

# EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Program

Columbia River Basin Restoration Program  
Working Group Meeting

October 20, 2022

Cascade Locks, OR

Oct



# Presentation Overview

- Overview of Columbia River Basin and toxics reduction work efforts
- Columbia River Basin Restoration Program – Clean Water Act Section 123
- Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Funding Assistance Program and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding
- Upcoming Requests for Applications:
  - Columbia River Tribal Government Request for Applications
  - “Fund the Funder”
  - General Toxics Reduction





## Background on the Columbia River Basin

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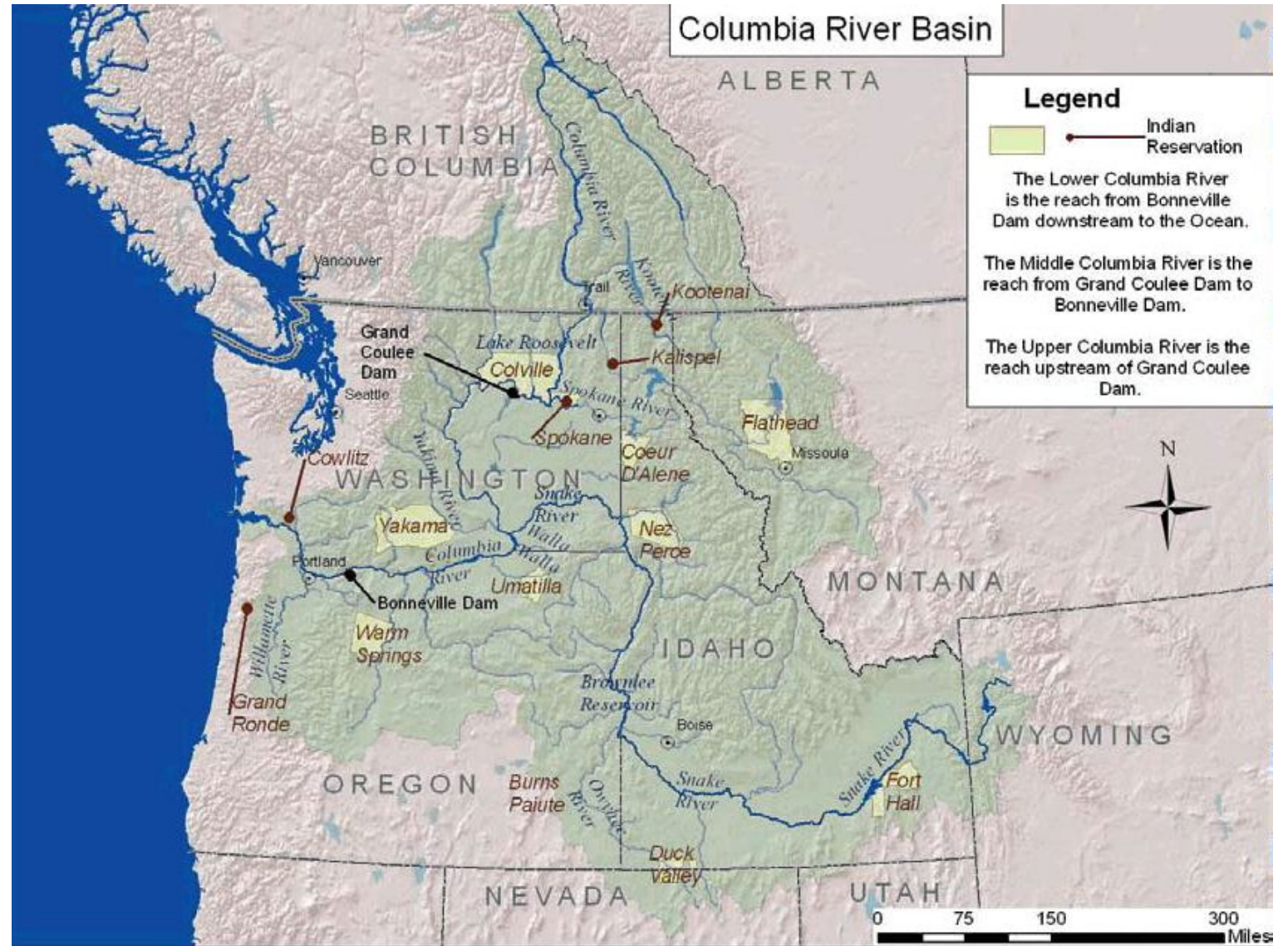
- One of North America's largest watersheds
  - approximately 260,000 square miles
- Includes parts of seven states including significant portions of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington
- Provides vital environmental, economic, cultural, and social benefits to millions

