

COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER®

RIVER CURRENTS | WINTER 2014 NEWSLETTER

This Issue:

**Get Involved! Be an
Adopt-A-River Volunteer**

**Meet the
Riverkeeper Staff**

Save Port Westward

**What's Underground
at Hanford?**

**Citizen Scientists
in Action**



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.

Staff

BRETT VANDENHEUVEL, Executive Director
LAUREN GOLDBERG, Staff Attorney
DAN SERRES, Conservation Director
LORRI EPSTEIN, Water Quality Director
JASMINE ZIMMER-STUCKY, Community Organizer
CHRISTINA SKIRVIN, Program Administrator
ROBIN ENGLE, Development Director
MILES JOHNSON, Clean Water Attorney
THERESA LABRIOLA, Hanford Coordinator
MARISSA GARCIA, Membership Assistant
EMILY LONG, Water Quality Assistant

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HOOD RIVER OFFICE

111 Third Street
Hood River, OR 97031

PORTLAND OFFICE

833 Main Street #126
Portland, OR 97214

info@columbiariverkeeper.org
www.columbiariverkeeper.org

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



RIVER NOTES

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Grand Coulee dam has no fish ladder so salmon are cut off from nearly 650 miles of the mainstem Columbia River. Double that number to include the tributaries. The famous “June hogs,” a run of Chinook salmon with the massive size needed to make the long journey into Canada, are now extinct.

Extirpating salmon from this vast area is a great tragedy on our river. Columbia River tribes and First Nations are leading an effort to solve this problem. Riverkeeper actively supports a long-term vision to restore salmon to their traditional homes. It is not going to be easy. For decades, there has been talk of fixing the fish-passage problem caused by Grand Coulee (and Chief Joseph dam, 51 miles downstream). But this time feels different. Scientists recognize the need for more and better habitat. The public supports salmon recovery. The United States is re-negotiating the Columbia River Treaty with Canada to provide for ecosystem-based function instead of just hydropower and flood control. It’s time to think big and think into the future. Just three generations ago, people caught 50-pound salmon in interior British Columbia. We can again.

RIVERKEEPER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, Brett VandenHeuvel

Save the Date - July 20, 2014

Columbia River Paddle

support a river, free of Hanford's nuclear pollution

Join us at one of three locations:
Hanford Reach
Columbia Gorge
Columbia Estuary
or canoe, kayak or paddleboard
at your favorite spot

learn more at www.columbiariverkeeper.org
#ColumbiaPaddle

Comics for Change!

Of course, Cheryl Johnson is featured in a comic book about the liquefied natural gas (LNG) fight. She is a true community hero. Cheryl and her husband, Ted Messing, are long-time volunteer Estuary Coordinators for Riverkeeper. Cheryl's comic helps honor the hundreds of other activists and community heroes (yes, you!) working to protect our river.

Comics for Change! Illustrated Stories from Oregon's Front Lines is a project of Know Your City, a nonprofit that works to connect people to place.

Visit www.knowyourcity.org to get your copy today.



Meet the Riverkeeper Staff



BRETT VANDENHEUVEL

Title: Executive Director

Education: B.S. in Geology from Hope College. M.S. in Climate Studies from University of Maine. J.D. from Lewis and Clark Law School. Member, Oregon State Bar.

Inspiring Journey: I took a solo pilgrimage to the headwaters of the Columbia, swam in the lake where the river begins, and drank from a spring that feeds the lake. Awesome. Then, weeks later, I stood on the south jetty 1,243 miles downstream and watched the Columbia crash into the ocean.

Favorite Salmon: Spring Chinook! It may be the perfect food. Delicious, fatty, fresh out of the ocean. The fish is so rich, like an avocado or dense cake, but good for you.

Best Part About My Job: Making a difference. When we engage on an issue, we go full speed.

○ “I’m lucky to be part of Riverkeeper’s staff. My co-workers are fun, hard-working, passionate, and immensely talented. Here is a profile of our team.” — Brett VandenHeuvel

LORRI EPSTEIN

Title: Water Quality Director

Education: B.A. in Environmental Studies from University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. M.S. in Biology from University of Montana.

Best Part About My Job: Getting to work with all of our amazing volunteers. I really mean it when I say that I am inspired by our volunteers. They are all so involved with their communities and committed to making a difference. Plus they are just really fun and interesting people!

