Columbia River Basin Restoration Working Group Meeting

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

May 11th, 2022
12:30 PM – 4:00 PM (Pacific)
Video Conference

Meeting Attendees

Alexis Malcomb, Upper Snake River Tribes
Andrea Sumerau, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians
Andy James, University of Washington Tacoma
Austin Baldwin, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Ben Jarvis, ID Dept. of Environmental Quality (ID DEQ)
Brad Hermanson, Hermanson Consulting Company LLC
Brain Haug, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Brian Muegge, Salmon-Safe
Brian Wolcott, Salmon-Safe
Brittney Wendell, Pacific Northwest Pollution Prevention Center
Brook Beeler, WA Ecology
Carl Grimm, Metro (Portland, OR)
Carl Merkle, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Catherine Corbett, Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (LCEP)
Cavan Gerrish, U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)
Christopher Mebane, USGS, ID
Collin Eagles-Smith, USGS, Corvallis, OR
Craig A Rideout, Private citizen
Damon Roberts, WA Ecology
Dan Kent, Salmon-Safe
David Wark, University of Washington Tacoma
David Gruen, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (OR DEQ)
Dennis Daw, Upper Snake River Tribes Foundation (USRTF)
Dianne Barton, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC)
Dorrie Sutton, City of Vancouver, WA
DR Michel, Upper Columbia United Tribes
Elaine Placido, LCEP
Emerson C Christie, WA Department of Health
Gary Bahr, WA Department of Agriculture (WA Dept. of Ag)
Gunnar Johnson, U.S. EPA Region 10
Hannah Hämmerli (Hilbert-Wolf), Washington State University
Heather Hendrixson, Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District
Heidi Nelson, OR DEQ
Helen Bottcher, U.S. EPA Region 10
Ian Waite, USGS
James Willacker, USGS
Jason Pappani, ID DEQ
Jennifer Bayer, USGS/Pacific Northwest Aquatic Monitoring Partnership (PNAMP)
Jennifer Morace, USGS
Jessica Keys, U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley's Office
Jim McKenna, OR Governor Kate Brown's Natural Resource Office
Johnna Sandow, NOAA Fisheries
Jonathan Houge, Cowlitz Tribe
Julie Atwood, Yakama Nation
Julie Carter, CRITFC
Julie Wroble, U.S. EPA Region 10
Justin Maynard, Clark County, WA
Karl Rains, WA Ecology
Karma Anderson, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
Kelley Willett, Montana Trout Unlimited
Ken Clark, Nez Perce Tribe
Ken Merrill, Kalispel Tribe
Kevin Masterson, Stony Creek Consulting
Kevin Scribner, Salmon-Safe
Kirk Shimeall, Cascade Pacific Resource Conservation & Development
Kimberly Grieves, WA Ecology
Laura Gephart, CRITFC
Laura Shira, Yakama Nation

Laurie Porter, CRITFC
Leslie Bach, Northwest Power and Conservation Council
Lisa Kusnierz, U.S. EPA Region 10
Lorri Epstein, Columbia Riverkeeper
Lucas DuSablon, U.S. EPA Region 10
Maggie A Mckeon, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
Margaret Drennan, WA Dept. of Ag.
Mark Jankowski, U.S. EPA Region 10
Mark Peterschmidt, WA Ecology
Matt Luxon, Ecozoic Environmental Consulting LLC
Megan Poskaitis, Farm Production and Conservation-Natural Resources Conservation Service (FPAC-NRCS)
Mike Poulsen, OR DEQ
Nancy Munn, NOAA Fisheries
Nina Bell, Northwest Environmental Advocates
Paula Calvert, Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)
Patrick Moran, USGS, Tacoma, WA
Peter Contreras, U.S. EPA Region 10
Ralph Myers, Idaho Power Company
Raj Kapur, OR Association of Clean Water Agencies
Rodney Cawston, Confederated Tribes of Colville Reservation
Rich Francis, U.S. EPA Region 10
Rudy Salakory, Cowlitz Indian Tribe
Sarah Burnet, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Sarah Whitney, Long Tom Watershed Council
Scott Hauser, USRTF
Shannon Carpenter, NRCS
Sherrie Duncan, Sky Environmental
Sierra Higheagle, Nez Perce Tribe
Stacy James, Private citizen
Stephanie Bailey, U.S. EPA Region 10
Steve Waste, USGS, Cook, WA
Susan Fricke, Eugene Water and Electric Board
Susan Hess, Columbia Insight
Suzanne Skadowski, U.S. EPA Region 10
Tamara Knudson, Spokane Tribe
Tate Libunao, University of Idaho
Ted DeWitt, Oregon State University
Tim Counihan, USGS, Cook, WA
Trevor Selch, MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife, & Parks
Warren Colyer, Montana Trout Unlimited
Whitney Fraser, Lodestone Environmental Consulting
William Hobbs, WA Ecology
Yevgeniya Malyutina, FPAC-NRCS
Zoe Roberts, USRTF

