

COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER

RIVER CURRENTS | 2017 Issue 3



This Issue:

Victory Over
Millennium Coal

Reflections on the
Eagle Creek Fire

Mentoring the Next
Generation of
Advocates
and Scientists

Columbia Riverkeeper is a non-profit organization working to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean.

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Columbia Riverkeeper!



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River Notes

A GUEST LETTER FROM THE DESK OF KATHLEEN PATTON

My name is Reverend Kathleen Patton. I give to Columbia Riverkeeper, and this is why I am asking you to give, too.

As a garden-variety pastor at a church in economically depressed Longview, Washington, I was afraid to raise my voice on behalf of the environment. But when Big Coal came to town seven years ago, I felt overwhelming fear for my community, together with a growing alarm about climate change. And I felt powerless to do anything about it.

Columbia Riverkeeper and the partnership it helped form—the Power Past Coal coalition—got my name somehow, and before I knew it I was taking the risk and joining with hundreds of other unlikely local folks protesting, testifying, and showing up for each other to stop the threat of cancer-causing diesel and coal dust pollution. We joined together to protect our climate and beautiful Northwest ecosystems.

Columbia Riverkeeper was our anchor. This is why I am asking you to make a generous year-end gift today.

For seven years, Columbia Riverkeeper's Senior Organizer, Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, shepherded us all. She coached us, guided us, encouraged us—even fed us. Every hearing, every protest, every gathering she was there, analyzing the facts, organizing the people, and developing strategies. Through mailings and rallies and tedious port meetings, she was at our side.

And not just in Longview. When all this started, our state was threatened simultaneously by six separate coal export proposals. Columbia Riverkeeper and the Power Past Coal coalition united pastors and ranchers, hipsters and housewives, and turned us into an army of activists, joining hearts and voices to oppose the rivers of money that threatened to bury us in coal. We became like a vast family from Bellingham to Aberdeen to Vancouver, sharing one another's struggles. Power Past Coal glued us together and kept us energized.

And Columbia Riverkeeper helped lead us in victory over every single coal project that threatened us. We won. Every time.

Now I can't and I won't stop talking about this precious Columbia watershed, this fragile and glorious planet, and I won't back down before my own fears or the powers that threaten us. Empowered by passionate stewards like Columbia Riverkeeper, this movement is a spiritual force, bringing courage and joy, as well as accomplishing huge victories for our watershed and planet.

We won on coal, but the big threats remain. Oil and gas giants propose the nation's largest oil-by-rail terminal and the world's largest fracked-gas-to-methanol refineries on the shores of the Columbia. Our climate and the health of our river cannot take any more sacrifice. Many fish are unsafe to eat, Hanford nuclear waste creeps closer to the river, and our federal government looks the other way.

Together, you and I can protect what we love. By giving to Columbia Riverkeeper, you employ attorneys, scientists, and community organizers at a time when we need them the most. This work is urgent and the time to fight is now.

In these desperate times, we each must find our voices and join with others to protect the Columbia, to protect the Earth. Riverkeeper is an essential companion, channeling the tiny streams of our individual energies into a powerful flood of advocacy and hope, uniting our voices and magnifying them with legal know-how and organizing power.

Your gift is part of a mighty river for change. Be generous, and know the blessing of making a real difference when you support Columbia Riverkeeper.

Sincerely,

Rev. Kathleen Patton



Reverend Kathleen Patton

COVER: Columbia Riverkeeper board member Capt. Peter Wilcox and Bridget Bayer participating in the fishing boat parade on the Columbia River as a part of the People's Climate March nation-wide day of action on April 29, 2017. Photo by Rick Rappaport.

BACK: Columbia River facing east towards Beacon Rock, 35mm film image, by photographer Nicole Mark. This fall, Nicole donated a portion of her print sales to Columbia Riverkeeper. Thank you Nicole! Visit Nicole's work (www.nicolemarkphotography.com).

Reflections on the Eagle Creek Fire

By Brett VandenHeuvel, *Executive Director*

Punch Bowl Falls at Eagle Creek on October 15, 2017.
Photo by Trip Jennings, aerial support by Lighthawk.

I was swimming with my family in the Columbia near Hood River when an ominous smoke cloud blocked out the sun. The Eagle Creek fire was raging.

The fire grew quickly and erratically due to strong easterlies. During the peak of the fire, I had to drive through the Gorge on the Washington side at 4:30 am. Across the river, I saw out-of-control flames jumping westward. One of my coworkers evacuated her home in Cascade Locks, and other coworkers were placed on Level Two evacuation notices. The smoke forced us inside for nearly two weeks, enough to make anyone stir crazy, especially if you're cooped up with a four and six year old. Many people suffered from the smoke, but thanks to firefighters and first responders, no serious injuries were reported.

