



Artwork by Michelle Saluskin

The Hanford Journey—

A gathering at the Hanford Reach to celebrate generations of cleanup advocacy and traditions of resiliency while inspiring and empowering cleanup action today.

June 24, 2022



C O L U M B I A
R I V E R K E E P E R[®]

Event Schedule



7:45 a.m.

Shuttle leaves YN Agency to Event site at Vernita Boat Launch,
Mattawa, WA

8:30 a.m.

Event registration opens, coffee & light pastries available

9:00 a.m.

Option A: Hike Tour Shuttle to White Bluffs (2 Tours total during the day, first come first serve)
Option B: Boat Tours begin (30-45 min tour, first come first serve)

9:15 a.m.

Opening Ceremony: Invocation & Welcome (no cameras)

10:00 a.m.-12:45 p.m.

Special Guest Speaker/Performance

1:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Catered Lunch / Speakers

1:35 p.m.

Last shuttle departing for Hike Tour, Boat Tours continue

2:15 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Speaker

3:00-3:45 p.m.

Closing Ceremony

3:45 p.m.

Shuttle departs Vernita Boat Launch to return to YN Agency by 5:00pm

4:30 p.m.

Final Boat Tours

Hosted by Yakama Nation's Environmental Restoration Waste Management Program and Columbia Riverkeeper.



Yakama Nation Environmental Restoration & Waste Management (ERWM) Program

The Yakama Nation uses its authorities under the Comprehensive Environmental Recovery and Compensation Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Washington State Dangerous Waste regulations (WAC 173-303) to participate in the process of cleanup and restoration of hazardous waste sites on the Hanford Site. The Yakama Nation Environmental Restoration and Waste Management (ERWM) Program is tasked with the oversight of this process and issues affecting Hanford Site natural resources. ERWM's involvement in these sites includes participation in technical, project management, and policy meetings on response and natural resource damage actions. In addition, ERWM has cultural staff that provides oversight of cultural resource compliance, as well as monitors, identifies, and cares for the cultural resources and traditional cultural properties located on the Hanford site.

Columbia Riverkeeper

Columbia Riverkeeper's mission is to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. Representing over 16,000 members and supporters, Columbia Riverkeeper works to restore a Columbia River where people can safely eat the fish they catch and where children can swim without fear of toxic exposure. Columbia Riverkeeper is a member of Waterkeeper Alliance, the world's fastest-growing environmental movement, uniting more than 300 Waterkeeper organizations worldwide. For more information, go to columbiariverkeeper.org.



Speakers

The event comes at a critical time: the United States government is weighing long-term cleanup choices and potential shortcuts to Hanford cleanup that threaten the people, fish, and wildlife that rely on the Columbia River. Speakers will explore their work at Hanford, the risks that Hanford poses, the threats to cultural resources, and the importance of Teaming Up to Clean Up.

Davis Washines/Yellowash, member of the Yakama Nation, retired from law enforcement in 2014 after 30+ years of service, including three terms as Chief of Police for the Yakama Nation and the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. He has served on the Executive Board of the Yakama Tribal Council and on Yakama General Council as Executive Chairman. As a youth educator, he directed the Yakama Nation Youth Summer Camp for several years and was a paraprofessional and middle school guidance counselor for the Wapato School District, as well as a Yakama language instructor at the high school. His current position is a Government Relations Liaison in the Yakama Nation DNR Fisheries Resource Program's Superfund Section. He is on the Board of Trustees for Pacific Northwest University of Health Sciences and on the Native American Advisory Board as Vice-Chairman for the Burke Museum at the University of WA. Yellowash is called upon in the tribal communities of the region to conduct traditional ceremonies because of his knowledge of his native language, culture and oral traditional history of native people, land and natural resources. He also carries the Oglala Lakota name of "Yello-Wash-Tay" bestowed by a Lakota elder at Crazy Horse School, Pine Ridge, SD, in 1995 at a traditional gathering.

Laura Watson, Director of Washington State Department of Ecology. Laura serves as a member of Governor Jay Inslee's executive cabinet and as Director of the Washington State Department of Ecology. Ecology has over 1900 dedicated employees across the state, working every day to achieve our mission to protect, preserve, and enhance the environment for current and future generations. The Department of Ecology provides regulatory services and science-based analysis through ten environmental programs focused on protecting and managing our water resources and shorelands, preventing and cleaning up toxic contamination, oil spill prevention and response, preserving air quality, combatting climate change, and managing solid and hazardous wastes. Our agency emphasizes work in communities with environmental justice concerns, seeking to eliminate or minimize environmental burdens and maximize environmental benefits in these communities. In the climate arena, Ecology's teams are hard at work implementing 2021 legislation to establish an economy-wide cap and invest systems and a clean fuels standard. We also work across the state to bolster communities' resiliency in the face of climate change, including focused efforts on flooding, coastal health, drought, ocean acidification, and health effects from wildfires. Prior to being appointed as director in January 2020, Laura served 22 years in the Washington State Office of the Attorney General. In her volunteer life, Laura has worked for organizations that provide housing solutions for homeless individuals and free legal services for low-income clients. Laura's husband, Dan, is a professor of mechanical engineering at St. Martin's University and her child, Violet, is a proud member of their high school's climate club and is pushing their family towards becoming a zero-waste household (which has been hard during the pandemic!)