EPA Columbia River Team:
Cheryl Vincent, U.S. EPA Region 10
Erik Peterson, U.S. EPA Region 10
Greg Frey, The Council Oak
Krista Mendelman, U.S. EPA Region 10
Mary Lou Soscia, U.S. EPA Region 10
Michael Fischer, U.S. EPA Region 8
Michelle Wilcox, U.S. EPA Region 10
Lauren Mcdaid, U.S. EPA Region 10
Nicole Taylor, U.S. EPA Region 10
Peter Brumm, U.S. EPA Region 8
Peter Ismert, U.S. EPA Region 8
Peter Murchie, U.S. EPA Region 10
Yvonne Vallette, U.S. EPA Region 10

PowerPoint Slides for the following presentations are available online:
https://gaftp.epa.gov/region10/columbiariver/TRWG/Meetings/2022May/

1. Update from EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Program
2. Grant Program Success Stories: Dan Kent, Salmon-Safe
3. Grant Program Success Stories: Sarah Whitney, UWWP

4. Grant Program Success Stories: Sierra Higheagle, Nez Perce Tribe
5. Grant Program Success Stories: Andy James, University of Washington Tacoma
6. Update from Toxics Monitoring Subgroup: Jen Bayer, USGS
7. Bradford Island, Tribal Fishing, and Health Risks: Laura Shira, Yakama Nation

Welcome, Agenda Review, and Teams Overview

Mary Lou Soscia, *U.S. EPA Region 10* and **Greg Frey,** *The Council Oak*

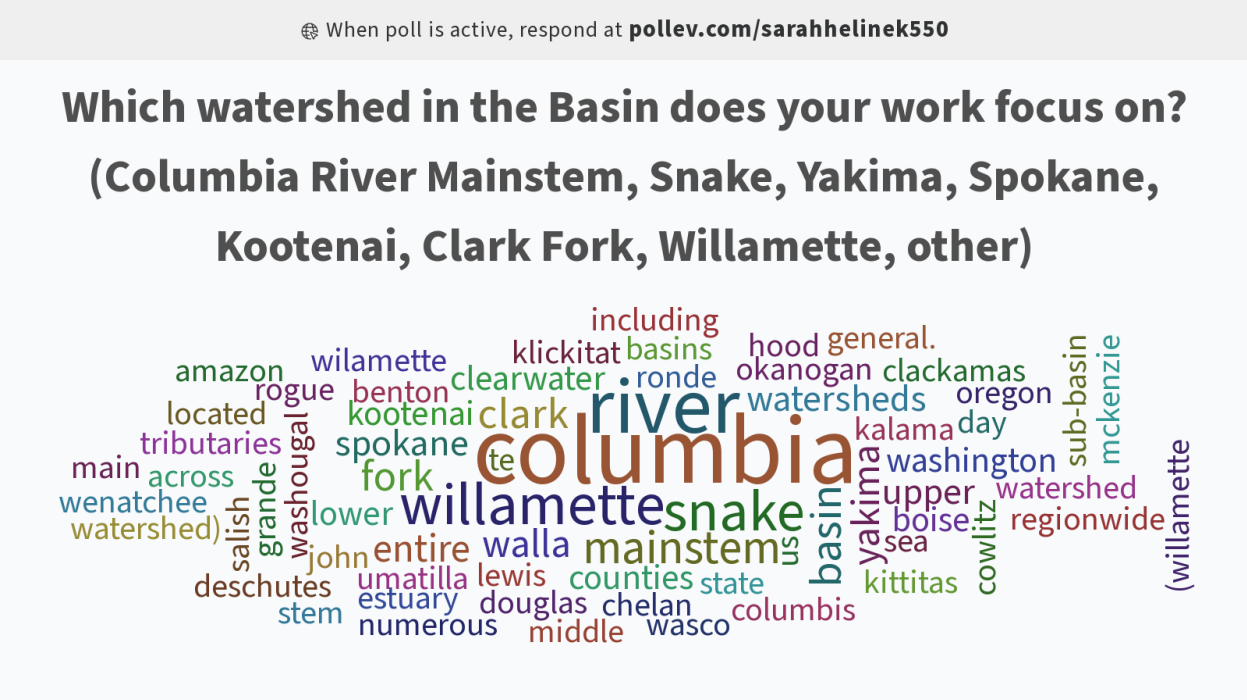
Mary Lou Soscia and Greg Frey welcomed the attendees. A quick review of the purpose of the meeting was provided for members who were joining for the first time. Mary Lou briefly introduced the presenters, including the keynote speaker DR Michel, and ran through the agenda, mentioning Columbia River Basin Restoration Program updates, news regarding current grants and efforts, the U.S. EPA collaboration on PFAS research, news on the Toxics Subgroup, and the newly listed Bradford Island Superfund Site, as well as announcements and celebrations.