What about the forest?

I think we will all be surprised at the health of the forest in a few years. Yes, some areas burned severely. And, yes, some trails are closed. But much of the forest did not burn, and fire can regenerate forests. Post-burn ecosystems can be incredibly prolific and beautiful. I saw a red-tailed hawk soaring over Eagle Creek recently, likely scanning the forest floor for small mammals.

My reflections on the Eagle Creek fire:



We love the Gorge! The outpouring of emotion during the fire demonstrates a deep love and concern for this special place.



Protect our clean air. Breathing deeply is a joy. I'll never take it for granted again. The smoky days had strong physical and emotional impacts on our communities. Many had sore throats, became depressed, or felt trapped by the heavy air. Fortunately, the air pollution was temporary. Millions of people in the world face terrible industrial pollution on a daily basis. Let's breathe deeply and commit to protecting clean air.



The forest will recover. Nature is resilient. I won't say the fire was natural—it was started by a teenager during one of the hottest years on record. But the forests on the west side of the Cascades have historically burned and recovered without human intervention. We are not used to fires on the "wet side" because the fire intervals are 100 to 150 years.



We should not use fire as an excuse for logging. While the Eagle Creek fire still burned, Representative Greg Walden introduced a bill in Congress that would waive environmental laws and allow more logging. This is deeply disappointing. Building new roads and logging the Gorge will make problems worse.



What Inspired You in 2017?

You are helping defend Columbia River communities from new fossil fuel infrastructure and illegal toxic pollution. Through strategic legal work, community organizing, and coalition building, we have earned a string of victories that protect clean water and our climate. We're proud to do this together. Thank you!

With Gratitude,
The Columbia Riverkeeper Team

Acrylic paintings by Vicki Baker, left "Pilot Boarding" and right "Our Columbia." See Vicki's work at the Tempo Art Gallery in Astoria, Oregon.

"I am inspired to be part of an incredible regional movement to protect the Pacific Northwest from massive new fossil fuel projects. Thousands of people are fighting and winning, town by town, on the Columbia." -**Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director**

"I am grateful so many of you stand up for what you love. It is amazing what we have accomplished together against powerful industries. Let's keep it going." -**Acasia Berry, Development Director**

"What inspired me most this year was the victories we've had. I am constantly amazed at how much we can accomplish with a handful of staff and a few thousand supporters. I'm very proud to be part of such an effective and strong organization." -**Rob Cochran, Canvass Director**

"Watching spawning salmon build redds on the Little White Salmon River with photographer Peter Marbach and Riverkeeper members was both captivating and inspiring. Our fall morning tour was graced with a visit from a family of river otters and a pair of mergansers that we watched dive and feed off the redds at the bottom of the clear water. This is why I fight for salmon and cold, clean water." -**Lorri Epstein, Water Quality Director**

"On a hot, smokey summer night in August, I joined dozens of Riverkeeper members at a public hearing pitting farmland and critical salmon habitat against mega-fossil fuel projects and industrial development. Community members passed out local blueberries and stickers saying 'Farms Feed Us.' People came from down- and up-river communities and, together, their testimony told the whole story: the ripple effect of development on a connected river system." -**Lauren Goldberg, Staff Attorney**

"I'm inspired by our latest victory to stop the coal terminal in Longview; it's incredible the thousands of people who gathered together to prevent such a big and damaging project that would have negatively affected our communities." -**Ubaldo Hernández, Community Organizer**

"I stood on the Mosier School lawn and listened to JoDe Goudy, Chairman of the Yakama Nation Tribal Council, discuss last year's oil-train disaster through the lens of tribal history and sovereignty. Chairman Goudy reminded me that the institutions I take for granted—like railroads and Big Oil—are only newcomers to our Columbia Basin." -**Miles Johnson, Clean Water Attorney**

"I am deeply inspired by the relentless activists resisting the United States' largest oil train terminal, which is proposed in Vancouver, Washington. In hearings this year, people from all walks of life—tribal leaders, longshore workers, firefighters, physicians, faith leaders, teachers, and elected officials—blew me away with their testimony, delivering hours of compelling arguments for why Governor Inslee should reject the Tesoro oil train terminal. Thanks to them, we are on the cusp of stopping this oil mega-project." -**Dan Serres, Conservation Director**

"Getting to help coordinate our artist-in-residency and tour for Holcombe Waller's 'Notes from the Riverkeepers' was a big highlight for me. It was inspiring to hear our story told through music and art; hearing a song about the Mosier oil train derailment at the Mosier Community School gymnasium stirred up a lot of emotions for our audience." -**Liz Terhaar, Communications Director**

"The Columbia River People's Climate Movement event in Kalama was a highlight for me. Tribal canoes and fishing boats, joined by supporters on shore, made it clear that clean water is worth fighting for." -**Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, Senior Organizer**

Our staff reflected on moments and milestones with Riverkeeper's members and friends. Here are some highlights from 2017....