Brett VandenHeuvel (he/him), Executive Director of Columbia Riverkeeper leads Riverkeeper's policy and legal advocacy work. Brett designs and implements creative campaigns, including work to protect the Pacific Northwest from fracked gas, oil, and coal infrastructure. He is an attorney with expertise in energy facility siting, the Clean Water Act, and land use. Prior to joining Riverkeeper, Brett conducted research on climate change during field expeditions to Antarctica and New Zealand.

Directions to White Bluffs Walk

Estimated travel time from event to hike: 30-35 min

Shuttle departing at 9 a.m. & 1:35 p.m.

All ages and abilities welcome, sneakers recommended

Location for smartphones: “Hanford Reach North Trailhead”

- Turn **right** onto **WA-243 N** heading towards Rd. L SW.
- Turn **left** on **WA-24** (do not cross the bridge).
- Continue **straight** on **WA-24** for 19 miles.
- Turn **right** onto a gravel road when you see a sign saying “HIKE” and an open gate.
- Continue **straight** for 4 miles.
- Turn **right** when you see a sign saying “HIKE”.
- Continue **straight** until you see staff parking cars.





Things to Know for the Hanford Journey

"It's not about what we see, but what we don't see.

High-level waste affects our land, culture, and health.

Radiation is an invisible threat that cannot be seen, felt, smelled, or touched."

-Samantha Redheart, YN ERWM STEM Coordinator

Columbia River tribes offer a vision for Hanford that involves people fishing, hunting, and living along the Hanford Reach.

Tribes invest significant resources in advocating for Hanford cleanup. In the early 1940s, the United States removed Native Americans from Hanford to construct top-secret nuclear reactors for the Manhattan Project. Except for this 80-year forced absence, native people have used the Hanford area since time immemorial to hunt, fish, gather food, trade, and live. This area has great traditional and religious significance to Columbia Plateau tribes and is home to multiple traditional cultural properties, traditional use areas, as well as significant ceremonial sites. In describing the importance of the Hanford area to the Yakama people, Dr. Russell Jim explained: "What does the land mean to us? All this is tied together, to our sovereignty, our government, our culture, our religion, all tied to the foods and medicines, our language, our way of life." In 1855, the Yakama Nation, Warm Springs, Umatilla, and the Nez Perce tribes, signed treaties ceding millions of acres of their lands to the United States, but reserved important rights. According to a landmark case upholding the tribes' treaty rights, "[The treaties] reserved rights . . . to every individual Indian, as though named therein." The Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC) explains, "Many of these were guaranteed to continue after their treaty was signed." CRITFC emphasizes that these are "not rights that the treaty granted, but rights the tribes had prior to the treaty that . . . they continue to have." One was the right to harvest fish in all the tribes' "usual and accustomed areas," which includes the Columbia River.

Take a boat tour today and view Hanford's nuclear reactors from the water.

Take in the sweeping vistas of the Hanford Reach on a 45-minute boat tour. Looming large and out of place in the beautiful shrub steppe landscape, reactors begin to appear. This portion of the Hanford Nuclear Site, the 100-Area, once contained nine plutonium production reactors, built between 1943 and 1965. Hundreds of thousands of tons of uranium fuel rods were subjected to nuclear chain reactions inside the reactors to produce tons of plutonium. During World War II

and the Cold War, the United States used plutonium produced at Hanford in nuclear weapons. Years of plutonium production generated billions of gallons of liquid waste and millions of tons of solid waste and contaminated soil. On the boat tour, you can see the B Reactor—the first full-scale plutonium production reactor ever built in the world. The B Reactor’s nuclear legacy reaches across the globe: the B Reactor produced the plutonium for the Trinity Test in New Mexico and the nuclear bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan, on August 9, 1945. The U.S. government stopped plutonium production at the B Reactor in 1968.

The Columbia’s Hanford Reach contains important salmon spawning habitat.

The Hanford Reach is the last remaining stretch of the mainstem Columbia River where fall Chinook salmon spawn in significant numbers. The Columbia’s Hanford Reach spans 51 miles of undammed, free-flowing river and contains islands, riffles, gravel bars, oxbow ponds, and backwater sloughs. The Reach is home to 43 species of fish, including the threatened Upper Columbia River spring-run Chinook salmon, steelhead, and bull trout. The Reach provides critical habitat for spawning, foraging, and migration of salmon and steelhead.

