

# COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER

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RIVER CURRENTS | 2019 Issue 1

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## THIS ISSUE:

- A New Deal for Orcas, Salmon, and the Pacific Northwest
  - Bold Actions to Protect the River, Climate
  - Why States Must Reject New Gas and Oil Projects to Save the Planet
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**Columbia Riverkeeper** protects and restores the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean.

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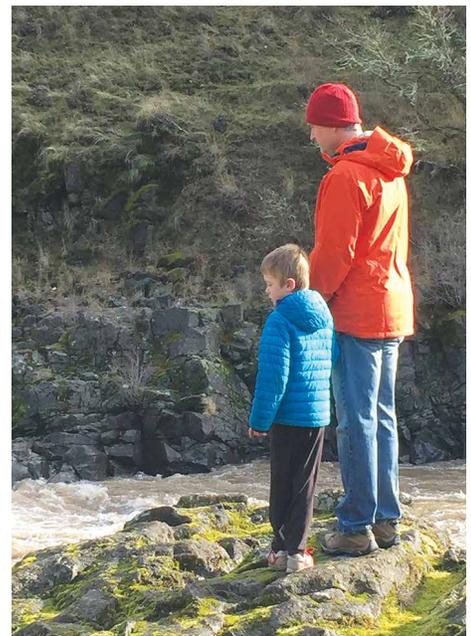


# RIVER NOTES

## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The theme of this newsletter is the relationship between salmon and orcas, two creatures that help define the Pacific Northwest.

Every fall, I take my two kids to the Klickitat River to watch Chinook salmon struggle up the frothing whitewater in a 10-foot-wide canyon called The Narrows. The canyon walls thrum with energy and we have to speak loudly just to hear each other. We scramble down the canyon walls and perch on the edge of a flat rock at the base of big rapid. Chinook salmon leap out of the water so close we can almost touch them—and the raging water beats them back, over and over again. We cheer at leaps, and groan at smackdowns.



Brett VandenHeuvel and his son, Gus, at the Klickitat River.

Next to the big rapid is a deep, clear pool where we watch a dozen fish rest, circling slowly, gathering the strength to take another shot. It looks impossible to ascend this maelstrom. But ascend they do, one after another, silver torpedos muscling up through the water.

A big Chinook, the largest we've seen, flies up the rapids without pause. This magnificent animal swam 180 miles from the ocean to its birth stream, where it will spawn and die, nourishing the river and the land itself with nutrients from the Pacific.

Upstream from The Narrows, skilled Yakama fishermen and women fish from scaffolds where their people have fished for thousands of years. Some of the salmon—bundles of protein from the ocean—literally jump into their dip nets. I look at the fishers, look at my kids, and renew my vow to fight for salmon with all I have.

What do orcas have to do with the Columbia? Endangered Southern Resident killer whales (aka orcas) travel from Puget Sound to the mouth of the Columbia each spring to pack on fat by eating salmon. Fishers crossing the Columbia River bar spot pods of orcas hunting. On rare occasion, people have spotted orcas upstream as far as Astoria.

I don't have a deep connection to orcas—I've never lived in their realm. (To tell the truth, I'm a little afraid of the ocean.) The Lummi people, featured on page nine, have the deepest connection possible. As Raynell Zuni-Morris, a Lummi Nation tribal elder explains, "My people's cultivated kinship relationship with resident killer whales goes back since time immemorial. They are not wild animals, they are family." The Lummi Nation is leading efforts to protect the whales, as each of us would protect members of our family.

This newsletter discusses the intertwined fates of salmon and orcas, and the Columbia River that sustains them. The bottom line: We must take action. Now. And we need your continued support of aggressive legal, policy, and organizing work to break down the status quo. Thank you for making a difference.