Why I Fight for Clean Water

By Lauren Goldberg, *Staff Attorney*

Fishing bores me, and the very thought of getting in a boat makes me seasick. So why have I spent nine years fighting to make fish in the Columbia River safe to catch and eat? To begin with, family.

First, the feel-good story. I grew up fishing with my dad and grandpa. As cellphones, computers, and video games drove a wedge between generations, fishing brought us together. Find the perfect fishing hole, banter to fill the waiting-for-a-bite void. And, if the stars align, catch a slimy bluegill or bass. In those groggy early morning hours, I not only learned how to fish, I learned about patience and family.

It's now my five-year-old daughter's turn to experience the joy and mystery of landing a fish. ("Did sturgeon really live when there were dinosaurs, Mommy?") Alone time with her dad, as the sun creeps over the horizon. Fishing may not interest me, but I value—and encourage—it nonetheless.

Now for the big C. During my formative years, cancer struck my family. Before Google and Web MD, I looked for answers in books: "Living Downstream: A Scientist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment;" "The Riverkeepers: Two Activists Fight to Reclaim Our Environment as a Basic Human Right;" and "Silent Spring." By the end of high school, I was convinced that everyone had the right to eat fish without fear of toxic pollution. Warm and fuzzy fishing memories were replaced by stories of people—predominantly people of color and low-income families—robbed of their right to eat otherwise-healthy fish. Outraged and inspired, I was dead-set on fighting the scourge of toxic pollution.



The author's grandfather and fishing mentor, Al Goldberg, fishing with his parents, Rose and David Goldberg, on Lake Michigan in the 1930s.

A River in Crisis

Gaze at the Columbia River, and the scenic beauty belies the toxic crisis. Raw science from the Columbia tells the real story: generations of abuse as a pollution dumping ground. The facts will jar you:

- Columbia River tribal members who eat fish frequently (48 meals per month) throughout their lives may have cancer risks up to 50 times higher than people who eat fish once a month.
- More than 100 toxic substances make their way through our wastewater treatment plants into the Columbia River.
- High levels of cancer-causing chemicals are found in certain species of fish, such as sturgeon and bass. Rather than clean up the pollution, Oregon and Washington warn people not to eat certain types of fish in specific areas of the Columbia River.

Where is all the pollution coming from? Every day, thousands of pipes release pollution into the Columbia and its tributaries. The Columbia River Basin, an area the size of France, accumulates pollution from factories, wastewater treatment plants, agricultural lands, logging, and runoff from industrial sites and city streets. As if this weren't enough, the Columbia Basin is also home to hundreds of contaminated waste sites—including the the most polluted place in the Western Hemisphere: the Hanford Nuclear Reservation. Studies on Columbia River resident fish, otters, bald eagles, and other species reveal the heavy toll of toxic pollution.

Fighting Back

Yes, the system is flawed. Long ago, someone decided that rivers were the easiest place to discard waste. But do not despair. Not so long ago (45 years to be exact), people across the nation came together and convinced lawmakers to restrict pollution: the Clean Water Act was born. Today, groups like Columbia Riverkeeper can sue polluters when the government turns its back on illegal pollution. We can also engage our elected officials and agencies to tell the public's story—how people rely on the Columbia for drinking water and food—and offer creative solutions to ratchet back pollution.

As part of the Riverkeeper team, I collaborate with impacted communities, Columbia River tribes, and non-profits to restore the public's right to toxic-free fish. Here's a snapshot of how we fight back:

- **Advocate for stronger laws.** In 2010, Oregon enacted the nation's most protective limits on toxic pollution. Working with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, Riverkeeper helped secure a victory that set national precedent. But clean water laws are under threat by the Trump administration and corporate interests.
- **Take polluters to court.** Riverkeeper cracks down on illegal pollution by enforcing the Clean Water Act. This year, we stopped 50,000 pounds of toxic pollution from entering the Columbia.



The author's daughter, Talia Seals, fishing with her grandfather, Bruce Goldberg, on a Columbia River backwater.

- **Watchdog permits to pollute.** While some pollution is illegal, our government actually allows a stunning amount of pollution through Clean Water Act permits. Riverkeeper's legal team reviews these permits and advocates for tougher pollution limits.
- **Promote science.** Riverkeeper supports studies to understand how toxics are impacting the Columbia's fish and wildlife.
- **Clean up toxic sites.** Riverkeeper works with communities to provide technical and legal assistance on complicated cleanups, like Hanford and shuttered aluminum smelters.