After explaining the Microsoft Teams functions, the attendees were invited to make individual introductions utilizing the chat functions and were informed about the open floor for questions at the end of the meeting, as well as the ability to ask questions in the chat or use the raised hand icon throughout the duration of the meeting.

Icebreaker

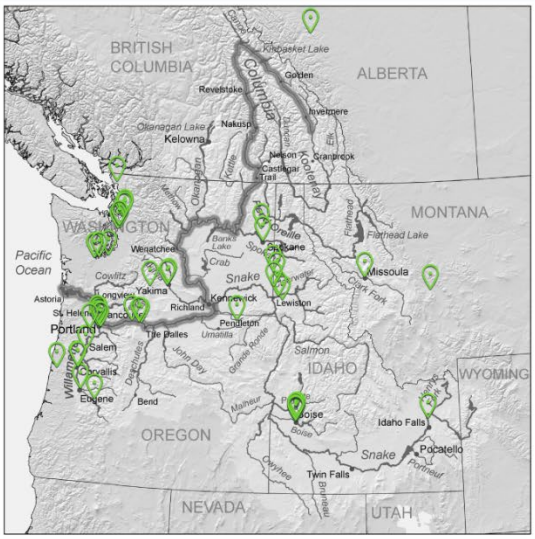
Greg Frey, *The Council Oak*

Greg led attendees in an interactive, online icebreaker activity to answer questions about their work and priorities for the Columbia River Basin. Meeting attendees provided input via their web browsers and as input was received, the tool took those results and populated graphics in the PowerPoint presentation in real time. The resulting word clouds and graphs are copied below.



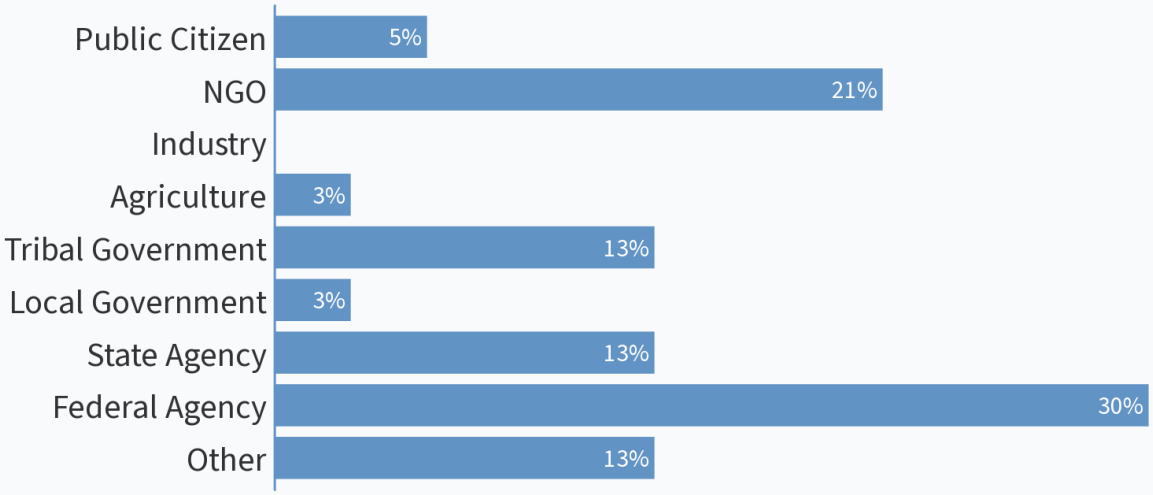
When poll is active, respond at **pollev.com/sarahhelinek550**