## Major Players in the Columbia River Basin

- 16 Tribal Governments
- 7 states: WA, ID, OR, MT, NE, WY, and UT
- Federal Columbia River Power System – US Army Corps of Engineers, US Bureau of Reclamation, and Bonneville Power Administration (DOE)
- Other Federal agencies
- British Columbia/Canada
- Municipalities
- Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership (EPA NEP)
- Northwest Power and Conservation Council
- Public Utility Districts
- Industry and Agriculture
- NGOs
- Ports and Barging Industry
- Irrigation Districts
- Railroad Industry
- Wind Energy Industry and Advocates
- Watershed Councils
- Congress

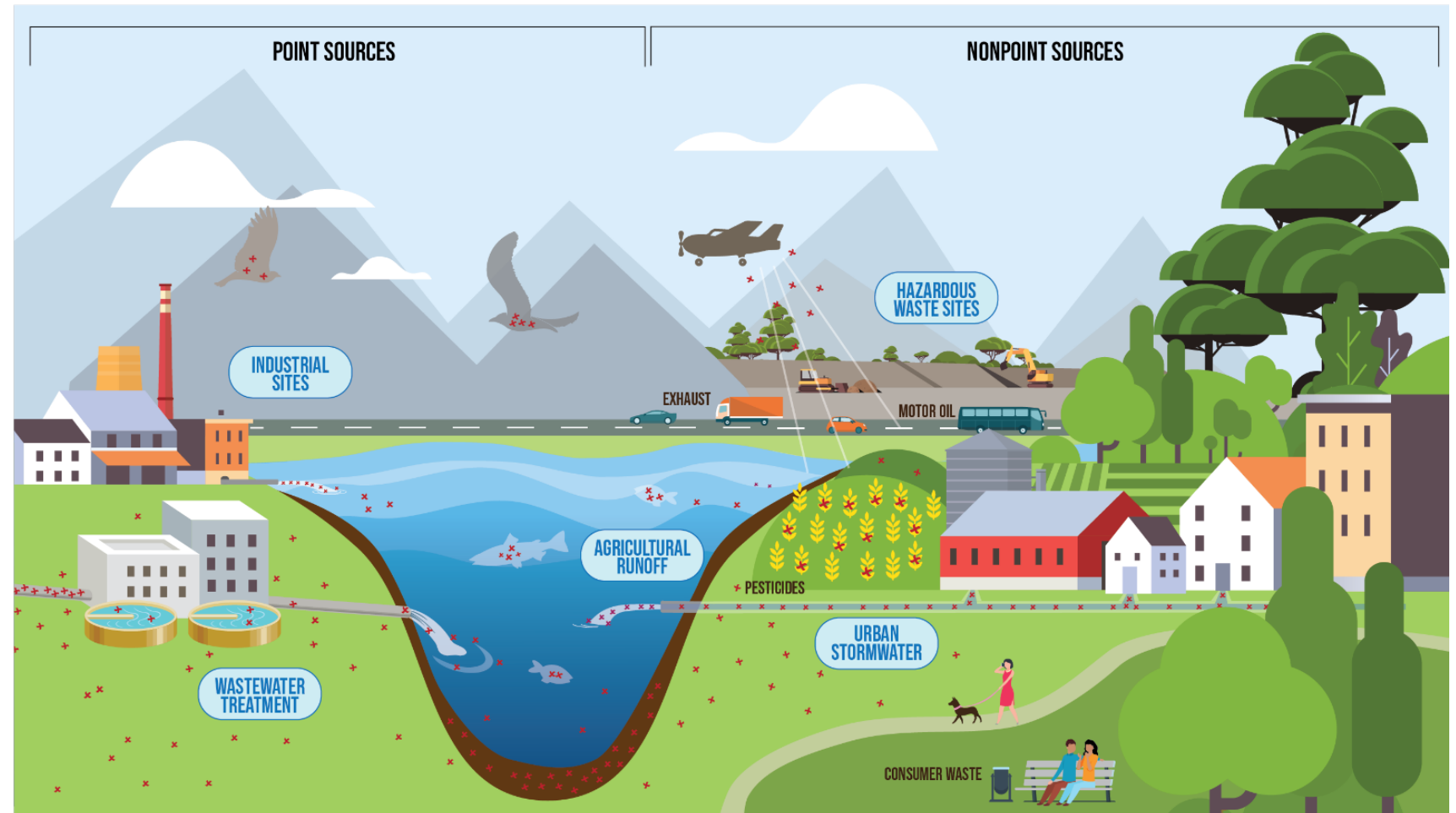


# 16 Columbia River Basin Tribes



# TOXIC CONTAMINANTS IN THE BASIN

- Toxics are widely distributed in the Basin
- Past research and monitoring show toxics are present across the Basin
- Toxics harm fish, wildlife, and human health