In today's political climate, where "regulation" is a four-letter word, every child's health is still Riverkeeper's North Star. On evenings when I feed my daughters salmon we caught from the Columbia, I'm reminded that the daunting, complicated task of fighting toxic pollution comes back to a simple truth: everyone has the right to eat fish without fear of toxic pollution.



Photo by Alex Milan Tracy

Victory **over Millennium Coal**

By Brett VandenHeuvel, *Executive Director*

I remember vividly the phone call seven years ago. A tip about plans to build a Columbia River shipping terminal to export coal to China. Big money, big players, big problem. I hung up and banged my head on my desk. And left it there. How could we fight big coal?

Jump ahead two years: nearly two thousand people in red “no coal” shirts cheered and waved signs as light rain fell on our rally in Longview, Washington. The speakers—a local doctor, pastor, business owner, and Montana rancher—addressed the crowd about the risks of dirty coal. After surveying the sea of red shirts, a longtime Longview resident said: “I’ve never been so proud of my community.”

Jump ahead again, to September 26, 2017. Washington’s Department of Ecology denied a key permit, killing the last coal export terminal proposed on the Columbia. Sure, Millennium will appeal, but they won’t win. Though our region celebrates the victory over Big Coal this fall, that rainy day in Longview may have been the moment we truly won. The passionate local activists, the massive crowd, the record-setting number of written comments, and that new-found sense of pride all led Washington to deny the permit.

How did we fight Big Coal?

Together. We helped build Power Past Coal, a coalition of non-profit, business, health, and faith communities, partnering with tribal nations, working with a common vision and strategy to defeat coal export. Together, we purposefully designed the coalition along the rail lines—from the Powder River Basin to the shipping ports and dozens of communities in between. We helped generate an unprecedented grassroots organizing effort to pack public hearings, earn media stories, and build local leadership.

What was our strategy to beat Big Coal?

Aggressive legal work and community organizing. We braided together grassroots organizing with litigation so that our public actions complemented our legal strategies. We quickly identified the legal hooks to defeat the projects, focused on key decision-makers like the Department of Ecology, and challenged permits along the way. We focused heavily on the Clean Water Act and the State Environmental Policy Act, where we ultimately prevailed.

But all the organizing and lawsuits in the world would not matter without you. You were the most important factor in this victory. You attended hearings, spoke to your neighbors, wrote letters, and made art. You powered the attorneys and organizers. Because of you, 44 million tons of coal per year will stay in the ground instead of sailing down the Columbia River to Asia. You became part of something bigger than yourself. You dreamed of a better future and then took action.

Setting precedent: Another big victory.

Just a week before the Millennium coal victory, we won a critical lawsuit over the largest fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery in the world. The Washington Shorelines Hearing Board ruled that the Port of Kalama violated state law by failing to disclose the methanol refinery's true greenhouse gas impacts.

The Kalama methanol refinery would use a staggering amount of fracked gas (also called natural gas)—more than all other industrial gas users in Washington combined. Tremendous volumes of methane, a potent greenhouse gas, leak into our atmosphere during the drilling, piping, and processing of fracked gas. The environmental impact statement for the Kalama methanol refinery was illegal because it ignored this major source of greenhouse gas pollution. This win sets important precedent: agencies must look at the full, lifecycle impacts of using fracked gas.

What's next?

When the Port of Kalama publishes an honest assessment of the project's greenhouse gas emissions, we'll make sure state and local leaders recognize that building a huge new fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery contradicts Washington's climate goals.

We extend a heartfelt thank you to our attorneys at Earthjustice and our lawsuit partners, the Sierra Club and Center for Biological Diversity. We are inspired by all the residents of Kalama, Cowlitz County, and the Northwest who continue to organize and mobilize for clean air and water.

Record-Setting Public Opposition

In 2012, our campaign against Millennium coal broke Washington's record for the number of public comments against a project. Five years later, near the end of the coal export fight, you broke your own record by submitting an unheard-of 260,000 comments against Millennium's Clean Water Act permit! Big Coal could not wear us down; in fact, we grew stronger.



Fishing boat parade on the Columbia River as a part of the People's Climate March nationwide day of action on April 29, 2017. Photo by Rick Rappaport.

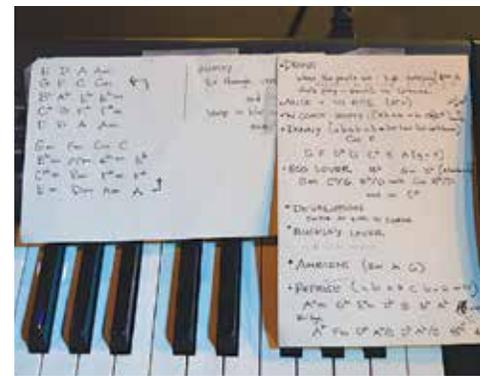
Riverkeeper Happenings

There is never a dull moment on the Columbia! Here are some highlights.