Where in the Basin are you joining from today?



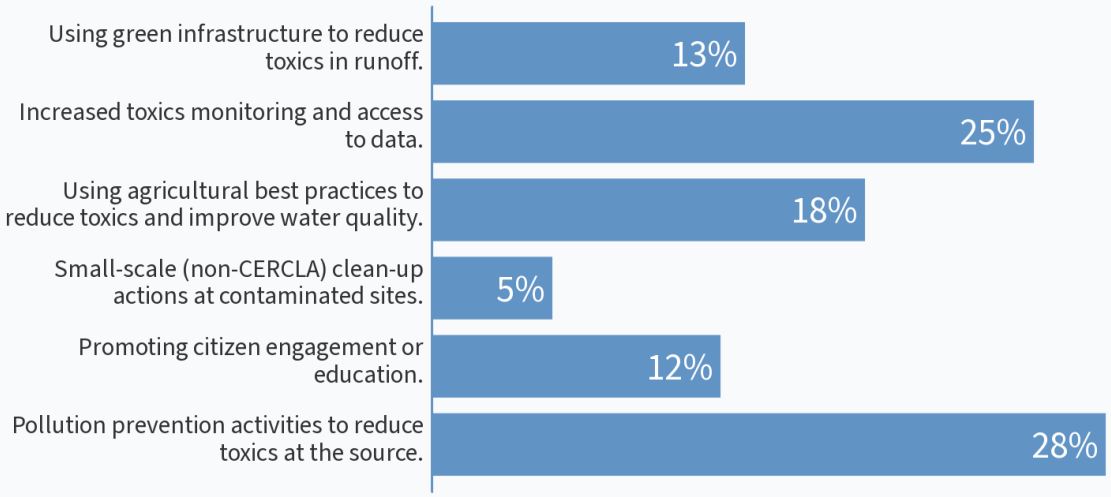
When poll is active, respond at **pollev.com/sarahhelinek550**

Are you representing an entity and if so which?



