

COLUMBIA
RIVERKEEPER

RIVER CURRENTS | 2018 Issue 1



THE COLUMBIA!

VICTORY EDITION

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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Join the conversation and keep up with the latest from Columbia Riverkeeper!



Ana Molina Trejo, Environmental Justice Campaign Liaison, Beyond Toxics, (left) and Ubaldo Hernández, Community Organizer, Columbia Riverkeeper, (right) recording Conoce Tu Columbia.

River Notes

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

This newsletter showcases the effective and diverse work you make possible. Riverkeeper may be best known for defeating dirty fossil fuel terminals like coal, oil, and fracked gas, and this edition does not disappoint. We celebrate victory over the nation's largest oil-by-rail terminal proposal in Vancouver, WA, after a five-year strategic campaign. Check out quotes from heroes of this effort (p. 6-7). Defeating big oil: you powered this work.

As a Riverkeeper member, I hope you are equally proud to support a new, Spanish-language radio show, Conoce Tu Columbia (Know Your Columbia). Produced by Ubaldo Hernández, Community Organizer, the show features stories about environmental and social justice efforts along the Columbia (p. 3). This program is one step to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion in our movement. Producing high-quality, bilingual programs: you powered this work.

And read how Riverkeeper volunteers collected samples for an Oregon Health & Science University study on pharmaceuticals polluting the Columbia (p. 14). Contributing to research: you powered this work, too.

From protecting our climate from fossil fuels, to engaging diverse communities, to supporting science, thank you for all you do.

Executive Director, Brett VandenHeuvel



"Raise your hand if you oppose this project"
Gaiser Hall, Vancouver, WA; Oct. 30, 2013.

COVER: Oil campaign art by Michel Losier (michellosier.com).
BACK: Photo credit: Liv Smith.

Radio for the River:

Conoce Tu Columbia // Know Your Columbia

By Liz Terhaar, *Communications Director*



In 2017, you helped launch a Spanish-language radio show called Conoce Tu Columbia (Know Your Columbia) airing on Gorge-based FM station Radio Tierra. Radio Tierra provides high-quality, innovative programming to the Columbia Gorge, and the world, to bring together diverse populations and promote mutual understanding, community support, and community development.

“Radio Tierra is very excited and grateful for the collaboration between our station and Columbia Riverkeeper,” said Juan Reyes, Vice President of Radio Tierra. “Conoce Tu Columbia has been a great addition to our programming and an excellent source of information for our listeners, pertaining to the protection and support of the environment surrounding the Columbia Gorge.”

Produced by Riverkeeper’s Community Organizer, Ubaldo Hernández, Conoce Tu Columbia features stories from the environmental and social justice movements along the Columbia River. Hernández shares, “Environmental and cultural awareness go hand in hand. To make these issues relevant to audiences, you need to make this connection.”

Quotes from the show:

“Social and environmental justice is the right of every person regardless of their race, economic status or wherever they come from. We all have the right to a healthy environment.”

-Ana Molina Trejo, Environmental Justice Campaign Liaison, Beyond Toxics

Episode title: *Pesticides, farm workers, and agricultural communities.* Aired January 16, 2018

“Signing petitions is an important way to participate from the Latino community.”

-Glicerio Zurita, Organizer, OneAmerica

Episode title: *Oil-By-Rail threats in the Pacific Northwest.* Aired July 29, 2017

“Public participation was the foundation for all the success on the fight against the coal industry.”

-Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, Senior Organizer, Columbia Riverkeeper

Episode title: *Coal export no longer threatens the Columbia River.* Aired November 14, 2017

“The participation of the community in the struggle of our natural resources must also be a celebration of culture and life.”

-Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, Founder, Earth Guardians

Episode title: *Youth environmental activism.* Aired August 16, 2017

En 2017, tú ayudaste a lanzar un programa de radio en español llamado Conoce tu Columbia, transmitido desde la estación FM Radio Tierra situada en el Gorge. Radio Tierra provee una programación innovadora y de alta calidad a la audiencia de Columbia Gorge y el mundo, con el propósito de acercar a los diferentes grupos de población y promover un entendimiento mutuo, apoyo comunitario y desarrollo de la comunidad.

“En Radio Tierra estamos muy entusiasmados y agradecidos por la colaboración entre nuestra estación y Columbia Riverkeeper”, dijo Juan Reyes, vicepresidente de Radio Tierra. “Conoce tu Columbia ha sido un gran aporte a nuestra programación y una excelente fuente de información para nuestra audiencia, con respecto a la protección y apoyo del medio ambiente en los alrededores del Columbia Gorge.”