Most Fun Had While Working: One of the coolest things I have experienced while working for Riverkeeper was watching the Condit Dam on the White Salmon River come down. We worked for years to free the White Salmon and then helped throw a big party and counted down to the first explosive blast that breached the dam. I felt like I was watching history happen. Watching the river take back its channel and carve out 100 years of sediment built up behind the dam was truly one of the coolest things I have ever seen. Go watch the video!

Favorite Animal: I love river bugs. The night I met my husband we chatted for hours about aquatic invertebrates. I literally knew it was meant to be when I saw his eyes light up when he asked if I’d ever seen a salmonfly (embarrassing, but true story!). We were a match made in bug-nerd heaven! Aquatic insects are the backbone of any river system, maintaining the food web and managing decomposition. They all have these very specific niches and super cool adaptations.



THERESA LABRIOLA

Title: Hanford Coordinator

Education: B.S. in Education and Ecology from Cornell University. J.D. from Vermont Law School.

Favorite Place on the Columbia: Where the river meets the sea and where freshwater and saltwater collide. This is where the river demonstrates its unwillingness to comply with manmade boundaries and where wildlife display their ability to adapt, survive, and thrive in a hostile, ever changing environment. It's where the river receives the bounty of the ocean and reminds me that every activity on land eventually affects our ocean.

Historic Columbia River Event I'd Like to Have Witnessed: I'd like to visit the Columbia River at a time when the river's sound dominated the landscape instead of highways, trains, boats, or industry. Imagine only hearing the echo of Celilo Falls, the slap of the salmon tails in dip nets, the honk of the sea lions, the wind of the gorge, or silence on the Columbia River.



JASMINE ZIMMER-STUCKY

Title: Community Organizer

Education: B.A. in General Science from University of Oregon.

Hidden Gems Along the Columbia: I love the thrift stores in downtown Longview. They're full of amazing gems and oddities. My best find was a hand powered ice cream maker that is perfect for camping trips. Having homemade ice cream to share around a fire makes me a very popular camper.

Favorite Tributary: The Willamette River. I bike to work along the East Bank Esplanade in Portland almost every day. Watching the changes in the river from season to season or after a big rain have become part of my daily routine. Sometimes I'm lucky enough to catch a brilliant sunrise or sunset.

Favorite Animal: Whale sharks! I once promised a whale shark that it would be my favorite animal forever if it let me snorkel so close to it that I could nearly swim into its gigantic mouth. It did! So now I have to hold up my end of the bargain.

MILES JOHNSON

Title: Clean Water Attorney

Education: B.S. in Biology from Whitman College. J.D. from Lewis and Clark Law School. Member, Oregon State Bar.

Favorite Tributary: I grew up on the Oregon coast, but I still consider the John Day River 'home water.' Since the age I could first fit into a life jacket, my family and friends have floated the lower John Day canyon almost every summer. Immense basalt cliffs, the canyon wren's descending call, the smell of new rain on sagebrush, and the jolt of a smallmouth bass on my line will keep me coming back year after year.

My Vision for the Columbia: I envision a Columbia with fishable runs of wild salmon and steelhead returning to free-flowing, healthy tributaries. I envision an estuary where diked and drained wetlands have been reclaimed, an upper river free of toxic and nuclear contamination, and an entire river system unburdened by fossil fuel shipping projects. More than anything, I envision a Columbia where ecological recovery fuels economic and cultural sustainability for all people who call the Columbia Basin home.



Meet the Riverkeeper Staff (continued)



CHRISTINA SKIRVIN

Title: Program Administrator

Education: B.S. in Business Administration from University of Oregon; Master's degree in Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School.

Favorite Tributary: Umatilla River. Growing up in Pendleton, a town right on the Umatilla River, this area is very close to my heart. I have many fond memories of time spent with family and friends enjoying the river and exploring the watershed—camping, hiking, bird-watching, fishing, and swimming.

Favorite Animal: Polar bear. Sadly, this majestic animal is only losing as we debate climate change. One of my many motivations to protect our natural environment is to help this species not only survive but thrive again. On my bucket list: getting a glimpse of a polar bear in the wild.