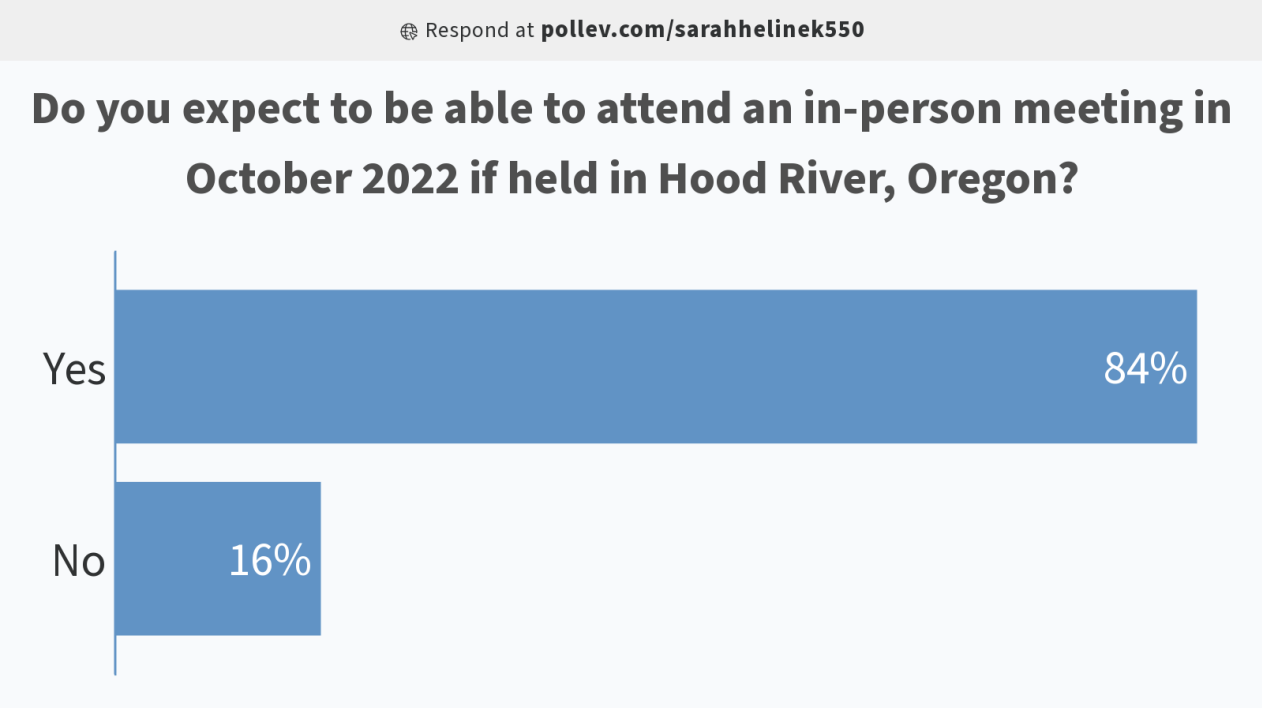
When poll is active, respond at **pollev.com/sarahhelinek550**

What type(s) of future work are most important to you?



When poll is active, respond at **pollev.com/sarahhelinek550**

What kind of assistance would be most helpful to you for preparing future grant application packages (e.g., webinars, help line, templates, technical resources, etc.)?



Keynote Speaker:

DR Michel, *Executive Director Upper Columbia United Tribes*
A member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, DR has over 36 years of experience in forestry and natural resource management, as well as the technical and policy aspects of working for Tribes. He served eight years on the Colville Business Council as both the Vice Chair and the Chair of the Natural Resource Committee.

DR spoke of the efforts to restore and protect the Columbia River Basin (CRB) and how this benefits all of those who visit, work, or live in the CRB, including future generations. DR highlighted the mission of the Upper Columbia United Tribes (UCUT) which, states that the tribes are "united for the benefit of all." The UCUT have been leaders in restoration efforts. As we learn how contaminants impact our world, we are learning just how detrimental toxics are on fishers, and Tribes are at the forefront of these impacts. DR shared a video reciting of the poem, *The Powwow at the End of the World*, by Sherman Alexie. The video highlighted a canoe journey DR and other tribal members took for the purpose of reconnecting to the water. Throughout the years, the Tribes have never surrendered to the loss of salmon and have seen fish from the Chief Joseph hatchery make their return. Salmon still have that desire and instinct to go upriver, and when possible, they find a way. DR pointed out that it is our responsibility to provide them an opportunity to get back to their traditional spawning grounds—if we follow the fish and let the fish show us how to get home. If we do not change our ways, one day future generations could just be reading about these things in a book, and never to see salmon themselves. This future it is not far off, and we are responsible for those future generations.

The poem can be found here: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47895/the-powwow-at-the-end-of-the-world. To see the video and learn more, please visit UCUT's webpage: https://ucut.org.

U.S. EPA, Region 10: Clean Water Act Section 123—Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Updates

Mary Lou Soscia, *U.S. EPA Region 10*

Mary Lou discussed the possibility of having an in-person or hybrid meeting in October. The history of the Columbia River Basin Restoration Program (CRBRP) was discussed, including the implementation of the Clean Water Act Section 123's primary mission and goal to develop a working group and grant program to reduce toxics. An overview was given of the program's accomplishments, updates on the CRBRP website, and the development of informational fact sheets, webinars, and a technical assistance program to support applicants during the grant development process.