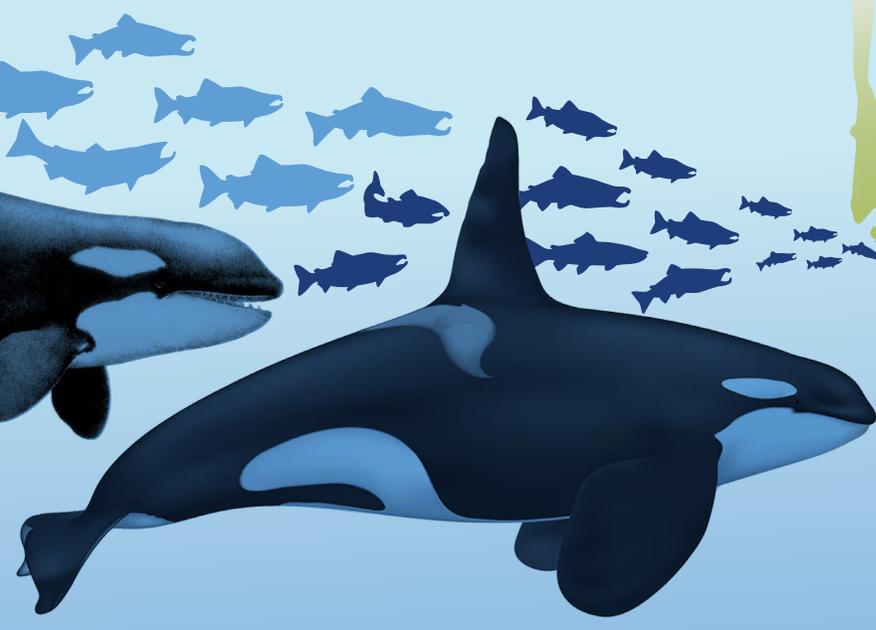
*Brett VandenHeuvel*

Brett VandenHeuvel  
*Executive Director*

COVER: Southern Resident killer whales, photo by NOAA Fisheries.  
BACK: Last light on Dog Mountain, photo by Peter Marbach.

# Salmon & Orcas

## ON THE BRINK



 **16 Million**

Salmon once returned to the Columbia and Snake rivers each year.

### Time Immemorial

Since time immemorial, the tribes of the Columbia Basin have enjoyed and exercised the right to harvest fish in their homelands. Treaties signed in 1855 between the U.S. and four Columbia River tribes guaranteed this right.

 **34%**

The percent of Columbia Basin salmon and steelhead runs that have gone extinct in the past 100 years.

 **74 Days**

Average number of days in summer that the Columbia River was hotter than the legal limit of 68°F (and too hot for salmon), measured at The Dalles Dam from 2013 to 2016.

 **55%**

Amount of Chinook salmon spawning and rearing habitat in the Columbia Basin that dams now block.

 **#1 Spot**

New science confirms Southern Resident orcas spend a lot of time hunting at and near the mouth of the Columbia River from January to April. Spring Chinook are especially valuable to these orcas due to their large size and high fat content.

 **1000 Miles**

The orca Tahiequah (or J35) captivated the world last year when she carried her dead newborn for 17 days and more than 1,000 miles. Two-thirds of Southern Resident orca pregnancies fail.

 **75** Current population of Southern Resident orcas.



Left to right: Sockeye salmon by Russ Ricketts (vimeo.com/riversnorkel); Bonneville Dam by Brett VandenHeuvel, orcas by NOAA Fisheries West Coast, Gorge sunset by Nicole Mark (nicolemarkphotography.com).

## A NEW DEAL FOR ORCAS, SALMON, AND THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

By Miles Johnson, Senior Attorney

We need a new deal in the Pacific Northwest, one that honors and restores cultures and ecosystems while setting a course to prosperity in the new green energy economy. To that end, we must rethink our relationship to the Columbia River hydropower system—or lose much of what defines the Pacific Northwest, including orcas and salmon.

Remember the first New Deal? Among other things, President Roosevelt's response to the Great Depression spawned the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and kicked off an era of building big dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. That effort brought cheap power to spur industrial growth, rural electrification, and a significant boost to America's military muscle in World War II.

But the costs were, and remain, staggering. Dam building and hydropower in the Columbia Basin decimated fisheries, displaced communities, and fractured ecosystems. The dams also destroyed entire Native American villages and treaty-guaranteed fishing sites, along with the economic, cultural, and spiritual livelihoods of thousands of Indian people. From Astoria to Celilo Falls to Kettle Falls to Revelstoke to Idaho's Sawtooth mountains, people are still paying for dam construction in ways that don't show up on our electric bills.

Tribes and Native fishers in the Columbia Basin acutely experience the destruction of salmon runs, which have always been a vital cultural resource. In 1905, the U.S. Supreme Court recognized that, for Columbia River tribes,

the right to catch salmon was "not much less necessary to the existence of the Indians than the atmosphere they breathed." A recent economic study, prepared in collaboration with several Columbia River tribes, similarly concluded that tribes' commercial, ceremonial, and subsistence salmon fisheries are literally "invaluable."

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"Celilo [Falls] still reverberates in the heart of every Native American who ever fished or lived by it. They can still see all the characteristics of the waterfall. If they listen, they can still hear its roar. If they inhale, the fragrances of mist and fish and water come back again."