DAN SERRES

Title: Conservation Director

Education: B.S. and M.S. in Earth Systems Science from Stanford University.

Favorite Place on the Columbia: Astoria still ranks at the top of my favorite places on the Columbia. It's been the site of such incredible activist energy. It's the place where I met activists from Washington and Oregon who have teamed up to fight LNG, coal, and now oil terminals that threaten the Estuary. It also happens to be the location where my fiancée, Laura Stevens, and I were engaged this Fall.

Favorite Tributary: The Clackamas River is my favorite tributary. Having grown up fishing, hiking, and swimming in the Clackamas watershed, the area is close to my heart. It remains the place I visit the most often when I need a cool swim, a long trail run, or an afternoon of fly-fishing. I am particularly proud of the work that Riverkeeper and our partners did in stopping the Palomar pipeline, which posed a huge threat to this beautiful river.

Favorite Animal: My favorite animal is the coyote, which often appear on the shore during our Hanford paddle trips.



EMILY LONG

Title: Water Quality Assistant

Education: B.A. in English with Environmental Studies from James Madison University.

Best Part About My Job: Getting to work outside with amazing volunteers. I love fresh air and exercise and it's great meeting people who are passionate about their community.

Favorite Plant: I'm captivated by the Curlleaf Mountain-mahogany. It's not a particularly pretty plant, but looking at it closely reveals the delicate beauty of the seeds.

My Vision for the Columbia: A cleaner and healthier watershed. Water is arguably our most important resource and there will always be issues that impact it. I feel it's necessary to protect its integrity.





MARISSA GARCIA

Title: Membership Assistant

Education: B.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies from Chapman University. J.D. from University of Oregon.

Favorite Animal: *Canis lupus familiaris*, better known as woman's best friend. Dogs will love you no matter what and I find it incredible that they have developed the ability to read facial expressions on humans just as well as a human infant does and better than any other non-human creature.

My Vision for the Columbia: That it continues to be protected for its own inherent worth as a jewel of nature and also as a place where communities can connect with its wonders and receive emotional and physical sustenance. I see a future where community voices and concerns regarding the health of this waterway matter more than corporate dollars.

LAUREN GOLDBERG

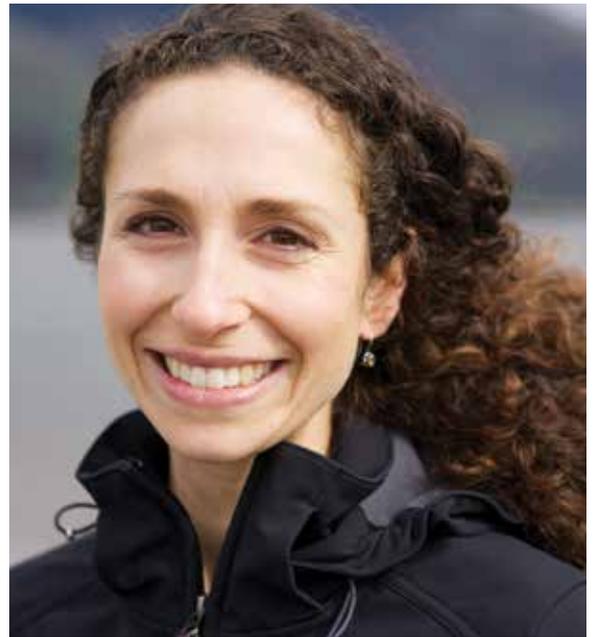
Title: Staff Attorney

Education: B.A. in Conservation Biology and Legal Studies from University of Wisconsin. J.D. from Lewis and Clark Law School. Member, Oregon State Bar.

Best Part About My Job: Working with passionate, smart, and fun people. Our members and staff inspire me every day.

Favorite Place on the Columbia: Columbia Hills State Park in Washington, which includes the incredible Horsethief Butte rock outcroppings. This site was a former Native American village and includes petroglyphs and pictographs dating back centuries. I feel the incredible weight of history whenever I visit this site.

Most Fun Had While Working: Bradwood LNG victory party. After NorthernStar filed for bankruptcy in May 2010, our volunteers who poured countless hours into protecting the estuary gathered at Puget Island at the home of Frans and Mieke Eykel. On a beach overlooking the proposed site of the Bradwood LNG terminal, we celebrated the incredible power of neighbors and communities joining together to protect their livelihoods and families from the threat of LNG.