EPA Regions 8 and 10 are committed to environmental justice and focused on leadership, accountability, and communication. When considering vulnerable communities with increased exposure to toxics in the face of climate change, the focus has shifted to include how we can utilize reducing toxics to combat the impacts of a changing climate, how we can begin coordinating work efforts, create green infrastructure, and increase public education and engagement. The CRBRP is looking at a long-term strategy that could involve a variety of grant possibilities to make sure we are taking advantage of this once-in-a-generation opportunity to reduce toxics in the Basin, protect human health, and provide a healthier environment for future generations.

In 2021 EPA received $79 million through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) which will enable to EPA to significantly grow the Columbia River Basin Restoration Program by increasing grants throughout the Basin to clean up and reduce toxics. These BIL funds are in addition to Congressional appropriations, ($2 million in FY22), and EPA expects a combined funding amount of at least $16 million per year for the next five years. In the next couple of months, our EPA team, in conversation with others, will be working to build a long-term strategy to expand our competitive grant program to:

- Increase monitoring and coordinate work efforts and information exchange across the Basin;
- Increase previously successful toxics reduction actions like green infrastructure, agricultural BMPs, pollution prevention actions, and small contaminated site cleanups; and
- Increase public education and engagement, especially to Tribal and environmental justice communities.

EPA will be developing technical assistance materials on successful efforts to reduce and assess toxics, and will provide this information through fact sheets, webinars, and any other information sharing techniques that can help prospective grant applicants. In the years ahead, EPA will award grants using both Congressional appropriations and BIL funding, following the requirements of the Act—competitive grants with matching funds—and is exploring various flexibilities in grant awards including: multi-year funding awards for 2-4 years; a competitive RFA focused solely for Tribal Governments; and competitive, focused RFAs on our priority funding actions (e.g., best practices for green infrastructure and agriculture).

The new 2022 Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Report and more information about priority work efforts over the next five years can be found here: https://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/columbia-river-basin-restoration-program-report

U.S. EPA Region 10, Grants Program:

Michelle Wilcox, *U.S. EPA, Region 10, Grants Program Team Lead*
Michelle discussed the first round of grant funding appropriations for FY 19–20 that resulted in 14 grant awards. During the second Request for Applications (RFA) that began on November 8th, 2021, and closed in March 2022, EPA received more than 20 applications. EPA completed the eligibility review on March 29th. In April, the Merit Review teams reviewed and scored the eligible applications and are now reviewing those scores. EPA will be making recommendations and notifying applicants by the end of May. In June and July, EPA will be negotiating workplans with selected applicants. Then in August, EPA will host a press event to announce the awardees. Michelle noted that it was great to see the polls at the beginning of the meeting about what kinds of assistance will be helpful to applicants in future RFAs.

Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Grantee Updates

Grantees from across the Basin shared updates on their work efforts, and recent achievements.

Salmon-Safe:

Dan Kent, *Salmon-Safe Co-Founder and Executive Director*
Dan Kent introduced the Salmon-Safe Team, the organization's Partner Network, and reviewed Salmon-Safe's primary project goals. EPA funding has allowed the Salmon-Safe network to group with Idaho partners, expand to a total of 8 conservation districts in Washington, support outreach to 500+ growers, and resulted in 60 farms with a total of 30,000 acres transitioned to Salmon-safe practices. Farm certification on water quality has been a key piece of Salmon-Safe's work, while targeted crops like hops have been a focus for Salmon-safe certification in the Yakima basin. Upcoming events include a 'Hops & Salmon' event on June 9th, and a 'Sipping for Salmon' in Walla Walla celebrating the release of a Salmon-Safe beer. Additionally, new partners who are barley growers will be announcing the first Salmon-Safe Whiskey from Seattle's Copperworks Distilling. Salmon-Safe works through partnerships, public education, and expanding their CRB footprint by working with other efforts (e.g., Lightening River Ranch). What's Next? Piloting an extension of Salmon-Safe called Trout-safe, working with Wyoming Farms, and building further incentives for growers to participate. To learn more about their project please visit: https://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/columbia-river-basin-restoration-funding-assistance-program#3. Also check out Salmon-Safe's 'Snowpack to 6-Pack' video, which can be found here: https://vimeo.com/681626651/41e6670259.