Producido por el organizador comunitario de Riverkeeper, Ubaldo Hernández, Conoce tu Columbia presenta historias de los movimientos de justicia social y ecológicos a lo largo del Columbia River. Hernández comparte que: “La conciencia cultural y ecologista van tomadas de la mano. Para lograr que estos temas sean relevantes para la audiencia, es necesario hacer esta conexión”.

Citas en el programa:

“La justicia social y ambiental es el derecho de cada persona independientemente de cuál sea su raza, estatus económico o de dónde vengán. Todos tenemos derecho a un medio ambiente saludable”.

-Ana Molina Trejo, personal de enlace para campañas de justicia social, Beyond Toxics

Título de episodio: *Pesticidas, trabajadores agrícolas y comunidades agrícolas.* Transmitido el 16 de enero de 2018

“La firma de peticiones es una manera importante de participar para la comunidad latina”.

-Glicerio Zurita, organizador, OneAmerica

Título de episodio: *Amenazas del transporte de petróleo por ferrocarril en el Noroeste Pacífico.* Transmitido el 29 de julio de 2017

“La participación pública fue la base de todo el éxito en la lucha contra la industria de carbón”.

-Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, organizadora principal, Columbia Riverkeeper

Título de episodio: *La exportación de carbón ya no amenaza más al Columbia River.* Transmitido el 14 de noviembre de 2017

“La participación de la comunidad en la lucha de nuestros recursos naturales debe de ser también una celebración de cultura y vida”.

-Xiuhtezcatl Martinez, fundador, Earth Guardians

Título de episodio: *Activismo ecologista de jóvenes.* Transmitido el 16 de agosto de 2017

Through inspiring interviews and music, the show shares stories of people protecting our health and water from pollution. Tune in and learn how you can make a difference in your community. **Listen to Conoce Tu Columbia live every other Tuesday from 7–8 p.m. on Radio Tierra 95.1 FM Hood River, OR; 95.9 FM Stevenson, WA; 96.7 FM Carson, WA; 107.1 FM Parkdale, OR; and 107.1 FM The Dalles, OR, or find archived episodes on our website (conocetucolumbia.org).**

A través de entrevistas y música inspiradoras, el programa comparte historias de las personas que protegen nuestra salud y agua de la contaminación. Sintoniza y aprende cómo puedes hacer la diferencia en tu comunidad. **Escucha en vivo a Conoce tu Columbia cada dos martes de 7–8 p.m. en Radio Tierra 95.1 FM Hood River, OR; 95.9 FM Stevenson, WA; 96.7 FM Carson, WA; 107.1 FM Parkdale, OR; y 107.1 FM The Dalles, OR, o encuentra episodios archivados en nuestro sitio web (conocetucolumbia.org).**



Tesoro: oil spills and unsafe labor

Oil campaign art by Amy Harwood with The Gloo Factory (thegloofactory.com). Designed for use at the Washington Energy Council's first hearing in 2013, Amy's banners appeared at nearly every oil campaign event from 2013 to 2018.

How Grassroots Efforts in Vancouver Beat Big Oil

By Brett VandenHeuvel, *Executive Director*

As I reflect on the recent victory over Tesoro's oil-by-rail terminal in Vancouver, WA, my coworker Dan Serres is helping plan the victory celebration. But five years ago, a victory party was tough to imagine.

Back in 2013, I sat alongside many of you at a Port of Vancouver meeting. It was a well-planned charade. Tesoro's team of consultants explained that building the nation's largest oil-by-rail terminal in the heart of Vancouver was perfectly safe. Bakken crude oil trains through the Gorge: safe. Emissions from huge storage tanks near neighborhoods: safe. Oil supertankers in the estuary: safe. The Port Commissioners lobbed softball questions and nodded knowingly at Tesoro's rehearsed answers.

I was itching to jump up and interrupt this sham process. When a Tesoro executive compared Bakken crude to "mother's milk," my co-worker—a new mother—was aghast. But we knew this would be a long fight and that Tesoro would win the first round. The Port approved the lease, and the \$210-million project enjoyed a glow of inevitability.

Two years later, I stood on stage at the Kiggins Theatre in downtown Vancouver looking through the lights at

an audience of 500. Next to me were two Vancouver City Councilors (the City had just voted to oppose Tesoro), the President of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 4, a business owner, and a local pastor—all there to speak passionately about protecting Vancouver and the Columbia River. The project's glow of inevitability was fading. I believed, for the first time, that we would win.

What happened?