ROBIN ENGLE

Title: Development Director

Education: B.A. in Political Science from the University of Washington.

Best Part About My Job: How social it is! Our donors and members are awesome people. I learn a lot from them, and I'm constantly inspired by their commitment to our work.

Favorite Animal: The river otter. Of course we all know they are ridiculously cute. Did you also know that they are a "sentinel species" to judge the health of the Columbia River? Lots of otters mean a healthy Columbia.



We're Growing!

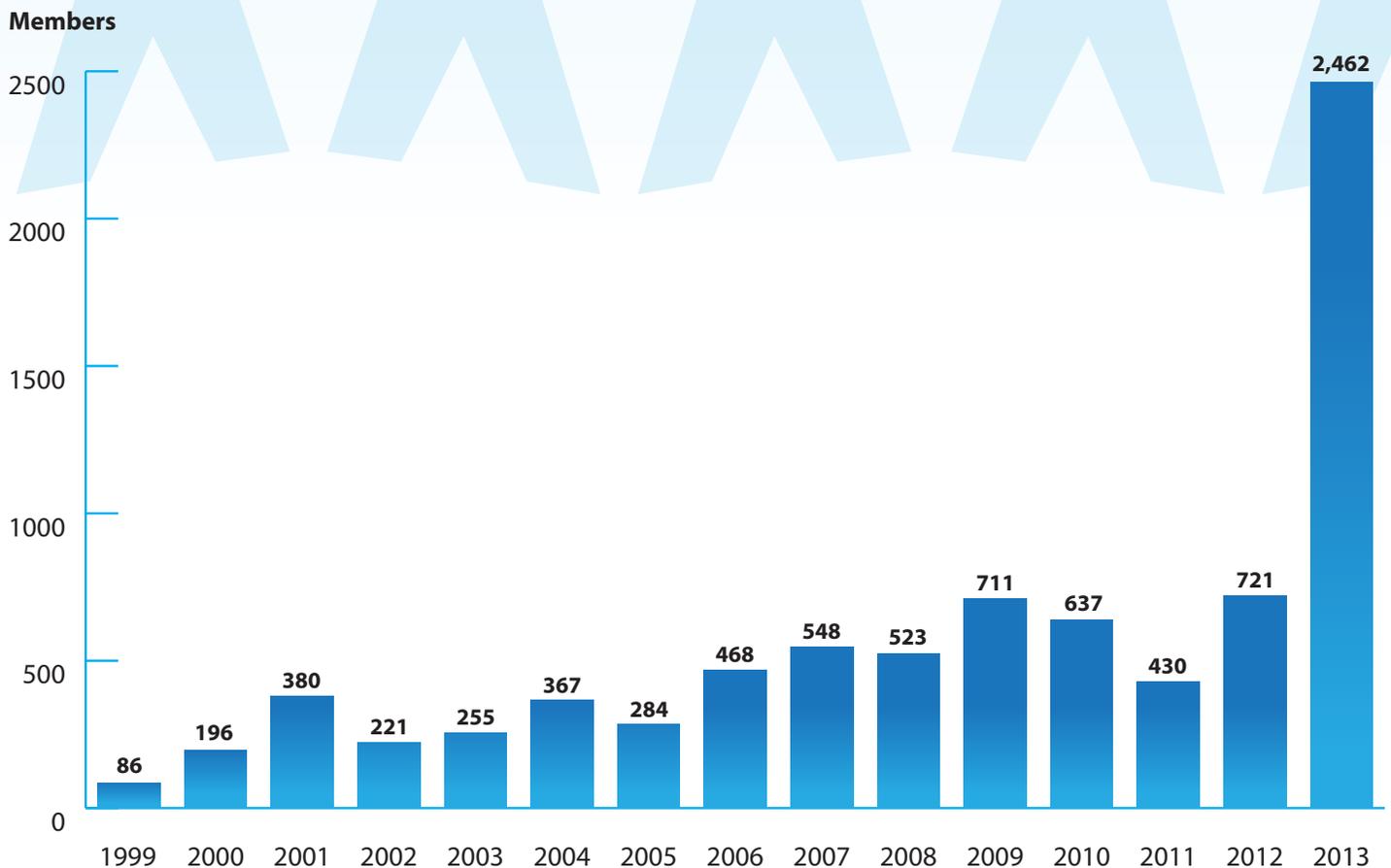
Supporters like you drive Riverkeeper's work. Thanks to your donations, we are taking on more projects, working harder, and making a bigger impact on clean water.