HOLCOMBE WALLER TOUR & DINNER THEATER FALL 2017

Thank you for a great night at “Notes from the Riverkeepers” dinner theater fundraiser with artist Holcombe Waller on October 19, 2017. Attendees raised \$24,000 to fight for clean water, exceeding our \$20,000 goal! We send our gratitude to Holcombe Waller, Signal Fire Arts, and the Tony Starlight Theater for being great partners.

Prior to the fundraiser, “Notes from the Riverkeepers” toured in Portland, Astoria, Seattle, Bainbridge Island, Mosier, and Hood River. We hope you enjoyed listening to Holcombe tell our story through music and art.



“CONOCE TU COLUMBIA // KNOW YOUR COLUMBIA” RADIO SHOW HOOD RIVER, OR: SEPTEMBER 19, 2017

We celebrated the launch of our new show on Radio Tierra “Conoce Tu Columbia // Know Your Columbia” at Lake Taco in Hood River. This Spanish-language show produced by Columbia Riverkeeper’s Community Organizer, Ubaldo Hernández, features inspiring stories from the environmental and social justice movements along the Columbia River and information about how to get involved. For the schedule and more information visit Radio Tierra (radiotierra.org).

FALL SALMON VIEWING COOK, WA: OCTOBER 7, 2017

Photographer Peter Marbach led Columbia Riverkeeper members at the Little White Salmon River on a tour to view and photograph spawning salmon. Attendees learned how to capture wildlife on film from a professional photographer while observing the final stage of the salmon lifecycle. Peter shared about traveling along the Columbia’s 1,243 miles—photographing riverscapes, wildlife, and the people who live and work along the river—while taking in the sights and sounds of salmon migration.



SHE WHO WATCHES TOUR

HORSETHIEF LAKE NEAR DALLESPORT, WA: SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

As a special thank you Columbia Riverkeeper supporters, we hosted a private tour at the famous She Who Watches (Tsagaglala) petroglyph with an interpretive guide from Washington State Parks. Stay tuned for future hikes.



LOVE YOUR COLUMBIA DAY

FROM THE HEADWATERS TO THE ESTUARY: AUGUST 26, 2017

Thanks to all 513 of you who made our fourth annual Love Your Columbia Day a huge success. We celebrated with 15 different events and collected nearly 16,000 pounds of trash along the river. This tally doesn't even include the acres of invasive weeds we cleared or the community barbecues, float trips, and celebrations. The Columbia is a better place because of you. Thank you!



FARMS FEED US

ST. HELENS, OR: AUGUST 2, 2017

The Port of St. Helens' controversial proposal to rezone 837 acres of farmland for heavy industrial development faced fierce opposition at a hearing before the Columbia County Board of Commissioners. Farmers, local business owners, commercial fishermen, retired teachers, and many others delivered passionate testimony to the Board on issues ranging from the value of local farms to the threats from oil-by-rail and other fossil fuel development.

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Thank you for your support!

ASTORIA CITY COUNCIL OPPOSES OIL TERMINAL

ASTORIA, OR: AUGUST 3, 2017

The City Council of Astoria unanimously opposed the massive proposed Tesoro Savage oil train terminal in Vancouver, citing oil spill risks to fishing, clean water, and the local economy. Thank you to the amazing community activists from the Columbia River Estuary Action Team (CREATE) who drafted the initial resolution and spearheaded this effort. CREATE activists were instrumental in making the resolution happen.



OREGON PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION HEARING

SALEM, OR: AUGUST 8, 2017

Oregonians scored a major victory for clean energy this summer when Oregon utility regulators rejected a proposal by PGE to commit our region to decades of power fueled by fracked gas.

Share your stories about the Columbia River and photos by emailing us: info@columbiariverkeeper.org. Follow our work on social media, too.



Oregon Hanford Expert Retires

By Dan Serres, *Conservation Director*

For decades, Oregon relied on Dirk Dunning to tackle the most complicated problems at North America's most contaminated place, the Hanford Nuclear Site. Dirk spent his career protecting the Columbia River from contamination left behind by America's nuclear weapons program as a chemical engineer with the Oregon Department of Energy. I asked Dirk about the highlights, lowlights, and lingering problems with Hanford cleanup. The following is an excerpt of our conversation.

Q&A with Dirk Dunning

Recent news from Hanford has been alarming—workers inhaling plutonium, a tunnel collapse, and potential new leaks from double-shelled tanks. Why do workers and the environment at Hanford keep getting put at risk?