People joined together to protect what we love. We organized. We litigated. We outworked and outsmarted the oil company's squadron of engineers, attorneys, and public relations consultants every day for five years. You powered this work. Thank you.

This victory was a wonderful and diverse group effort. Local heroes in Vancouver, labor unions, neighborhood associations, businesses, faith communities, progressive elected leaders, and non-profit organizations came together with a common vision. Our Stand Up to Oil coalition wove local fights into a larger campaign. And tribal nations, including Warm Springs, Umatilla, Yakama, Nez Perce, and Cowlitz, were absolutely critical to this victory. An oil train fire in Mosier, OR, also undercut Tesoro's safety pitch.



“The Tesoro Savage Vancouver Energy Project is a direct threat to our treaty-reserved rights, which is why the Yakama Nation has always opposed the project The people of the Yakama Nation have lived, fished, and practiced their cultural and religious traditions since time immemorial along the Columbia River, including the area threatened by the proposed Tesoro-Savage project site. The Treaty of 1855 between the Yakama Nation and the United States allows the us to practice and preserve these traditions.”
-JoDe Goudy, Chairman, Yakama Nation; Press Release, November 2017.

“I went door to door in Vancouver neighborhoods, in between the coal train tracks and the oil terminal. One man told me their home shakes when the trains pass by. And half of the people are immigrants, most of them are Latinos, and many of these people do not have a voice—but they have to breathe polluted air.”
-Glicerio Zurita, Organizer, OneAmerica; Petition Delivery & Rally, May 2017.

“We are convinced there are no safe ways to carry these volatile materials through our front yards, right by our schools. We are calling for a moratorium on the traffic of this highly volatile, dangerous fossil fuel through the Columbia River corridor.”
-Arlene Burns, Mayor of Mosier; Mosier, June 2016.

“Today, the Governor’s decision on the Tesoro-Savage oil terminal showed that the health of the Columbia River and the safety of its citizens matters most.”
-Jaime Pinkham, Executive Director, Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission; Press Release, January 2018.

“To allow this project would cause Fruit Valley and other nearby neighborhoods to sacrifice their health for the greed of a dying industry.”
-Alona Stenke, Retired Nurse & Vancouver Activist; Air Pollution Hearing, June 2017.

“For the railroads and big oil companies, derailments and fires are simply the cost of doing business. For me, it means the lives of our children and the lives of my patients and their families.”
-Dr. Maria McCormick, Mosier Physician; Vancouver City Council, July 2016.

“The Governor put the health of our communities and the Columbia River ahead of the oil industry’s profits. People across Washington and the greater Pacific Northwest are standing alongside him in this denial. This is what leadership looks like.”
-Rebecca Ponzio, Director, Stand Up to Oil Campaign; Press Release, January 2018.

“We are not an oil town.”
-Bart Hansen, Vancouver City Council Member; Vancouver, December 2017.

“When you think about the negative impacts of Tesoro’s proposal on local businesses, the jobs we create, and our local economy, you realize that this project is terrible for Vancouver. And considering the risks, when it comes to the terminal even making a profit, this project just doesn’t pencil out.”
-Bryan Schull, Trap Door Brewing & Member of Vancouver 101; EFSEC Hearing, January 2016.

Back to the Future with Riverkeeper

By Lauren Goldberg, *Staff Attorney*

The year is 2118. You stand barefoot, cold water lapping at your ankles, along the Columbia's Hanford Reach. You are here to catch fall Chinook. On your flight to the river (did I mention you flew here in a hovercraft?), weathered warning signs dotted the landscape: "Hanford Site, Restricted Government Area." Strange. The land around you is wild shrub-steppe. You grab your zPhone to scan the water for toxic pollution. Nothing. So you reach for your pole.

Back to reality. Can salmon survive in the year 2118? What will remain of Hanford's radioactive and toxic pollution? Are Columbia River fish too toxic to eat? And are fossil fuels powering that hovercraft?

Civil rights icon Rosa Parks once said, "Stand for something or you will fall for anything. Today's mighty oak is yesterday's nut that held its ground." Our big dream for 2118 is a Columbia River that pulses with migrating salmon and invites kids to jump in on a hot day, where everyone can eat fish without fear of toxic pollution. How do we get there from here? We dig in our heels and fight for cleaner, colder water. And, together, we turn away fossil fuel projects that are so last-century.

Riverkeeper's plans are ambitious. Here are some highlights of how we will work shoulder to shoulder with people across the Columbia Basin and fight for the promise of clean water and strong salmon runs—in 2018 and beyond.