— Ted Strong, Yakama Nation

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We've learned a lot since the 1930s—or even the 1960s, when we dammed the Lower Snake River. Advances in renewable energy production and distribution mean that the Snake River dams no longer produce the cheapest, most reliable electricity in the region. And decades of hindsight show that using the Columbia and Snake as a power plant pushed the world's greatest salmon and steelhead runs to the brink of extinction.

Let's make a new deal here in the Pacific Northwest. Or, at least, rethink the old deal. We can take advantage of decades of research and innovation. We can take stock of what's really important to Pacific Northwesterners and make sure we protect it for future generations. Let's dive in.



### What's happening to salmon and steelhead?

The mighty Columbia and Snake rivers are synonymous with salmon. Despite significant declines, their salmon runs still hold tremendous cultural and economic value for Northwest tribes and river and coastal communities.

The federal government has spent billions of dollars on salmon recovery and mitigation. But throwing money at the problem isn't working. About one third of the salmon and steelhead runs in the Columbia Basin are extinct. Many more runs are stuck on the Endangered Species List, hovering near extinction. Federal agencies like the BPA and the Army Corps of Engineers have become adept at using litigation and administrative delay tactics to avoid taking meaningful actions to recover salmon and steelhead.

In the river, the situation is grim. During 2015, 96 percent of the endangered Snake River sockeye salmon run died without making it upriver to spawn. The Snake River's threatened "B-run" steelhead population—a magnificent run of 20-plus-pound fish—has collapsed. Last fall, Oregon and Washington closed almost the entire Columbia River to salmon and steelhead fishing. And this year's spring Chinook and sockeye salmon run projections are dismal.

### The plight of Puget Sound orcas and Columbia Basin salmon.

Images of an emaciated orca futilely pushing her dead calf riveted the Pacific Northwest last summer. The governors of Washington and Oregon called for renewed studies and discussion about orca conservation, but the bottom line is this: Columbia and Snake river Chinook salmon are important food for the Endangered Southern Resident orcas, which are slowly starving to death and extinction. According to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, seven of the top 15 most important Chinook salmon stocks for orca recovery come from the Columbia Basin.

These beloved orcas spend their summers delighting whale watchers in Puget Sound. But in the early spring, they hunt the mouth of the Columbia for large, nutritious spring Chinook. It's a critical time of year for the whales to feed and put on weight: from there, they head north to give birth in Puget Sound. Orcas that arrive in Puget Sound underweight or malnourished have trouble giving birth and feeding their young.

The Southern Resident orcas depend on Chinook salmon, and the Columbia Basin was once the largest producer of Chinook on the West Coast. If we cannot significantly improve the Columbia's salmon runs, there's little hope for the orcas that depend on them.

### Dams hurt salmon.

Dams, and the reservoirs they create, make it hard for Columbia and Snake river salmon to survive their journeys to and from the ocean. While the dams are not the only threat to Columbia River salmon, they are the most deadly.

For young salmon, the turbines of the dams pose lethal obstacles. Sending water over the dams' spillways during the spring (commonly called "spill") helps young fish avoid the turbines. Riverkeeper and our allies are pressuring federal and state agencies to immediately provide additional spill to help young fish migrate safely.

For adult salmon swimming upstream, warm water has become a dire threat. Average summer water temperatures have steadily increased over the past 60 years. Warm water encourages disease, delays salmon migration, and depletes salmon's energy reserves. Salmon that stop or slow their migration, and languish in warm water, begin dying from stress and disease.

What does warm water have to do with dams? Most of the dams in the Columbia and Snake rivers create large, shallow reservoirs that trap the sun's heat and warm the



Senior Attorney, Miles Johnson, flying over McNary Dam. Aerial support from Lighthawk.

river until the water becomes dangerously hot for much of the summer. Research by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shows that the dams cause the Columbia and Snake rivers to exceed the safe water temperature that salmon need to survive.

### **The Lower Snake River: gateway to salmon and orca recovery.**

Removing the four Lower Snake River dams is the most impactful and concrete (sorry, dam pun) action that we can take to restore salmon and orcas.

The upper Snake River watershed, including the Salmon and Clearwater rivers, provides key spawning habitat for salmon and steelhead. This high-elevation area in central Idaho will resist the warming and drying brought on by climate change. And much of this landscape is already protected as national forest or wilderness. The Snake River watershed is where salmon and steelhead might recover in sizable numbers—if they could only make it to the ocean and back.