As you can see from the graph below, 2013 was a huge year for new donors. We're proud of the number and geographic scope of our supporters. Support from individuals provides a stable source of income and keeps us connected to the public that we serve. Riverkeeper is

powered by real people who care about the river. We remain independent and autonomous, focusing on the issues that matter most.

In addition to the increased number of donors, hundreds of volunteers contribute in many ways – through Adopt-A-River, organizing community meetings, speaking up at hearings, and river clean-ups. We appreciate your support. Together, we can protect and restore the Columbia and our river communities.

Riverkeeper Membership Over the Years



Will we see YOU on the river?



Want to learn about the river while having fun? Want to do something meaningful for your community and the environment? Now is a great time to get involved with Riverkeeper. We have volunteer programs that fit your schedule, whether you have a couple hours a month or just a couple hours a year.

Our Adopt-a-River program is in its 9th year and is a great program for school groups, families, or individuals who want to give some time to our wonderful river. Visit your adopted site at least once per season and fill out our habitat assessment report on wildlife

use, human activity, native and invasive species, and threats to habitat. It's that easy! We will train you on what to do if you see a river emergency such as an oil spill or illegal dumping. Tuning-in and watching the seasons change at your site is a great way to connect with the river.

This spring we will be conducting trainings for our Adopt-a-River Programs in your area. Check www.columbiariverkeeper.org or contact Emily Long at volunteer@columbiariverkeeper.org for more information on how to get involved. See you on the River!

Riverkeeper Teams Up with Local Farmers to Protect Land and Water

When Kinder Morgan shelved their plans for a massive coal export terminal at Port Westward last year, Riverkeeper and our Columbia County allies celebrated a major victory. But work remains. Located in the Columbia River Estuary, Port Westward is surrounded by forested wetlands and shallow water sloughs that endangered salmon depend on for their survival. On January 30, 2014, the Columbia County Board of Commissioners voted to rezone high-quality farmland adjacent to Port Westward, paving the way for more industrial development and vessel traffic in critical salmon habitat.

Joining with local farmers, Riverkeeper is working to protect important farmland and salmon habitat. With the support of land use attorneys at the Crag Law Center, Riverkeeper announced plans to appeal the County's decision.

Rezoning farmland and salmon habitat for heavy industrial development, including crude oil and coal terminals, met fierce public opposition in Columbia County. The hearings were packed. Dozens of people testified in favor of protecting the land. Blueberry farmers, business owners, fisherman, and even local monks spoke out.

But the Columbia County Board of Commissioners voted to pave the farmland for new industrial development.

“We’ve created a successful rural industry in Columbia County but expansion at Port Westward is like choosing oil trains over local business,” said Mike Seely of Seely Mint Farms. “We’re fighting for our company and the jobs that we provide. We’d be wiped out if this expansion proceeds.”

Also at stake is linchpin salmon habitat. Federal agencies recently completed a multimillion dollar habitat restoration project right next to Port Westward. The wake of large oceangoing ships, the expansion of permanent in-river infrastructure, and the threat of an oil spill are all competing against the survival of juvenile salmon in the estuary.

“This rezone paves the way for dirty and dangerous oil and coal trains,” explained Brett Vandenhuevel, Riverkeeper’s Executive Director. “Our river, salmon, and farmland are too valuable to sacrifice for exporting oil and coal.”

Riverkeeper’s decision to challenge the expansion of industrial land at Port Westward to Oregon’s Land Use Board of Appeals is rooted in our vision for the future of the Columbia River. While industry is necessary for region to thrive, it should not happen at the expense of existing jobs, like the Seely Mint Farm, and not in sensitive salmon habitat. Our goal is to ensure a Columbia River that future generations will be proud to inherit.



Rufous the Red-Nosed Raindog says
“Keep Farm land for Farm dogs!
SAVE PORT WESTWARD!”