● Save salmon

Salmon and steelhead need cold water to survive. The hard reality: climate change coupled with dams and habitat degradation increases water temperatures in the Columbia Basin. In 2015, rising water temperatures killed roughly 250,000 adult sockeye salmon migrating up the Columbia and Snake rivers. According to NOAA Fisheries, 2015 river conditions are consistent with a warming climate.

Back in 2003, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) studied the root causes of hot water in the Columbia and Snake rivers and drafted an enforceable plan to fix the problem. But dam operators objected. Why? EPA found that the dams are warming our rivers.

In 2017, Riverkeeper and allies sued to force EPA to take action. The court will likely decide our case in 2018. If successful, our lawsuit would compel EPA to write a plan to control water temperatures in the Columbia and Snake rivers.

This lawsuit alone will not save salmon. But the case is an important step; salmon will not survive to 2118 unless we start tackling the hot water problem now.

● Clean up Hanford

The Columbia River runs through the Hanford Nuclear Site, home to some of the most dangerous pollution on Earth. Public involvement matters. In spring 2018, we will kick off a new project, working in solidarity with the Yakama Nation, to increase public outreach on and near the Yakama Reservation. Our goal: empower more people to engage in Hanford cleanup decisions.

We will also watchdog critical government decisions about Hanford cleanup and arm people with the facts to make a difference. Case in point: cleanup of the PUREX tunnels. The tunnels made headlines last year when Tunnel 1 failed and collapsed. Tunnel 2 may contain over 7,000 curies of plutonium and other radioactive materials. Through our seat on the Hanford Advisory Board—a non-partisan government board that makes recommendations to decisionmakers—and community organizing, we are speaking up and mobilizing people to protect the Columbia.

● Stop the fracked gas scourge

Recent scientific studies show that the climate impact of fracked gas (sometimes called “natural” gas) is nearly as bad as coal. This is because fracked gas, which is mostly methane, leaks into the atmosphere from fracking wells and gas pipelines. Methane is an extremely potent greenhouse gas.

Today, the gas industry plans a stunning increase in fracked gas infrastructure and consumption in

Washington and Oregon. This includes: fracked-gas-to-methanol refineries; new pipelines; and fracked-gas-fired power plants. Stopping the nation’s largest new methane users is an important step to fight climate change. That’s where Riverkeeper comes in.

After a major legal victory in 2017, we have a second chance to convince Governor Inslee and state regulators to stop the world’s largest fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery, proposed along the Columbia in Kalama, WA. Through grassroots community organizing and strategic litigation, we will dig deep in 2018 to protect our climate and the Columbia from fracked gas.

● Engage diverse communities

The environmental movement has a well-deserved reputation for failing to serve, represent, and include diverse communities. We are committed to doing better. Last year, we launched a Spanish-language radio show called *Conoce Tu Columbia*. Produced by Columbia Riverkeeper’s Community Organizer, Ubaldo Hernández, *Conoce Tu Columbia* features stories from the environmental and social justice movements along the Columbia River. This year, we will also partner with the Ford Family Foundation and the CAPACES Leadership Institute to offer a series of Spanish-language leadership trainings.

We are also expanding the Nichols Natural Area project, a community-led restoration of a former industrial site, to include more curriculum offerings and bilingual instruction for local schools. Nichols is a living laboratory for school groups and a much-needed greenspace. The Mayor of Hood River, Paul Blackburn, said, “This project can become a centerpiece for restoration in the heart of the Hood River waterfront. Riverkeeper’s leadership in creating an inclusive project and engaging diverse communities is just what we need to be successful.”

We are committed to asking tough questions, learning from our mistakes, and building a more inclusive society.

● Hold polluters accountable

Riverkeeper cracks down on illegal pollution by enforcing the Clean Water Act. The Columbia River, and the communities that depend on it, face serious threats from toxic pollution. In recent years, Riverkeeper brought legal actions against more than 50 facilities that illegally polluted our river.

Riverkeeper’s lawsuits deliver results: we stop thousands of pounds of toxic pollution per year. This year, we expanded our legal team, bringing on associate attorney Simone Anter to help hold more polluters accountable. If the Trump administration and cash-strapped state agencies won’t protect our fish and waters, Riverkeeper will enforce the law.

What do you want the Columbia to look like in 100 years? We stand for a future Columbia where people can eat fish without fear of toxic pollution, salmon thrive, and clean energy eclipses dirty fossil fuels. Stand with us.