The four Lower Snake River dams block the way to salmon migration and recovery. These dams turn the Lower Snake River into a long, warm lake populated by deadly turbines and voracious salmon-eaters like smallmouth bass and walleye. A 2017 study by the Fish Passage Center—the federal scientific agency created to study how the dams affect salmon—found that removing the Lower Snake

dams would allow threatened Snake River spring Chinook to recover. Keeping those four dams would not. EPA's water temperature model also shows that removing the four Lower Snake dams would keep the Lower Snake cool enough for salmon to migrate upstream to their spawning grounds—even in very hot years. Removing the four dams will help unlock some of the most productive salmon spawning habitat left in the Columbia Basin.

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**Riverkeeper and our allies are pressuring federal and state agencies to immediately provide additional spill to help young fish migrate safely.**

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### **What about cheap electricity from the Lower Snake River dams?**

If you are like most people here in the Pacific Northwest, polling shows you'd actually be willing to pay a bit more to protect our salmon and orcas. But here's the good news: we don't have to choose between salmon and higher electrical bills.



Dams, and the reservoirs they create, make it hard for Columbia and Snake river salmon to survive their journeys to and from the ocean. While the dams are not the only threat to Columbia River salmon, they are the most deadly.

The truth is that each Lower Snake River dam makes, on average, just one percent of our region's electricity, and the Northwest already makes more power than we use. Thanks to advances in energy efficiency, and renewables like wind and solar, we don't need the electricity that those four dams generate.

And the power they make is not cheap. BPA sells the power from its dams at a rate that is roughly twice the price of power on the open market. And right now, BPA is asking permission to raise its rates even higher—to cover hundreds of millions of dollars of upcoming and overdue maintenance on these aging dams.

The small amount of electricity these four Lower Snake River dams produce is overpriced and could be replaced. In-depth research using BPA's own power-planning computer models shows that we could replace the Lower Snake dams' electricity without burning fossil fuels or breaking the bank—while actually improving the reliability of our electrical grid.

**A new deal for the Pacific Northwest.**

Back in the other Washington, some politicians are peddling a less-than-inclusive return to past American "greatness." Here in the Pacific Northwest, we are looking to a future filled with challenge and innovation. Hydropower will remain part of our electricity grid for some time. But not every hydroelectric dam built last century makes sense

today. It's time to admit that the four Lower Snake River dams—like dams on the Elwha, White Salmon, Rogue, and Klamath rivers—have outlived their usefulness.

It's been a long time since the first New Deal, and our world has changed dramatically. We've learned a lot, often through bitter experience. Let's make a new deal for the Pacific Northwest—one that meets our energy needs without endangering Northwest salmon, orcas, and cultures.



Orca Human Mural, photo by Davin Rubicz and Emily Ho of GonzoFile.com.



Photos by Paul K. Anderson.

## ANNUAL TOTEM POLE JOURNEY

by Lauren Goldberg, Legal & Program Director

This spring, the Lummi Nation will undertake the annual Totem Pole Journey to honor the captive orca, Tokitae, and bring attention to the plight of the Southern Resident orca population and the need to repair and restore the Salish Sea. Tokitae is a Southern Resident orca that was brutally captured 47 years ago. The Lummi believe she is asking them to help bring her home to the L-pod, where her mother is now the matriarch.

The journey with the 15-foot-long qwe lholmechen (Killer Whale or orca) totem pole will begin at the University of Florida, which is currently hosting the Lummi exhibit, Whale People, Protectors of the Sea, and then to Miami for three days of events to continue to pressure Seaquarium to release Tokitae (May 30 - June 1). Events will also take place in Los Angeles (June 7 - 8), San Francisco (June 9), Portland (June 11), Seattle (June 12), and at the Lummi Reservation near Bellingham (June 20 - 22). For updates and information, please email [kurtr@lummi-nsn.gov](mailto:kurtr@lummi-nsn.gov) or visit [www.sacredsea.org](http://www.sacredsea.org). Visit Columbia Riverkeeper's website ([columbiariverkeeper.org/news/2019/totem](http://columbiariverkeeper.org/news/2019/totem)) to view the film trailer for The Orca Oracle, now in production.

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“According to our Lummi traditional teachings, the Southern Resident Killer Whales are connected to my people through bonds of kinship. What happens to them, happens to us. Our term for them is qwe ‘lhol mechen, which means, ‘our relations under the waves.’”

— Raynell Zuni-Morris  
Lummi Nation Tribal Member & Elder

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Raynell Zuni-Morris



Jewell James of The House of Tears Carvers and the Lummi Nation finish a revision to the Totem.