*Reducing toxics in fish is an  
EPA responsibility to protect  
Tribal Human Health*



# TOXICS REDUCTION IS CRITICAL TO A HEALTHY COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN ECOSYSTEM



- Columbia River Basin Tribal people have lived here for more than 10,000 years
- Tribal people eat far more fish than most other residents
- Toxics in fish pose unacceptable health risks to Tribal people and other high fish consuming populations
- The Columbia River Basin Restoration Program grew from our work with Tribes to reduce their exposure to toxics from high fish consumption



# EPA'S FOUNDATIONAL WORK TO REDUCE TOXICS IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN



- Collaborative Watershed Effort to Reduce Toxics – many diverse partners throughout the Basin
- **2009 State of River Report** – “tell toxics story”
- **2010 Columbia River Basin Action Plan** – 61 actions
- Columbia River Basin legislation introduced in Congress in 2010, 2014 – toxics focus
- Other related work efforts included OR/WA/ID Human Health Criteria



COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN  
RESTORATION PROGRAM

# 2016 Columbia River Basin Restoration Act

Congress passed the **Columbia River Basin Restoration Act** in 2016, which amended the Clean Water Act by creating **Section 123** and directed EPA to:

1. establish a **Columbia River Basin Restoration Grant Program** to support voluntary actions to reduce and assess toxics throughout the Basin; and
2. establish a **Working Group** representative of states, tribal governments, and other entities in the Basin.





# COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM VISION STATEMENT



***“The EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Program – through the implementation of CWA Section 123 – will be a catalyst for basin wide toxics reduction work efforts; enabling communities to access unimpaired watersheds with healthy fish and wildlife and quantifiable toxics reductions in fish, wildlife and water.”***



# COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM WORKING GROUP



- Collaboration between tribal governments, states, industry, non-governmental organizations, and others
- Goal is to share information, coordinate activities, and develop strategies to identify and reduce toxics in the Columbia River Basin
- Meets every six months
- More than 300 individuals invited to participate