Riverkeeper Happenings

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



RESTORATION EFFORTS

SANDY, OR; NOVEMBER 29, 2017

With participants from the Wisdom of the Elders Workforce Development Internship Program, a Native American workforce training, and the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership, we planted 500 willow trees on the Sandy River Delta. This project will help re-establish natural flooding, invigorate floodplain processes, and create habitat for juvenile salmon. Participants and staff enjoyed an equal exchange of environmental education, traditional ecological knowledge, and restoration goals and strategies.



HANFORD SENSE OF PLACE LECTURE HOOD RIVER, OR; JANUARY 10, 2018

A sold-out audience of over 150 people listened with rapt attention as retired Hanford expert Dirk Dunning joined Riverkeeper's Dan Serres and Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility's Damon Motz-Storey to share perspectives on Hanford cleanup efforts. Gorge Owned sponsored the event.



RALLY TO STOP TESORO SAVAGE SEATTLE, WA; JANUARY 25, 2018

King County executive, Dow Constantine addressed a rally in Seattle to call on Governor Jay Inslee to deny the Tesoro Savage oil train terminal. Within one week, Governor Inslee issued his decision rejecting the terminal.



"Thank you to the thousands of people across the northwest . . . [W]e have turned back massive oil and coal expansions and we are poised to do the same with the Tesoro proposal on the Columbia River."

—Dow Constantine



IMPROMPTU PRESS CONFERENCE CELEBRATING DENIAL OF TESORO SAVAGE OIL TERMINAL VANCOUVER, WA; JANUARY 29, 2018

Vancouver City Councilmember Bart Hansen joined a jubilant crowd in the pouring rain outside City Hall to commend Governor Inslee's decision to deny the Tesoro Savage oil terminal. Television, print, and radio journalists huddled under a tent to hear local activists, city leaders, longshore workers, and health professionals react to Inslee's decision.

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



EFSEC REJECTS TESORO OLYMPIA, WA; NOVEMBER 28, 2017

In an emphatic, unanimous vote, the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council recommended denial of the Tesoro Savage oil terminal. Local activist leaders Don and Alona Steinke joined Riverkeeper Conservation Director Dan Serres and Stand Up to Oil Campaign Director Rebecca Ponzio in a surprised, speechless moment of celebration.



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Photo by Rick Rappaport ©

New Study Reveals True Climate Cost of Kalama Methanol Refinery

By Miles Johnson, *Clean Water Attorney*

A proposal to turn fracked gas into methanol in Kalama, WA, would increase Washington's contribution to climate change even more than previously reported, according to a new study by the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI), an international non-profit research organization.

How much climate pollution are we talking about? Kalama's fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery would cause the equivalent of 3.7 to 7 million tons of CO₂ pollution annually, based on 20-year global warming potential. That's similar to the carbon footprint of the massive coal-fired power plant in Centralia, Washington. When the Centralia coal plant closes in 2025, the Kalama methanol refinery and export project would take up the mantle of Washington's top contributor to climate change.

Backers of the fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery have long insisted that the Kalama facility would lead to an overall decrease in global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Their theory was that methanol made in Kalama would be used instead of methanol made from coal, with higher GHG emissions, in China. But SEI found that "there is no guarantee that production of gas-based methanol at the Kalama facility would avoid an equivalent amount of coal-based methanol production in China." SEI concluded that it was "just as or more likely

that [the Kalama methanol refinery] would displace the other, lower-GHG" ways to make plastics—a result that would increase global GHG emissions even further.

Perhaps the most damning aspect of SEI's report is the conclusion that the Kalama methanol refinery cannot help us achieve a low-