# BOLD ACTIONS TO PROTECT THE RIVER, CLIMATE

By Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director

It's easy to feel deeply sad about the fate of salmon and orcas. I do. I'm sure you do, too. This is a healthy emotional response to our society putting such magnificent creatures—and the cultures that depend on them—in peril. Here are three other emotions that I feel: committed, motivated, and bold.

If you're committed to making a difference and motivated to act, you're in the right place. If you think now is the time to be bold, we hear you. As a Columbia Riverkeeper member, you are taking action every day to fight for salmon and orcas.

## TOGETHER, WE ARE:

### 1. SUING THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

When the federal government refused to address the hot water crisis on the Columbia, we took them to court. And won. In October, U.S. District Court Judge Ricardo Martinez ordered the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to create a plan to reduce hot water. This plan is a critical first step to restoring cool water. Judge Martinez ruled that "EPA has failed to undertake its mandatory duty. ..."

EPA appealed Riverkeeper's victory to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. We are defending our victory with vigor. If we win, we will push the EPA to evaluate removing the four lower Snake River dams to give salmon a fighting chance. Holding the Trump administration accountable in court is vital work, but we are also...

### 2. CREATING POWER FOR WASHINGTON STATE TO PROTECT SALMON AND ORCAS

After five years of Riverkeeper's strategic litigation, the states of Washington and Oregon now have the authority—for the first time ever—to force federal dam operators to keep the Columbia River cool enough for salmon survival. Our efforts generated two front-page, above-the-fold articles in the Seattle Times in one week (January 31 and February 6, 2019). Wow!

Why the high-profile press? Providing Washington and Oregon with authority to protect salmon under the Clean Water Act—instead of just relying on the federal government—is a potential game changer. While this power shift is exciting, we are also...

### 3. FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE

The Columbia River gets hotter and hotter as our climate warms. The United States has surpassed Russia and

Saudi Arabia as the world's largest producer of oil and fracked gas, and the Pacific Northwest has emerged as a key battleground to prevent large-scale export of fossil fuels to Asia. Our climate cannot afford more fossil-fuel infrastructure—shipping terminals, fracked-gas refineries, and pipelines—that lock us into decades of intense fossil-fuel use.

Cold-water-loving salmon simply won't survive.

The good news? We have defeated every large, new, fossil-fuel proposal. Together, Riverkeeper and allies knocked back 10 huge coal, oil, and fracked gas proposals totaling more than 200 million metric tons of carbon per year—right here on the Columbia. Nice work, everybody! While we work to restore cool water for salmon and protect our climate, we are also...

### 4. STOPPING TOXIC POLLUTION

Warm water plus toxic pollution is a dangerous mix for our salmon. Studies show that many chemicals are more toxic (e.g., more bioavailable) to salmon in hot water than they are in cold water. Plus, hot water stresses the immune system of salmon and reduces the amount of dissolved oxygen available in water. Think about breathing exhaust from a bus. Not ideal. Now think about inhaling exhaust while running uphill on a 100 degree day. Dangerous.

To reduce toxic pollution, Riverkeeper brought more than 50 Clean Water Act enforcement actions over the last decade. We prevented hundreds of thousands of pounds of illegal pollution from entering the Columbia. Every day, we track down illegal polluters and stop toxic discharges to protect salmon and community health. We are taking action now and...

### 5. DEVELOPING FUTURE LEADERS

Clean water and our climate will always need protecting, long after you and I are gone. So we invest in training and inspiring future leaders. We mentor summer law clerks who go on to work in Congress, at public-interest law firms, and for other nonprofits. We hire water quality interns to collect E. coli data from popular recreation areas, where they learn field and laboratory science while providing the public with valuable information.

And to inspire kids to believe in the power of community, we launched the Nichols Natural Area project. In 2018, more than 700 students learned about our river and restored an old industrial site along the Columbia into a community greenspace. Yes, we have urgent issues today, but we need to train and motivate advocates to carry on the legacy.

Thank you for being committed, motivated, and bold to protect your community and our planet. Together, we are making real and lasting changes.



"Hoodberg" by Tom Lehmann (springfish.bigcartel.com).

## You Can Help the Columbia River Through Your IRA

If you are 70½ years or older, you may be able to transfer up to \$100,000 from your IRA directly to Columbia Riverkeeper or another charity without having to pay federal income tax. Simply notify your IRA plan custodian of your intent to make a current transfer. It's a win-win!

