokane and Boise River Basins*

For University of Idaho’s crayfish monitoring project, members of the public will be able to use a website to record where they sampled and view data and analytical results. Volunteers will be able to see their efforts recorded and integrated immediately within a larger effort. Their team believes a charismatic invertebrate – like crayfish – will attract citizen science interest because of how much easier it is to sample and collect invertebrates (compared to vertebrates).

*Delivering education services during the current pandemic*

Ofelio presented how his grant project team has tailored their curriculum to go virtual using WebEx to train larger numbers of people online. Their team has found that they can reach out to grower representative organizations and pesticide companies to help overcome issues with in-person training during Covid-19. Some companies are offering free internet to applicators and workers to take trainings.

#### **End of Meeting Summary**

The next Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Working Group will be held in Spring 2021. EPA is prepared to host the meeting via webinar, and it will likely be two half-day meetings. EPA wants to hear what worked well and what aspects of the format and/or meeting facilitation could be improved. EPA welcomes suggestions for presentation topics at future events. Please submit comments or suggestions to Mary Lou Soscia via email at [Soscia.MaryLou@epa.gov](mailto:Soscia.MaryLou@epa.gov).