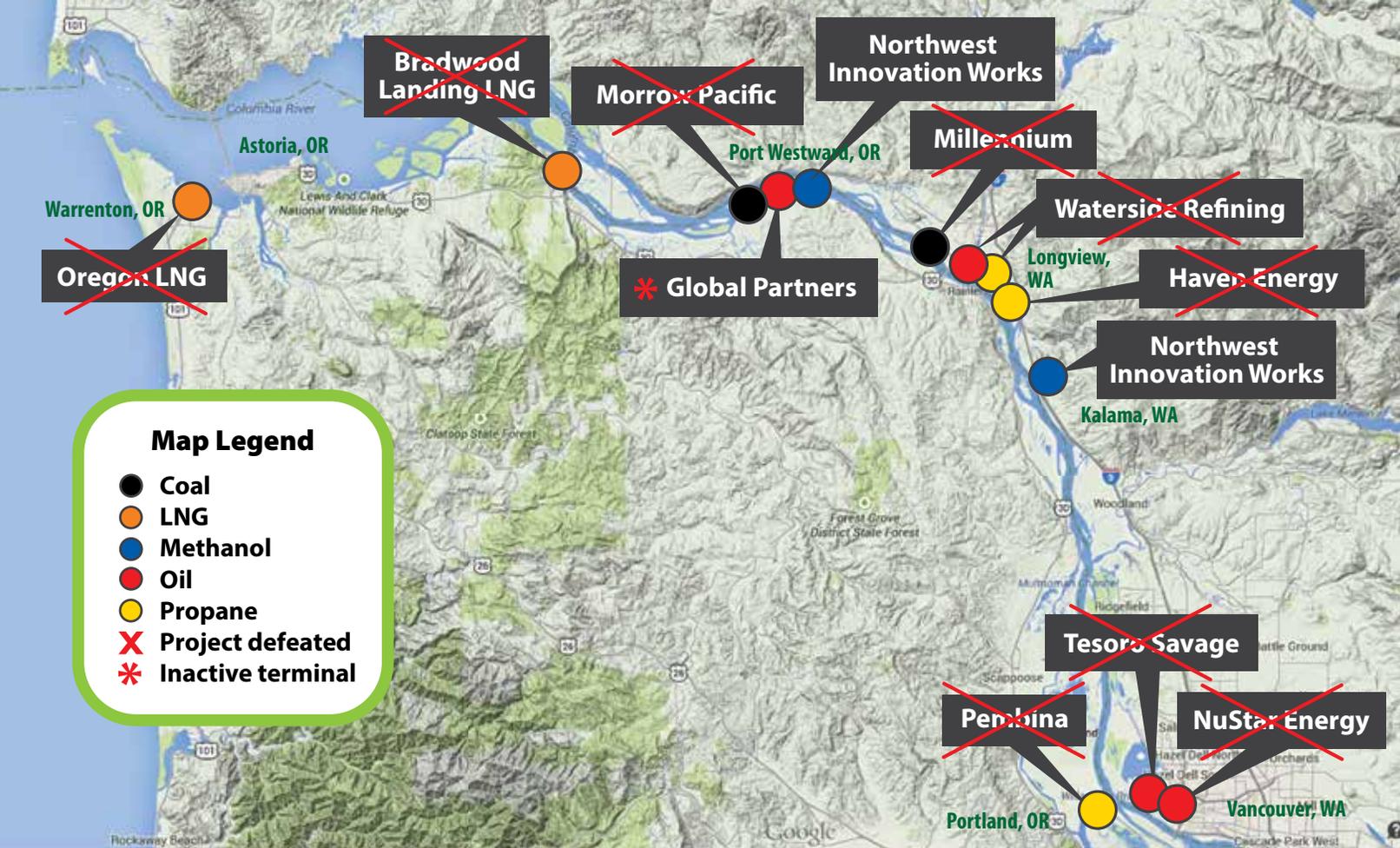
carbon future or meet the goals in the Paris Climate Accords. According to SEI's report, approving the Kalama fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery "would not appear to be consistent with globally agreed climate goals of keeping warming at less than 2 degrees Celsius." Project proponents depict a choice between "this or that"—methanol made from fracked gas in Kalama or methanol made from coal in China. But the right choice, for our climate, appears to be "neither."

We can't control what China does, but we can take responsibility for our own decisions and lead by example. Based on SEI's results, it's hard to reconcile support

for the Kalama fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery with Washington's goal of cutting climate pollution eleven percent by 2020.

SEI's study is timely as well as revealing; Cowlitz County and the Port

Why is fracked gas so bad for our climate? "Natural" gas is mostly methane. During and after fracking, significant amounts of methane leaks out of gas wells into our atmosphere. And methane is an extremely potent greenhouse gas: 87 times worse than CO₂.



of Kalama just began a court-mandated re-write of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Kalama fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery—focused on the proposal’s GHG emissions. You can read Riverkeeper’s scoping comments on our website.

Beyond methanol: Fracked gas versus the Pacific Northwest.

Though it would rank among Washington’s worst climate polluters, the Kalama fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery is actually a symptom of a larger problem: cheap fracked gas. Advances in fracking technology over the last decade made it possible to exploit vast quantities of so-called “natural” gas throughout North America. The glut caused fracked gas prices in the United States to plummet; it also caused energy and petrochemical companies to look for ways to exploit this new-found source of cheap fossil fuel.

One result of the fracking boom is a slew of proposals to replace coal-fired power plants in the United States with power plants fueled by fracked gas. Coal is dirty, but we need to replace it with clean, renewable energy—not another fossil fuel. You may have heard that gas extracted by fracking is “natural,” “clean burning,” or “cleaner than coal.” Energy companies tout fracked gas as a “bridge fuel” towards a clean energy future. The sad truth is that fracked gas is a bridge to nowhere. New studies show that extracting and burning fracked gas to generate electricity is almost as bad for our climate as burning coal.