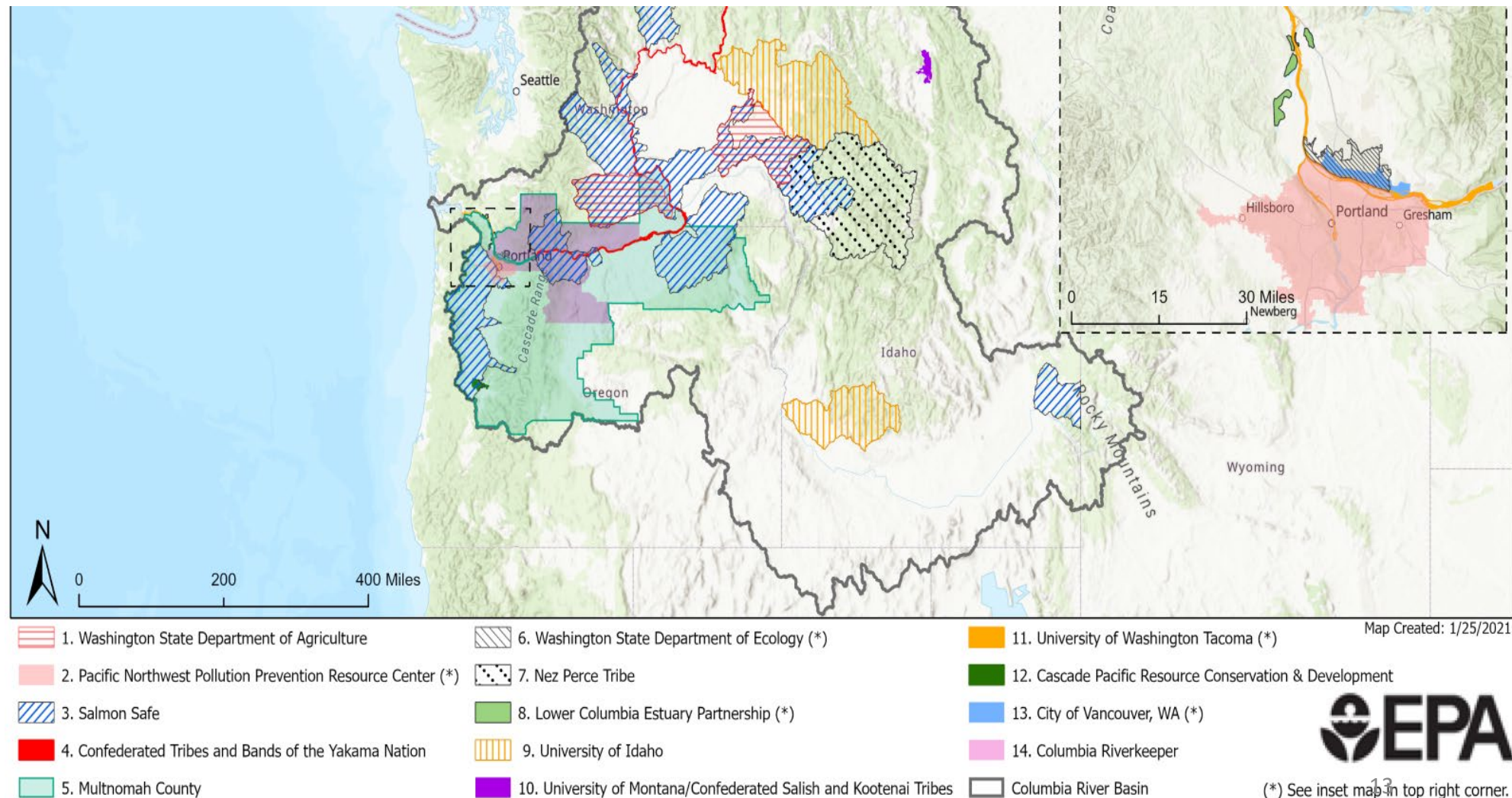


# 2020 INAUGURAL GRANTS



COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN  
RESTORATION PROGRAM

- Grants span the entire Basin
- 7 focus on monitoring
- 7 focus on reducing toxics which include:
  - ✓ Agricultural Best Practices
  - ✓ Stormwater Green Infrastructure
  - ✓ Pollution prevention
  - ✓ Community education and engagement



(\*) See inset map in top right corner.

# TOXICS MONITORING SUB-GROUP

- USGS and EPA co-chair a Toxics Monitoring Sub-Group which is composed of EPA monitoring and assessment grantees and other interested entities.
- Group has met through 2022, we will be reconvening to include the 17 2022 Monitoring and Assessment Grantees.
- Please contact Mary Lou Soscia [soscia.marylou@epa.gov](mailto:soscia.marylou@epa.gov) or Greg Frey at [gfrey@thecounciloak.com](mailto:gfrey@thecounciloak.com) if you are interested in participating.





# COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW FUNDING



- \$79 million will provide support for next 4 – 6 years
- Prioritize support to Tribes and other communities with increased risk for toxics exposure
- Build tribal government and community capacity to reduce toxics in fish, water and sediment
- Build on previous successes:
  - Agricultural best practices, green infrastructure, pollution prevention, small-scale clean-up actions, and education and outreach



# WHAT'S NEXT?



- Ongoing management of 14 FY 2020 grants
  - Award 25 2022 grants in August/October 2022 – approximately \$6.9 million with \$3.8 million in BIL funding
  - 3 new RFAs in 2022 - 2023
    1. Tribal Governments
    2. “Fund the Funder”
    3. General Toxics Reduction to all CWA 123 eligible entities
- Priorities for all 3 to reduce toxics:
- Agricultural best practices
  - Stormwater green infrastructure
  - Clean up of non-CERCLA sites
  - Pollution prevention
  - Outreach, education and community engagement
- Continue engagement and communication with Working Group – October 20 in person/remote



# Grant Program Overview

- Competitive, voluntary grant program – as described in CWA Section 123
- **25% match provides leverage and partnership opportunities, however, match funding requirement waived for Tribal governments**
- Cooperative agreements, substantial involvement, technical assistance
- Award terms and conditions
- Multi-year project and budget period, full or incremental funding allotments depending on project scale
- Project location must be within the US portion of the Basin
- Building on and implementing management plans or previous work efforts to address toxics, such as: toxic action plans, toxic TMDLs, watershed plans
- Sub-awards, partners
- Reporting progress, every 6 months using a form, and quarterly check-ins with your EPA Project Officer
- Presenting project highlights at a Working Group meeting