**For more information, please contact Sandy Wright, development director, at [sandy@columbiariverkeeper.org](mailto:sandy@columbiariverkeeper.org) or 971-645-5535.**



Power Past Fracked Gas Rally in Olympia, WA; February 21, 2019. Photo by Ale Blakely.

## THE STATE MUST REJECT NEW GAS AND OIL PROJECTS TO SAVE THE PLANET

By Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director, Columbia Riverkeeper, and David Turnbull, Strategic Communications Director, Oil Change International

*The Seattle Times published the following op-ed on February 24, 2019. This summer, Washington Governor Jay Inslee and the Washington Department of Ecology will make critical decisions that could spell the end of the Kalama fracked gas-to-methanol refinery.*

The United States has passed Russia and Saudi Arabia as the largest producer of oil and natural gas in the world. As a result, we are seeing an onslaught of proposals to export fossil fuels and petrochemicals through the Northwest.

It is no longer enough for Washington leaders to focus on reducing demand for fossil fuels through state policies. Washington must stop permitting new fossil-fuel infrastructure.

Building new pipelines, refineries and export terminals will lock us into decades of fossil-fuel use, which our climate cannot afford. We urge Governor Jay Inslee to reject new fossil-fuel projects, including the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery proposed in Kalama.

Inslee carries the message and the mantle of climate leadership to a national audience, and his passion and commitment to the issue are obvious and robust. Today, Inslee can bend down the arc of fossil-fuel production and promote clean energy by rejecting projects that spur new oil and gas fracking.

The good news? Inslee and the Washington Department of Ecology can stand up to the oil and gas industry's plans to use the Northwest as an export hub for fossil fuels by denying pending permits for the proposed methanol refinery in Kalama. Oil Change International recently released a report, "Drilling Towards Disaster," which highlights a sober truth: The oil and gas industry plans to unleash a burst of new carbon emissions between now and 2050 at an unprecedented scale. While the world must rapidly decarbonize to avoid runaway climate disaster, the United States is increasing oil and gas extraction.

Backed by the Chinese government, the refinery would consume 320 million cubic feet of fracked gas per day, more than all other industrial or residential uses in Washington combined. The developer says we need methanol to make more plastic or to burn as a fuel in Asia. The proposal's staggering gas use will spur more fracking and new pipeline development in Washington, and contribute to spiking methane emissions that pose a potent threat to our climate.

We have seen what strong climate leadership looks like in Washington. In 2018, Inslee stood up to the oil industry by denying the continent's largest proposed oil-by-rail terminal in Vancouver, Washington. In recent days, the governor made strong statements in opposition to the TransMountain tar sands pipeline proposed in British Columbia. (On Friday, Canada's National Energy Board recommended approval of the pipeline despite environmental and First Nations' concerns.)

Last week, the Power Past Fracked Gas coalition delivered more than 100,000 public comments to Inslee calling on him to reject new fracked gas projects in Washington.

And King County passed a moratorium on new fossil-fuel infrastructure.

These are the sorts of hard but necessary decisions climate leaders are called to make.

Under Inslee's leadership, Washington has taken important strides on climate action. Here, with the Kalama methanol refinery, he faces an important decision. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated that we have 12 short years to set a new course for our economy and climate or face debilitating consequences for our region. Accepting and winning this challenge requires that we choose an innovative, clean path forward and reject a new generation of dirty fossil-fuel projects, starting today.