Photo by Tracy Prescott MacGregor

Help Us Save Portward. Donate Today at
www.columbiariverkeeper.org/donate



“We’ve created a successful rural industry in Columbia County but expansion at Port Westward is like choosing oil trains over local business,” said Mike Seely of Seely Mint Farms. “We’re fighting for our company and the jobs that we provide. We’d be wiped out if this expansion proceeds.”



Promoting Parks on the Columbia

We want more greenspace, public parks, and riparian habitat along the Columbia River! The Port of Hood River is developing plans for an undeveloped lot at the Columbia River waterfront, and Riverkeeper is part of the stakeholders' committee to help influence a positive design that will benefit the community and the river. Riverkeeper is advocating for maximizing greenspace that will support the Columbia River Gorge com-

munity and protect water quality and salmon habitat. Our vision includes a 220-foot wide community park with ample water access for a stand-up-paddleboard and kayak launch, swimming and playing, a children's play area, a beach with shade trees, and a continuous greenbelt that connects the town of Hood River to the Columbia River via a pedestrian and bike path. We are also pushing for improved riparian and salmon habitat (not just more

grass for geese). We hope the Port of Hood River will listen to the community and build a world-class park that will support families, recreationists, and relaxers.

For more information, visit <http://columbiariverkeeper.org/hood-river-riverfront-park/>



Wings on the Water

When the wind dies down and the sunshine turns cold or elusive, many folks pack away their boats, kayaks, or stand-up-paddleboards, and dust off their skis. But wintertime on the Columbia is when the river comes alive with thousands of ducks, geese, and other water birds. Some of these birds can be found on the Columbia year round, but most spend winter on the river, and in nearby agricultural lands, and migrate north to arctic breeding grounds in the summer. On a calm winter day, a quiet walk or paddle along the Columbia can yield excellent views of hundreds of active, social, and strikingly-colored water birds.

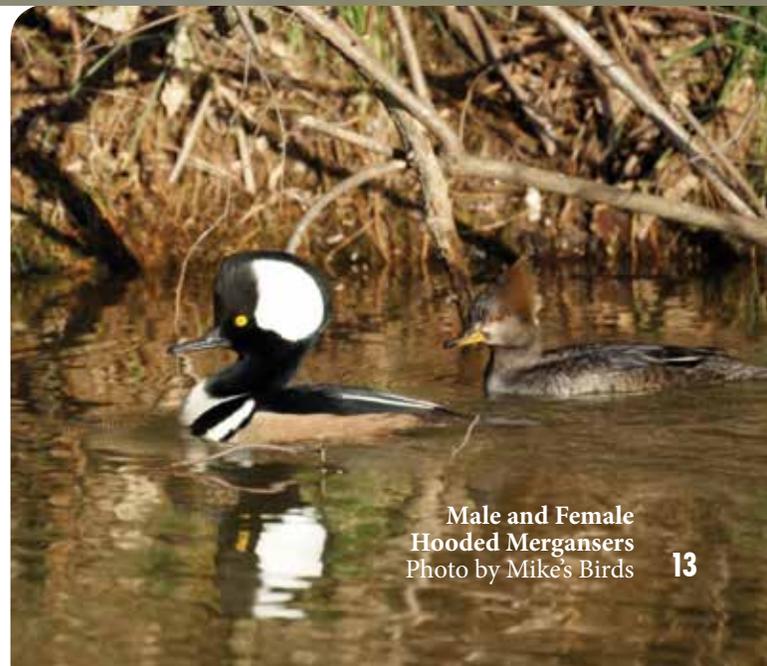
Near Portland, Sauvie Island is the classic winter birding spot for waterfowl, and the sheer number of Canadian geese there can be truly amazing. Just up the Gorge, the Franz Lake National Wildlife

Refuge (at milepost 31 on Highway 14) is a winter-time home to dozens or hundreds of graceful Tundra Swans. An afternoon stroll at the mouth of the Hood River is often rewarded with views of common and hooded mergansers, widgeon, and the group of black-crowned night herons that frequents the Nichols boat basin. Farther east, the Umatilla National Wildlife Refuge is home to thousands of wintering ducks and geese, and has a wildlife observation tower and photo blind for birdwatchers. Upstream, the Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area features abundant waterfowl and wintering bald eagles.