Dirk Dunning

The folks at Hanford truly do mean to do a good job. However, they have a very particular cultural past that is quite different from most of society. In the early days of nuclear weapons production, there was huge emphasis on making plutonium for bombs to beat the Russians . . . Everything else was secondary—including public and worker health and safety. A side effect of that was [U.S. Department of Energy's efforts to downplay] the impacts of radioactive materials on people. They did this for what they thought were good and valid reasons. And in time, they came to believe it themselves. This self-deception was aided by the random nature of radiation risk and by the long delay in consequences.

You were involved in some of the biggest successes in Hanford cleanup. What aspects of the cleanup are you most pleased with?

The Spent Fuel Project was my first, and one of my largest, successes. The Spent Fuel Project dried out, packaged, and removed over 2,400 metric tons of nuclear fuel from two failing basins adjacent to the Columbia River. The

catastrophic risk there was as large as Chernobyl.

I proposed that the Tri-Parties—U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Washington Department of Ecology— put together the needed processes to deal with whatever came out of the 100 Area waste sites, and in essence 'sample the entire site,' processing the waste as they went. The Tri-Parties agreed to this exploratory method. It has been a huge success. Nearly all of the waste is now off the river. Doug Shoop (manager of the Richland Operations Office for DOE) and his team have done a great job, along with EPA and Washington's Department of Ecology.

Getting the Plutonium Finishing Plant finally shut down, and torn down, is one of the largest accomplishments in the nation. DOE has had serious difficulties and has had to take a step back and reassess before they finish that work in the coming months. Still, it is a great success.

What concerns you most about Hanford? What are Hanford's highest-priority, unresolved issues?

The greatest risk by far is from the cesium and strontium capsules stored in the Waste Encapsulation Storage Facility.

The removal of these capsules into dry storage is now a very high priority. If the basins, or a pipe under the basins, were to fail, and the basin water levels fell below the top of the capsules, the radiation levels would become so intense that no one could ever approach the building again. No meaningful response would be possible. In a matter of months, all of the capsules would fail, the building's concrete would crumble from high heat, and much of the cesium would be released on the wind. This would be a Chernobyl-scale accident. It must be prevented.

The second largest risk is the double-shell tanks. The tanks were designed and built decades ago. At the time, they were thought to be the best design we had. [Today,] the outer tanks are all probably at or near failure, as they rust through from the

Hanford: An Insider's Perspective

bottom up. The ... corrosion is expected to be the worst ... directly underneath the main tanks, where they cannot be inspected. New tanks are needed.

How can Riverkeeper members protect themselves and the Columbia from Hanford?

Stay active and involved. Be as informed as you can. Ask good questions. DOE does listen. It just takes a long time for them to agree to change course when billions of dollars are involved. The public's input, particularly in Hood River and Portland, has been crucially important to Hanford decisions from the earliest days of cleanup. The Tri-Parties have listened to you.

Your career spanned many administrations and leadership styles. Are you concerned about current changes at EPA and DOE that might impact Hanford cleanup?

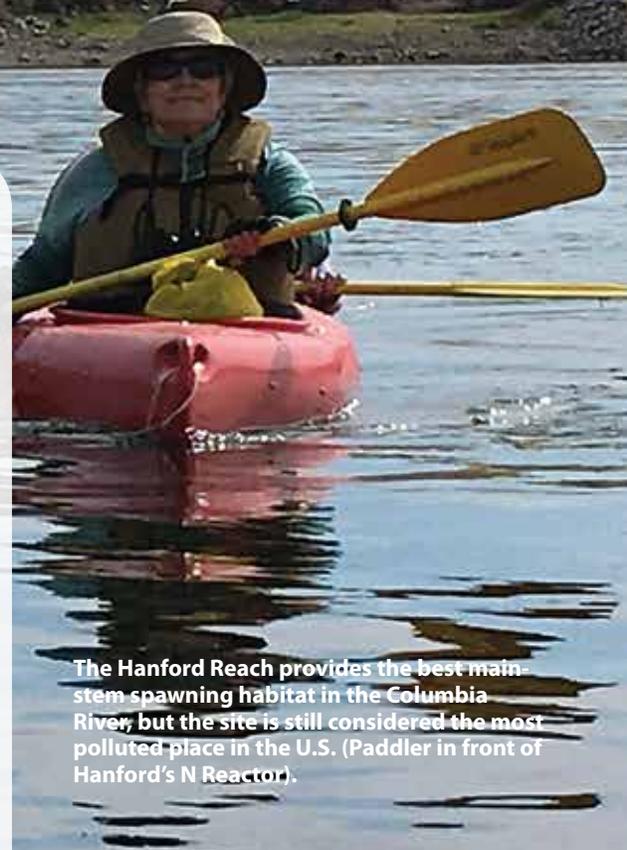
Yes, I am. The single largest loss will be the loss of institutional knowledge. Currently, EPA at Hanford is extremely short staffed and trying to cover a lot of areas outside of Hanford. Their project manager, Dennis Faulk, just announced his retirement. He takes with him an immense amount of institutional knowledge. There is no one to replace him. That is a great loss.