Toxic and radioactive pollution from the Hanford Site threatens Columbia River habitat.

Toxic and radioactive groundwater plumes from Hanford are currently upwelling into the river or may do so in the future. Cleanup is most focused on include hexavalent chromium, nitrate, tritium, strontium-90, iodine-129, trichloroethene, and uranium contamination. Contaminated groundwater predominantly enters the Columbia River during the river’s low-flow periods in fall and winter. These plumes of upwelling contamination can impact the habitat for aquatic organisms such as fish, insects, mollusks, plants, and amphipods. In addition, organisms that utilize the bottom of the river have potential for direct impacts in areas of contaminated upwelling. There is a wide array of actions being taken by the Tri-Parties to reduce these impacts, but further actions are required.

Gain a deeper understanding of the Hanford Reach National Monument on a guided hike with staff from Yakama Nation’s Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program and U.S. Dept. of Fish and Wildlife.

Across the Columbia from the Hanford Nuclear Site lies the Hanford Reach National Monument. Designated by President Bill Clinton in 2000, the Monument covers 304 acres of varied shrub-steppe, cliff, wetland, and river habitat. The iconic White Bluffs run nearly half the length of the Hanford Reach. River and lake sediments left behind by the ancestral Columbia River and its tributaries formed the bluffs. At points, the cliffs tower almost perpendicular above the Columbia, reaching heights up to 300 feet. The cliffs contain large fossil deposits, including the remains of rhinoceros, camels, and mastodons. Want to learn more about the Monument? Join the hike or visit [fws.gov/refuge/Hanford_Reach](https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Hanford_Reach).

Can you spot a mule deer or coyote? The Hanford Reach National Monument is renowned for its biodiversity:

- -43 species of fish, including threatened and endangered salmon and trout;
- 42 mammal species;
- 258 bird species;
- 4 amphibian species;
- 11 reptile species; and
- over 1,500 invertebrate species.



Take Action!

Take a Photo and Tag the U.S. Dept. of Energy to let them Know that we are here at Hanford demanding a cleanup that protects our future.

Instagram filter: bit.ly/journey-filter-ig and QR code



Facebook filter: bit.ly/journey-filter-fb and QR code

Twitter: twitter.com/ColumbiaRKeeper



Hashtags: #TeamUp2CleanUp #HanfordJourney

Sign the Canvas: People are connecting at Hanford and see a future, what future do you see Secretary? Write a note to the U.S. Energy Secretary Granholm about what you are seeing and experiencing today. This canvas will be mailed to the Secretary.

Write a Postcard to the U.S. Dept. of Energy demanding a protective cleanup.

Thought of the Day Box

Take a minute to write down something new you learned or something that stuck with you from the day

Hanford Overview

The Hanford Nuclear Site is the most contaminated site in the Western Hemisphere. Toxic and radioactive contamination from decades of plutonium production for nuclear weapons left behind tremendous quantities of waste in Hanford's aging structures, such as underground tanks.

Soils and groundwater remain too polluted for people to use in many areas, requiring restricted access to land and water uses across the site. For decades, the U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. EPA, and Washington Department of Ecology have worked to clean up contamination at Hanford, with the hope of stabilizing waste and removing the waste from the environment where it could enter groundwater or come in contact with people, animals, and other life. Waste at Hanford is both chemically toxic and radioactive.

Yakama Nation's Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Program (ERWM) has been instrumental in protecting and restoring Hanford. ERWM has pressed for the protection and restoration of Hanford since well before the cleanup began, including preventing Hanford from becoming a high-level nuclear waste dump in the 1980s, spotlighting groundwater contamination and the methods needed to address it, and pressing government agencies not to abandon waste in Hanford's soils and groundwater. The effort to restore Hanford continues.

Some Current Issues in Cleanup

Addressing Hanford's High-Level Waste is a High Priority. Hanford is beginning the process of treating high-level tank waste in preparation for turning tank waste into glass (a method called vitrification), the most durable option for immobilizing the waste. Meanwhile, Energy plans to reclassify waste at Hanford to treat high-level waste as low-level waste. Energy has also proposed changing the definition of high-level waste, lowering the bar for cleanup. These decisions could open the door for Energy to grout the waste (mixing in cement instead of glass) and leave it in shallow disposal at Hanford. In other areas of the site, high-level waste has already been released into the soil. For example, tank B-109 is leaking 3.5 gallons of high-level waste every day into soils in the Central Plateau. Energy must be held accountable for addressing this pollution, which will reach Hanford's groundwater unless it is cleaned up.

Groundwater remains contaminated above drinking water standards. Despite government agencies pumping groundwater and treating billions of gallons each year, Hanford's groundwater is polluted, with some of the contamination reaching the Columbia River. In some areas, the groundwater is many times above the legal standard. Work continues to remove sources of groundwater contamination and to address the groundwater pollution that already exists. (See below for a map of Hanford's plumes.)