# Columbia River Basin Tribal Government Request for Applications



RFA will provide up to \$20 million to Columbia River Basin Tribal Governments to provide funding support for program, plan and project development to reduce toxics in fish, wildlife and water through the following priorities:

- Agricultural best practices
- Stormwater green infrastructure
- Clean up of non-CERCLA sites
- Pollution prevention
- Outreach, education and community engagement

EPA will not be funding status and trend monitoring; project effectiveness monitoring is encouraged to provide to provide accountability and results.

RFA opens on October 31, 2022. Grant applications are due by January 31, 2023.

# Competition Schedule and Milestones

- October 31, 2022 -- RFA opens
  - Posted on grants.gov
  - Application packet materials
  - Informational webinars
  - Q and A posted weekly on web page
  - Ask questions by emailing [ColumbiaRiverBasinGrant@epa.gov](mailto:ColumbiaRiverBasinGrant@epa.gov)
- January 31, 2023 -- RFA closes
- Applications reviewed for eligibility and merit
- March 2023 -- notification of selection (anticipated)
- June 2023 -- awards issued (anticipated)
- Project start date as early as July 1, 2023

# “Fund the Funder” RFA



EPA anticipates awarding up to \$40 million, with \$4-7 million per entity, for the development of multiyear cooperative agreements which will support toxic reduction programs, activities, and projects. These programs will reduce toxics in fish, wildlife and water through the following priorities:

- Agricultural best practices
- Stormwater green infrastructure
- Clean-up of non-CERCLA sites
- Pollution prevention
- Outreach, education and community engagement

EPA will not be funding status and trend monitoring; project effectiveness monitoring is encouraged to provide accountability and results.

We anticipate the RFA will open at the end of November/mid-December 2022, with a 90-day open period. Awards will be made in summer 2023.

A November webinar will be available ahead of the RFA release.



# General Toxics Reduction RFA

- EPA will issue an RFA in early 2023 for all CWA Section 123 eligible entities for individual toxics reduction projects.
- Priorities will be same as previous 2 RFAs and more details will be provided to the Working Group in late 2022.
- Project priorities:
  - Agricultural best practices
  - Stormwater green infrastructure
  - Clean-up of non-CERCLA sites
  - Pollution prevention
  - Outreach, education and community engagement

# Project Examples

- Implementing agricultural best management practices and providing technical assistance
- Creating or partnering with voluntary certification programs that use industry best practices to protect the environment; such as Salmon-Safe or EcoBiz
- Starting or increasing Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships and collection events
- Developing pollution prevention programs to reduce, for example, herbicide and insecticide use
- Providing incentives for safer chemical alternatives and associated training programs
- Installing green infrastructure or stormwater raingardens to reduce toxics in runoff
- Implementing small-scale cleanups at non-CERCLA sites
- Developing outreach materials and educating Tribal members about any of these toxic reduction tools and methods