Another consequence of cheap fracked gas is proposals to export liquefied natural gas (LNG). LNG export terminals buy massive

amounts of cheap fracked gas, cool it into a pressurized liquid, and ship it overseas where gas is more expensive. Riverkeeper and allies successfully defeated two LNG export proposals in the Columbia River estuary, but the Jordan Cove LNG export proposal still threatens southern Oregon.

Riverkeeper is fighting the fossil fuel industry’s attempt to hijack our clean energy future by switching from coal to fracked gas. Riverkeeper and allies helped convince Portland General Electric to cancel two fracked-gas power plants at Boardman, OR, that would have replaced a closing coal plant.

Fracked gas is also made into a variety of chemicals and plastics. That’s the theory behind the Kalama methanol refinery: producing chemical feedstock for China’s booming plastics industry. Other uses for fracked gas are popping up across the Pacific Northwest. In Longview, WA, a company has proposed converting fracked gas into anhydrous ammonia for fertilizer. And in Tacoma, WA, a company is proposing to use LNG to power ships. Using vast quantities of cheap fracked gas makes money for energy companies, but locking in decades of reliance on fossil fuel is incompatible with stopping climate change.

Riverkeeper is making energy companies tell the whole truth about fracked gas. Riverkeeper and allies, represented by Earthjustice, recently won a precedent-setting legal victory which required the Kalama methanol refinery to reveal its full, life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions. Because of our success, the Longview fracked-gas-to-ammonia proposal and the Tacoma LNG project must produce similar studies.

The Science of Unregulated Pollution

Study tracks pharmaceuticals in the Columbia River

By Lorri Epstein, *Water Quality Director*, with Dr. Tawnya Peterson, *OHSU*

Map produced by *Kirstyn Pittman and Brittany Cummings*

Columbia Riverkeeper volunteers collected samples for a new Oregon Health & Science University study about the pharmaceutical metformin in the Columbia River. The study, led by Dr. Tawnya Peterson, Dr. Joseph Needoba, and Brittany Cummings, draws attention to a relatively new kind of unregulated pollution.

Every day, wastewater treatment plants and storm drains add millions of gallons of wastewater to the Columbia River. This wastewater is usually treated, but the treatment methods are not designed to remove the pesticides, herbicides, flame retardants, personal care products, and pharmaceuticals that can wind up in household wastewater. Collectively, these substances are called Chemicals of Emerging Concern (CECs). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) does not generally regulate CECs, even though the EPA knows or suspects that many CECs harm aquatic life.

We know that CECs are going into the Columbia. In 2013, a Riverkeeper-supported study detected CECs in the wastewater of seven sewage treatment plants. Scientists also detected CECs in sediments on the Columbia River bottom in 2012.

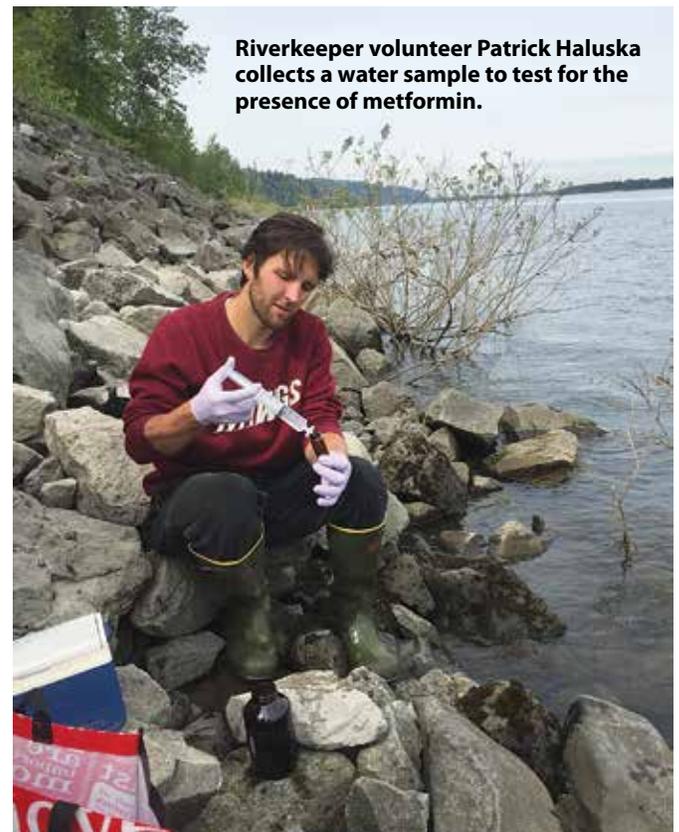
But the Columbia is a huge river. With all that water diluting the contamination, can we really detect CECs like personal care products and pharmaceuticals in the Columbia? Yes. In a groundbreaking study in 2014, Dr. Peterson and her colleagues detected, for the first time, personal care products and pharmaceuticals in the open waters of the Columbia. Although the concentrations of most CECs were very low, our ability to detect these contaminants in such a large river suggests that a lot of CECs are entering the Columbia.