## CALL IT WHAT IT IS: FRACKED GAS

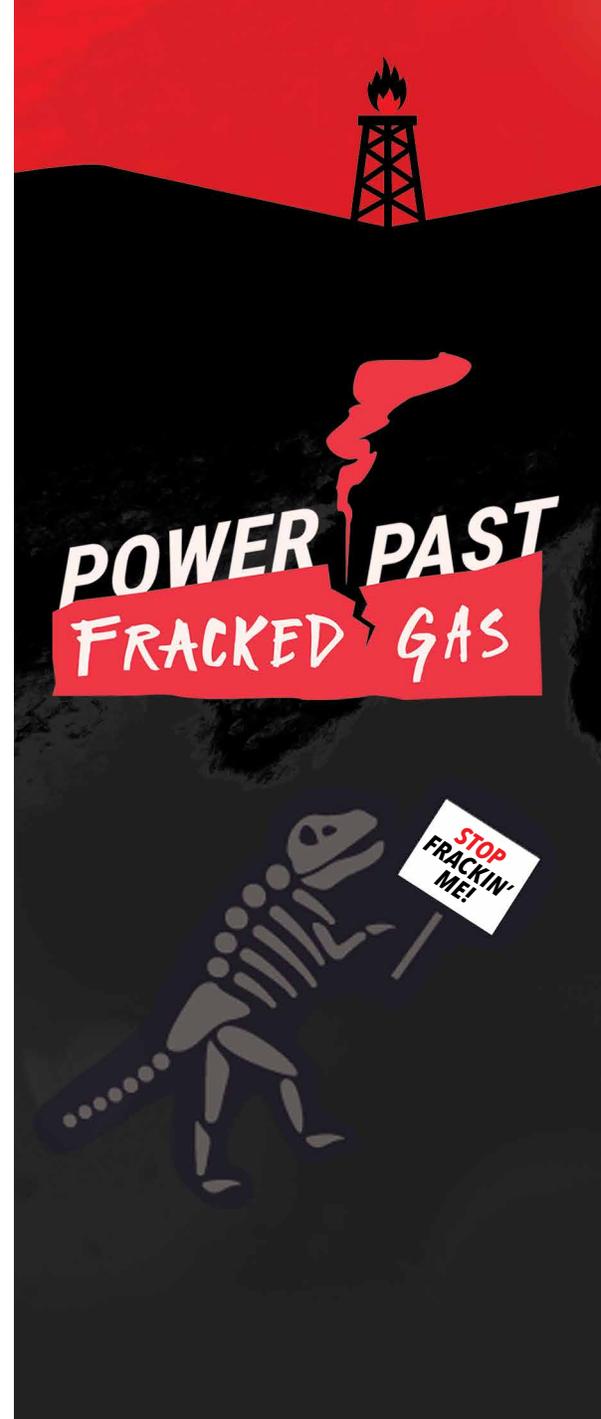
“Natural gas” is a phrase promoted by the fossil-fuel industry to fool consumers into believing that methane—the primary component in “natural gas”—is a climate-friendly fossil fuel. Don’t be fooled. At least half of the natural gas we consume comes from fracking—a dangerous and dirty process that pollutes soil, water, and air. In 2014, the fossil-fuel industry used fracking to extract half of the gas produced in Canada—and it’s expected to increase to 80 percent by 2035. Bottom line: There’s nothing “natural” about destroying our climate, communities, and water.

## POWER PAST FRACKED GAS

In 2018 Columbia Riverkeeper helped launch Power Past Fracked Gas, a growing coalition of Pacific Northwest health, environmental, faith, and community groups that believe in the power of clean energy and the value of clean water. The coalition opposes new fracked gas infrastructure that locks our region into decades of continued reliance on dirty energy and harmful projects. The newly-minted coalition supports and builds on the work of ally coalitions Power Past Coal and Stand Up to Oil. To learn more, visit [powerpastfrackedgas.org](http://powerpastfrackedgas.org).

## MORE GAS THAN NORTHWEST CITIES—COMBINED

According to a recent analysis from the Sightline Institute, the consumption of fracked gas at the Kalama, Washington, methanol refinery would dwarf the consumption of the Northwest’s biggest cities. Even adding up all the fracked gas used by every home, business, and industry in Seattle, Portland, Tacoma, Spokane, Bellevue, Eugene, Bellingham, and Corvallis, does not come close to equaling the voracious appetite of the methanol export refinery planned for Kalama. Check out the report at [sightline.org](http://sightline.org) and learn more about the Kalama refinery at [columbiariverkeeper.org](http://columbiariverkeeper.org).



## TAKE ACTION

Columbia Riverkeeper members protected the Columbia from massive fracked gas infrastructure projects including the Bradwood Landing and Oregon LNG terminals and hundreds of miles of new pipelines. Together, we can stop the world’s largest fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery. Commit to taking three actions this spring:

- 1** Call Governor Inslee. Dial during business hours (360-902-4111) and tell the governor to do the right thing and oppose the Kalama fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery.
- 2** Attend a Hearing. Cowlitz County and the Port of Kalama will hold critical public hearings on the Kalama refinery this spring or summer. Subscribe to Riverkeeper’s email list or social media channels for updates.
- 3** Forward a Petition to Five Friends. We’ll deliver another tidal wave of petitions to Governor Inslee and the Washington Department of Ecology this summer. Share Riverkeeper’s petitions with five friends and help build the movement for our climate and river. Visit [columbiariverkeeper.org/take-action](http://columbiariverkeeper.org/take-action).



Fracked Gas Rally in Olympia, WA; February 21, 2019. Photo by Ale Blakely.