Cascade Pacific Resource, Conservation & Development:

Sarah Whitney, *Urban Waters & Wildlife Partnership (UWWP) & Long Tom Watershed Council*
Sarah Whitney described the Urban Waters and Wildlife Partnership's on-going efforts to create a regional coalition to support voluntary stormwater improvements and associated effectiveness monitoring in the Upper Willamette region. Sarah discussed the on-the-ground projects occurring in the Willamette Basin, primarily in Eugene and Springfield, OR. The project has three common areas of work: Community Engagement, which includes collaboration with BIPOC-led organizations; Outreach & Implementation; and Monitoring and Evaluation. Urban stormwater pollution is considered the highest drinking water pollution problem in most watersheds. Runoff from impervious surfaces concentrates pollutants and results in increased toxics and floods. Paved surfaces also create urban heat islands. UWWP has been combating these impacts through programs such as the Trout Friendly Landscapes Program. This program facilitates voluntary water quality improvement projects on commercial, industrial, religious institutions, and school sites. Regulatory agencies are partners on this work, both in

the City of Springfield and City of Eugene. To Learn more, visit the Long Tom Watershed Council Urban Waters & Wildlife Partnership webpage: https://www.longtom.org/science-projects/amazoncreek/.

Clearwater River Watershed Baseline Monitoring and Toxics Assessment–Phase 1:

Sierra Higheagle, *Nez Perce Tribe, Water Resources Division*

Sierra Higheagle discussed project goals that included supplementing Clearwater River Watershed Data, filling Mid/Upper Columbia River Basin data gaps, and providing baseline data to inform future monitoring. Performed from April to October 2021, the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT) partnered with the Idaho State Department of Agriculture Surface Water Program to revisit 15 of the 22 previously monitored Clearwater River tributaries to collect monthly surface water samples to monitor for DDD, DDT, DDE, nutrients, and metals. Of the 12 samples collected at each site, eight different pesticides were detected, but at levels that were significantly less than previously sampled years. Additionally, no pesticides were detected at Lapwai Creek. Overall, surface water and sediment sample results concluded that nutrients seem to be the biggest water quality concern. With Phase II, the NPT hopes to establish baseline toxic and pollutant data for the Clearwater River, as well as adding four new sites where fish, mussel, and lamprey tissue will be monitored. To learn more please visit: https://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/columbia-river-basin-restoration-funding-assistance-program#7

University of Washington Tacoma:

Andy James, *University of Washington Tacoma*

Andy James discussed the University of Washington Tacoma's progress in sampling the mainstem Columbia River for Contaminants of Emerging Concern (CECs), such as endocrine disruptors. The two main goals of this project are to monitor and characterize the occurrence of previously unmonitored contaminants and utilize multiple measures of biological impacts to understand their potential for harm. The research team's motivation is to improve understanding of CECs associated with harm, as a better understanding could improve fish survival. This project has completed four sampling events—two during the rainy winter months and two in the dry summer months. There were 16 sampling locations throughout the Lower Columbia mainstem. To analyze results, the project is using non-target screening based on high-resolution mass spectrometry. This technique can detect hundreds to thousands of unique compounds in each sample without prior knowledge of compound identity. These techniques are relatively new and allow the team to get a broad idea of what is going on in the river. Generally speaking, we can focus on these datasets to gain a system-wide perspective. Results are not yet final and will be shared at the close of the project.

To learn more, visit the University of Washington Tacoma's Center for Urban Waters website: https://www.urbanwaters.org.

EPA's Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) Work

Lauren McDaid, *U.S. EPA Region 10 and* **Peter Brumm**, *U.S. EPA Region 8*

Lauren and Peter introduced the EPA Office of Research and Development's demonstration project in the Columbia Basin that seeks to prioritize site investigation of PFAS contamination and screen for PFAS chemicals of concern to support Columbia River Basin Tribes and States.

For more information on EPA's PFAS work efforts please visit: https://www.epa.gov/pfas

Update from the Toxics Monitoring Subgroup:

Jen Bayer, *USGS*

Jen provided an update on the March and April 2022 meetings of the Toxics Monitoring Subgroup. The monitoring subgroup was recommended by CRBRP Working Group last year. Its goal is to coordinate toxics monitoring grants in the Basin and exchange information to assist toxics monitoring. The group hopes to develop a strategy for coordinated monitoring activities across tributaries, compatible with emerging mainstem monitoring and existing estuary monitoring efforts. They are also working to develop a shared data management system. An example of the data sharing proposal might be creating a new dashboard to access CRB data from toxics monitoring data published to the EPA Exchange Network's WQX data system. Other potential work efforts include identifying priority contaminants for future monitoring efforts, holding an annual research and emerging concerns workshop, and review of the CRB contaminants of concern framework, finalized in August 2020.