Dr. Peterson and colleagues focused their research on a CEC called metformin—a drug for treating Type II diabetes. Metformin, at the concentrations typically found in treated sewage, interferes with sexual development and reproduction in certain fish.

Peterson's recent work—in partnership with Riverkeeper and funded by Oregon Sea Grant—tracked metformin at several Columbia River sites between The Dalles and Astoria. Metformin appears to be widespread throughout the Columbia. The highest metformin concentrations were typically found downstream of

the Willamette River confluence during low flows, but the overall amount of metformin entering the Columbia remained about the same year round.

The good news is this: metformin concentrations in the Columbia are 250–300 times lower than in the studies that demonstrated impacts on fish. Now the bad news: we don't know if, or how, fish respond to the concentrations of metformin currently in the Columbia. We also don't understand how mixtures of CECs affect fish and wildlife. Metformin is one of many unregulated chemicals, and Riverkeeper will keep supporting science about how CECs impact the Columbia River.



Riverkeeper volunteer Patrick Haluska collects a water sample to test for the presence of metformin.

Why We Knock: Columbia Riverkeeper's Grassroots Canvass Program

By Rob Cochran, *Canvass Director*

Our Grassroots Canvass team works hard each night going door to door to promote clean water. A key goal is to recruit new Columbia Riverkeeper members. Not only do members fund Riverkeeper's work, they volunteer, attend rallies, and talk to their neighbors about oil trains or toxic pollution. And when our staff tells an elected official that we speak for 12,000 members, we add political clout and power. Membership matters.

Many of you reading this newsletter joined Riverkeeper after a conversation with a canvasser. Thank you! You powered truly important victories for our clean water, our climate, and our communities.

Every night we see first hand how deeply people care about our planet. The numbers may surprise you—20 percent of the people we speak to become a member or renew their membership. Since we began canvassing in 2013, we have:

- Knocked on 163,500 doors;
- Spoke to 92,500 households about the Columbia River;
- Gained 10,000 new members; and
- Raised over \$722,000 to protect clean water and healthy communities.

Our canvassers are committed to protecting the Columbia River from the shore to your front door. We look forward to seeing you soon.



Back row: Dennis Paul; Matt Landon; and Olive Louise. Front row: Alex Smith and Rob Cochran. (Not pictured, Kevin Pryles and Benjamin Ayer.)

You can renew your membership by mailing in the donation envelope in this newsletter or donating online. Better yet, become a monthly donor so your membership is always current. Set up monthly giving at columbiariverkeeper.org or contact Acasia Berry, acasia@columbiariverkeeper.org or (541) 399-9119.



Simone Anter



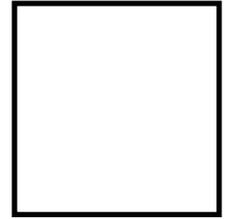
Yexsy Navidad

New Riverkeeper Staff

We are excited to announce our two newest team members: Simone Anter, Associate Attorney (left), and Yexsy Navidad, Administrative Assistant (right). Simone strengthens Riverkeeper's legal team and works to protect salmon and stop pollution. Simone also supports increased public engagement in Hanford Nuclear Site cleanup, in partnership with the Yakama Nation. Yexsy supports Riverkeeper's office operations and membership; she is fluent in both Spanish and English. Yexsy will likely answer when you call, so be sure to say "hi" and welcome her. We are thrilled to add Yexsy and Simone to Riverkeeper's staff.



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Join us at member events.

More information at columbiariverkeeper.org/events:

**May 6, 2018: Annual Pete Seeger Celebration
at the Clinton Street Theater in Portland, OR.**

This event is a fun, family-friendly celebration of resistance and song.

**Aug 11, 2018: Columbia Riverkeeper Fundraiser and
Dinner at the beautiful Helvetia Winery in Hillsboro, OR.**

Enjoy good company, music, food, and wine while raising funds for clean water. One of Riverkeeper's founders, John Platt, and friends will host this special event.