So don't leave the river behind just because it's cold outside. Wintering waterfowl are some of the most beautiful—and easy to watch—wildlife on the Columbia River.



Male Bufflehead
Photo by Bill Bouton



Male and Female
Hooded Mergansers
Photo by Mike's Birds



WHAT'S UNDERGROUND AT HANFORD?

HANFORD ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

The 2012 Hanford Groundwater Monitoring Report revealed that extensive contamination of Hanford's groundwater remains a problem. **Carbon tetrachloride, hexavalent chromium, iodine-129, nitrate, strontium-90, trichloroethene, technetium-99, tritium and uranium** contaminate the groundwater at concentrations that exceed the safe levels for drinking water. In addition, the groundwater contains pollutants that are highly toxic to river life once the groundwater reaches the river. Many of these plumes are contaminating the Columbia River.



More than **58 square miles** of groundwater is contaminated at Hanford.

That much water **would cover an eight-mile by eight-mile square** of Seattle in **660 feet of water.**

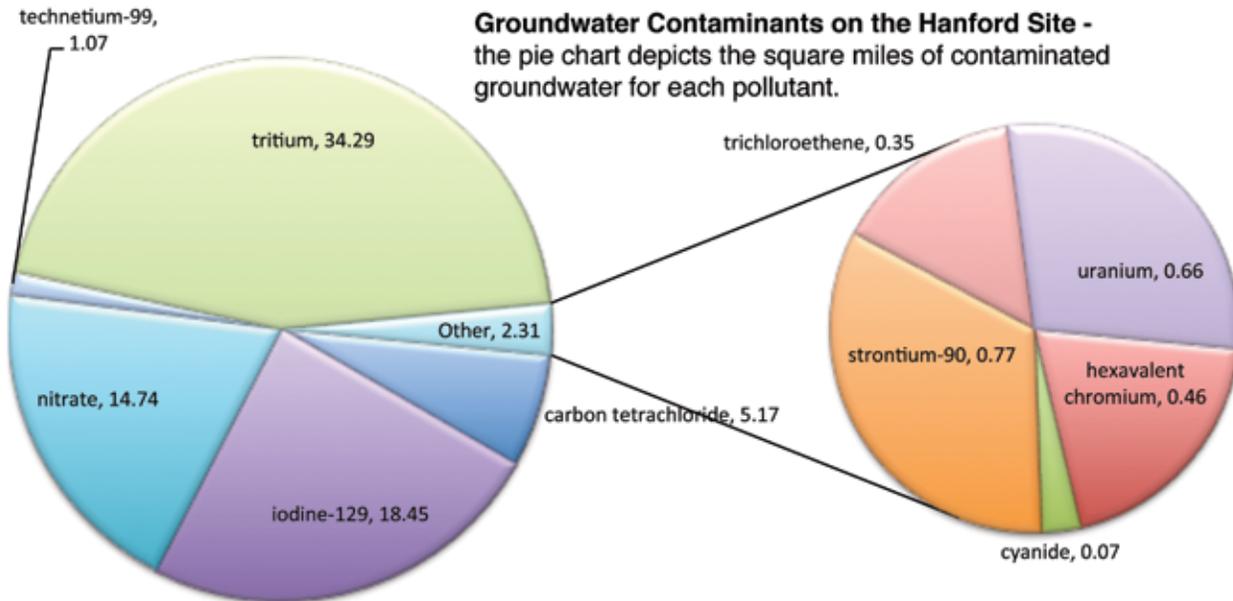
That's enough water to cover the space needle.



WHAT'S UNDERGROUND AT HANFORD?

HANFORD ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

Groundwater plumes are contaminated with radionuclide & chemical pollutants that are harmful to human health & the environment.



TRITIUM

high doses can contribute to cancer and damage genetic material in humans & fish

IODINE-129

causes thyroid cancer and low doses inhibit activity in the thyroid gland

CARBON TETRACHLORIDE

a carcinogen and acutely toxic to humans

HEXAVALENT CHROMIUM

human carcinogen and small amounts are highly toxic to salmon & aquatic life

STRONTIUM

a “bone-seeker” in humans and becomes lodged near blood-forming bone marrow - causes bone cancer and immune system suppression



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Winter Inversion Near Underwood, Washington
Photo by Brett VandenHeuvel