To learn more and access past Toxic Monitoring Subgroup meeting summaries and presentations please visit: https://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/columbia-river-basin-restoration-working-group *(scroll to Toxics Monitoring Steering Committee).*

WQX Resources can be found here:
WQX User Guide: https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/user-guide-version-30-water-quality-exchange-web
WQX FAQs: https://www.epa.gov/waterdata/frequent-questions-water-quality-exchange-wqx

Bradford Island, Tribal Fishing, and Health Risks

Laura Shira, *Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation*

Bradford Island is located within the Bonneville Dam Complex (BDC), near the southernmost dam of the Columbia River. Toxics releases from Bradford Island affect both Oregon and Washington river waters. Yakama Nation has been advocating for cleanup of this site for many years. When comparing PCB concentration in fish around the Basin, with a max of 183,140 ppb, Bradford Island concentrations are staggering compared to both the Portland Harbor max of 6,460 ppb and the Lower Duwamish max of 640 ppb. Yakama Nation leaders are deeply concerned of the great human health risk posed by Bradford Island for high Tribal fish consumers. Tribal fishing is part of the Columbia River Basin Tribal lifeway, spirituality, and culture. With many family-owned Tribal fishing platforms in the area surrounding Bradford Island, fishing is very important to Tribal culture. As a result, salmon is a high percentage of the community's diet, with resident fish consisting of 45% of fish consumed. Resident fish consumption advisories including a Mid-Columbia advisory, and a Bradford Island-specific advisory have been posted and awareness is spreading. On March 16, 2022, EPA listed Bradford Island as a superfund priority site, after years of work from Yakama Nation and their partners. While the Yakama Nation is pleased with the listing, more work is needed. Yakama Nation's goal is to increase awareness of this site, and they are hopeful this listing will lead to protective actions and funding for the restoration of this site. Community meeting information can be found here: https://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Releases/Article/3018709/corps-to-host-public-meeting-on-bradford-island-cleanup/

Event Announcements and Celebrations

Meeting attendees had an opportunity to share upcoming events and updates on their work.
David Gruen from Oregon Department of Environmental Quality gave two updates.

1. Aquatic Life Toxics Rulemaking project: DEQ is beginning to update aquatic life criteria based on current EPA recommendations. The last comprehensive update was in 2004. DEQ is likely to initiate

a rule to add aquatic life criteria for aluminum, acrolein, carbaryl, diazinon, and nonylphenol, and update criteria for cadmium, selenium, and tributyltin based on the latest EPA recommendations. This project is currently in a data-collection phase and likely will not move into the public comment phase of rulemaking until July 2023 or later.

2. Toxics Narrative implementation project: This project will involve determining implementation methods for using toxic effect data (e.g., benchmarks, screening values, etc.) in DEQ's water programs when there is insufficient data for formal EPA-recommended criteria. This might be a useful way to evaluate and protect our waters for contaminants of emerging concern. Tentatively, this project is slated to begin background research work in early 2023. This will not require a formal rulemaking process.

Jen Bayer from USGS shared that PNAMP and StreamNet are teaming up to put on an Emerging Technologies Information Webinar series and conference which will occur November 14–16, 2022. Registration will open June 1st, 2022. Visit their website for more details: https://www.pnamp.org/project/emerging-technologies-information-sessions-2022

End of Meeting Summary

Thank you to all who were able to attend our May 11th, 2022, Columbia River Basin Restoration Working Group meeting, with 93 individuals in attendance. As always, EPA appreciates the opportunity to engage with partners from across the entire Basin. EPA will continue to share program updates, trainings, and funding opportunities. The next Columbia River Basin Restoration Working Group meeting is expected to occur in October 2022 and will likely be offered in a hybrid (virtual and in-person) format. More information to come. Thank you.