Dirk's blunt warning about the loss of institutional knowledge at Hanford reminded me of a Milan Kundera quote. Kundera wrote, *"The struggle against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting."* This struggle continues at Hanford. The imminent loss of expert knowledge of Hanford's waste compels us to redouble our efforts to watchdog DOE's cleanup of North America's most contaminated site.

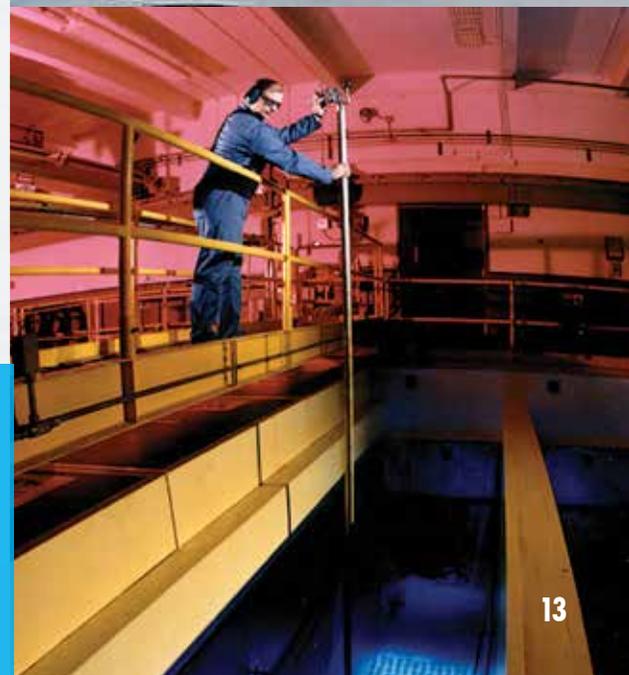
Riverkeeper's staff and members extend our gratitude for Dirk's candor in this interview and his tireless work to protect the Columbia River and the people of the Pacific Northwest from Hanford's chemical and radioactive legacy.

SAVE THE DATE: JAN 10

"Hanford: Our River Runs Through It" is a panel discussion with Dirk Dunning, moderated by Dan Serres, on January 10, 2018, at 7 - 9 p.m., at the Columbia Center for the Arts in Hood River, Oregon. To reserve your ticket, visit gorgeowned.org/sense-of-place.



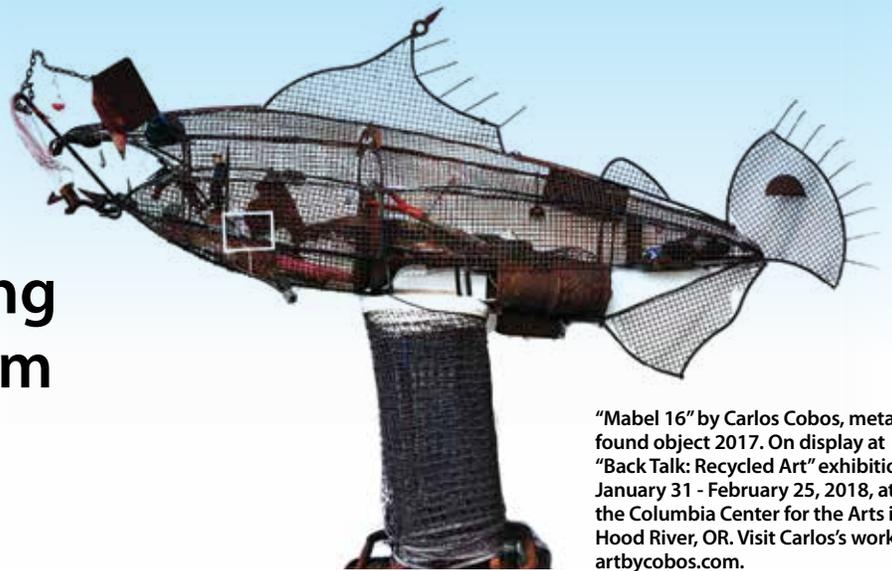
The Hanford Reach provides the best main-stem spawning habitat in the Columbia River, but the site is still considered the most polluted place in the U.S. (Paddler in front of Hanford's N Reactor).