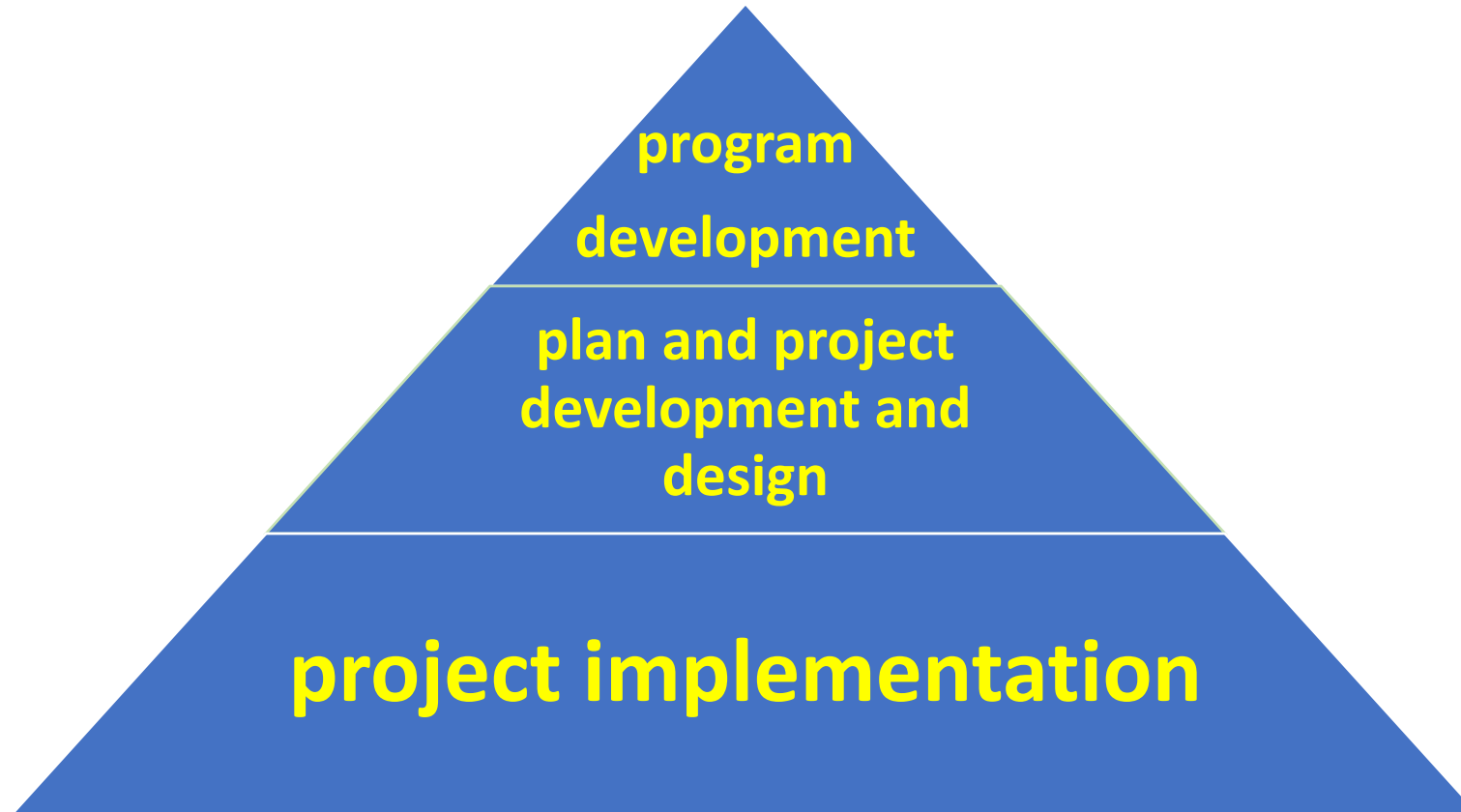
More information about any of these examples can be found at –

<https://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/columbia-river-basin-restoration-funding-assistance-program>



# Project Examples

Multi-year, multi-phase project implementation



# EPA RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Funding Assistance:  
<https://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/columbia-river-basin-restoration-funding-assistance-program>
- EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Story Map:  
<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/24979f1fd3124cc7bb4c85147d38eedc>
- Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Working Group:  
<https://www.epa.gov/columbiariver/columbia-river-basin-restoration-working-group>
  - ✓ Toxics Monitoring Sub-Group



# EPA RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- [Columbia River Basin Contaminants of Concern Framework](#)
- [Toxic-Impaired Waterbodies on 303d Lists in the Columbia River Basin](#)
- [Columbia River Basin Toxic Contaminants Reference List](#)
- [2019 Columbia River Basin Toxics Reduction Status Update](#)
- [Story Map: Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons - Locations in the Columbia River Basin Where the Toxics Could Be Affecting Fish and Wildlife - exit EPA WEBSITE](#)
- [Chemicals of Emerging Concern in the Columbia River](#)
- [Columbia River Toxics Reduction Action Plan](#)
- [State of the River Report for Toxics](#)

# Last words.....

- Columbia River Basin Tribal Government RFA opens on October 31, 2022, **posted on GRANTS.GOV**, grant applications are due January 31, 2023.
- EPA will hold additional informational webinars during the RFA open period. These webinars will contain more detailed information about how to apply.
- **EPA can only provide technical assistance before the RFA opens.** For more information, contact Lauren McDaid – [mcdaid.lauren@epa.gov](mailto:mcdaid.lauren@epa.gov); 208-378-5768
- EPA Fund the Funders RFA later in 2022 - information will be provided through Working Group communications regarding this and other upcoming RFAs. Stay tuned!