## RIVER HAPPENINGS: THERE IS NEVER A DULL MOMENT ON THE COLUMBIA

### RIVERKEEPER IN COURT KELSO, WA, JANUARY 28

Last year, the Washington Department of Natural Resources sold off 153 acres of wildlife habitat and public recreation land to pave the way for a mega-industrial port. We took the agency to court for violating the state's own hallmark environmental law. The land—located near the confluence of the Lewis and Columbia rivers—supports threatened and endangered species like sandhill cranes and Columbia white-tailed deer. “The public has a right to know why the Department of Natural Resources capitulated to industrial interests and sold off this public recreation gem,” explained Columbia Riverkeeper’s senior attorney, Miles Johnson. We expect a decision from the Cowlitz County Superior Court later this year. A special thanks to Maura Fahey of the Crag Law Center, co-counsel in the appeal.

### FRACKED GAS RALLY OLYMPIA, WA, FEBRUARY 21

More than 100 people gathered on the capitol steps to send Governor Inslee a powerful birthday message: Come on climate governor, take a stand against dirty fracked gas projects! We delivered nearly 150,000 public comments to the governor opposing dirty fracked gas projects, including the Kalama fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery. Birthday cupcakes kept everyone’s spirits high on the frigid winter day. A huge thank you to our partners with the Power Past Gas Coalition for sending a strong message for climate action.

### PUBLIC INTEREST ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CONFERENCE EUGENE, OR, MARCH 1

Riverkeeper’s associate attorney, Simone Anter, presented on a panel, *Rivers Under Threat: Using Environmental and Native Laws, Policies, and Strategies to Protect Rivers in an Era of Climate Change and Drought*. Simone’s presentation focused on Riverkeeper’s approach to working in solidarity with tribal nations in the Columbia Basin. Simone shared Riverkeeper’s work with Yakama Nation to increase public engagement in the Hanford Nuclear Site cleanup and fight for long-term protection of the people and salmon threatened by Hanford’s legacy. Hanford is located on Yakama ceded land and Hanford’s nuclear waste impacts treaty-reserved rights.

Share your stories about the Columbia River and photos by emailing us:

[info@columbiariverkeeper.org](mailto:info@columbiariverkeeper.org).  
Follow our work on social media, too.





Conoce Tu Columbia event in Portland, OR; March 16, 2019. Photos by Stan Hellman.

## **CONOCE TU COLUMBIA COMMUNITY CELEBRATION PORTLAND, OR, MARCH 16**

Families and friends gathered along the Columbia's shores at Kelley Point Park to volunteer, learn, and connect. Participants restored native habitat, cleaned up a community park, tested water quality, and learned about traditional ecological knowledge from Portland-based nonprofit Wisdom of the Elders. A special thanks to the East Multnomah County Soil and Water Conservation District, the City of Portland Parks and Recreation, and our partners for making the event a success.

## **SHIFTING SAND: A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME AT THE COLUMBIA'S NICHOLS BOAT BASIN HOOD RIVER, OR, MARCH 20**

A sold-out crowd learned about the Columbia River waterfront's history during a panel presentation about Nichols Natural Area. Riverkeeper's water quality director, Lorri Epstein, presented our ambitious plans to turn the former industrial site into an outdoor classroom and community-led habitat restoration site. The lecture also featured Carina Miller, a dynamic speaker and tribal council member from the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, and former Hood River mayor and amateur historian Arthur Babitz. Thanks to Gorge Owned for organizing the Sense of Place lecture series.

## **COMING SOON! THE HANFORD JOURNEY HANFORD REACH, WA, JUNE 14**

Riverkeeper is working with Yakama Nation to plan the Hanford Journey event. Hosted by the Yakama Nation Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program and Riverkeeper, this day-long event will inspire people to help heal the Columbia from Hanford's nuclear legacy. Speakers will explore and honor Yakama Nation's persistent and successful efforts to clean up Hanford. The event features a performance by Yakama Nation's Swan Dancers and guided hikes and boat rides.

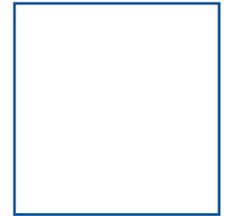


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# You Can Leave a Legacy of a Clean Columbia River and a Healthy Climate



By including Columbia Riverkeeper in your will or estate plans, you help ensure that everyone can swim, fish, recreate, or just enjoy the majestic Columbia River now and for many generations to come.

For more information, contact Sandy Wright, development director, at **971-645-5535** or [\*\*sandy@columbiariverkeeper.org\*\*](mailto:sandy@columbiariverkeeper.org).