Author and Forager Langdon Cook's Newest Book

“Upstream: Searching for Wild Salmon, from River to Table”

By Liz Terhaar, *Communications Director*



“Mabel 16” by Carlos Cobos, metal found object 2017. On display at “Back Talk: Recycled Art” exhibition January 31 - February 25, 2018, at the Columbia Center for the Arts in Hood River, OR. Visit Carlos’s work artbycobos.com.



Langdon Cook, Seattle-based author and forager, shares what inspired his latest book, “Upstream: Searching for Wild Salmon, from River to Table.” It provides an in-depth and timely look at salmon—one of the last wild foods on our table.

Langdon addresses the future of wild salmon by exploring the legacy of overfishing and industrial development; the conflicts between fishermen, environmentalists, and Native Americans; hatchery issues; and the longstanding tensions between science and politics, wilderness and civilization.

Q&A with Langdon Cook

What inspired your transition from writing about foraging mushrooms to a book about salmon?

I saw it as a lateral move. I’ve been writing about wild foods for the last 10 years. I viewed salmon as the ultimate wild food, certainly in North America with entire societies that have formed around the lifecycle of the salmon.

How did you frame this story?

My work is very character-based because I think you need to get to know people first, then maybe you can understand why they have the views that they have.

We all love salmon. Everyone in this book loves salmon, but we’re not all on the same page when it comes to conserving the resource and how to conserve it for future generations.

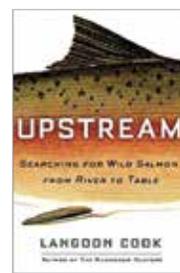
What inspired you to write this book?

We all just want to put food on the table for our family, why should we have to do all this research?

I thought I knew something about salmon and the issues salmon face; as I got into the subject, I realized how little I knew. The book begins at a place of naivete, my naivete, and follows me as one layer of complexity is added on. Going through all these issues, from farmed salmon, to hatchery salmon, to the tribes, commercial fishing, sport angling, and so on, right up through the science and what groups like Riverkeeper are doing.

His Advice to Fellow Riverkeeper Members

Educate yourself. The most basic connection to salmon is as a consumer at the fish market. If we want to make informed decisions, we need to educate ourselves. If you want to be a responsible consumer, it has to start with you.



◀ Pick up a copy of “Upstream: Searching for Wild Salmon, from River to Table” by Langdon Cook at Powell’s Books in Portland, or Waucoma Bookstore in Hood River. For more information about Langdon Cook’s new book, foraging recipes, and his latest events, visit langdoncook.com.

Mentoring the Next Generation of Advocates and Scientists



Left to right: Melissa Knudson, Corie Lahr, Seth Chicas, and Justin Takkunen.



Jon Terhaar

By Lorri Epstein, *Water Quality Director*

Interns make a huge impact at Riverkeeper and beyond. Riverkeeper helps the next generation of scientists and advocates gain critical experience, build their resumes, and gather perspective on some of our region's most pressing problems. Our interns have gone on to pursue advanced degrees, become community leaders, and protect our rivers with passion and creativity. We're proud that their time at Riverkeeper provided experiences working in a water quality lab, following scientific protocols, meeting volunteers from diverse backgrounds, and understanding Columbia River issues. Former intern Susan Elliot reflects on her time at Riverkeeper:

"Working with volunteers, interpreting water quality data, and supporting a rockstar team dedicated to river and community health absolutely empowered me to make river conservation a bigger part of my life. After interning with Columbia Riverkeeper, I completed a graduate degree in Water Resource Engineering with a focus in river restoration. The Columbia also helped me see river protection on a grander scale. From Hanford to Liquefied Natural Gas to salmon to coal trains, so much impacts this vast watershed. Today, my husband and I are raising awareness for Wild & Scenic Rivers across the country through a project we call 'Wild River Life.' Looking at so many watersheds helps me see a more comprehensive view of river health across our country, thanks to the perspective I gained on the Columbia."

Most of our interns pursue careers protecting public health and the environment. They've become the scientific voices speaking out on climate change, river protection, and environmental justice. They are advocates and leaders in their communities, and we are so proud of the work they do.

Building on a history of successful internships, we are excited to launch our "Clean Water Champions Internship" this year. This new internship program will promote river health, safe fish consumption, and pollution control, while specifically reaching out to underserved communities. With robust mentorship, our Clean Water Champions will gain experience using the scientific process, water quality monitoring tools and methods, and community organizing and advocacy. Every intern comes to Riverkeeper with unique knowledge and background; we give tomorrow's scientists and advocates the skills to protect what they love.

To learn more about Elliot's project celebrating Wild & Scenic Rivers, follow @WildRiverLife.



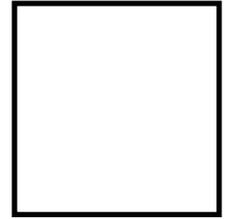
Susan Elliot (right)



Patrick Haluska



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