

LOVE
DEFEND

CLEAN
WATER

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

by Brett VandenHeuvel

This is my last newsletter. Columbia Riverkeeper took a chance on me 15 years ago. It's been an honor to represent each of you, our amazing members, in our fight for clean water. I've given it my all.

I am starting a consulting practice to work with nonprofits, foundations, and Native American tribes. I will apply the lessons I've learned to advance the fight for clean water and our climate across the nation.

Here are a couple of reflections on my work with Columbia Riverkeeper. It's funny how I spent thousands of hours on legal work, but the public hearings stand out so vividly in my memory. Less plot, better characters, I guess.

As a new attorney, I attended my first public hearing in Astoria on the proposed Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminal. The LNG company flew its executives up from Houston and they sat in the front row flanked by a squadron of big-firm attorneys. On our side: hundreds of local residents trying to protect the place they love. A gillnetter with hands like catcher's mitts, a retired librarian wearing a denim jumper (disguising her real nature as a killer organizer), a farmer along the pipeline route who was threatened with eminent domain; and an artist dressed in a powder blue Texas suit with fake money stuffed into the sleeves and collar. One after another, the people of the estuary testified to protect the river, salmon, communities, and their families.



Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are.

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

I had worked on our legal strategy for stopping LNG and knew the odds were stacked against us. I was not sure we were going to win, but I was proud of whose team I was on.

In fact, we lost the vote that night when Clatsop County commissioners voted unanimously, 5-0, to approve LNG. Columbia Riverkeeper challenged that approval in court, and won. Local activists elected new commissioners, who ultimately voted 5-0 to reject LNG. Five years and many public hearings and lawsuits later, the community defeated the LNG terminal. The Houston executives stopped coming back, but the salmon returned year after year while friends told stories about how they defeated the giant fossil fuel company.

Out in the cold to defeat big oil

After we defeated two LNG terminals and two coal terminals, Tesoro strolled into town with a proposal to build North America's largest oil-by-rail export terminal.

Graphic design by Kathleen Courian-Sanchez (katsandesign.com)

Cover Photo: Sky Bear Media

Back Photo: Paloma Ayala

LOVE DEFEND CLEAN WATER



Brett VandenHeuvel, former Executive Director; and Lauren Goldberg, Executive Director. Photo: Lydia Ely.

Early hearings were held at Clark College in Vancouver, but after we exceeded the 400-person capacity, the state moved hearings to the Clark County Fairgrounds, which held thousands.

Our strategies came together in an amazing way at the Tesoro oil terminal hearings in Vancouver. Tesoro reserved all the rooms at the Fairgrounds to block us from having a place to gather. I remember walking into Tesoro's hospitality suite, an enormous room filled with giveaways. There was no energy, just 20 people looking like they had to be there.

We got the leftovers: a barn on a freezing winter day. But when I walked into that barn, it was like a rock concert, with inspiring speeches from a longshoreman, a doctor, a local pastor, and a climate activist. More than 1,000 people attended the hearing to oppose Tesoro. The combination of elevating local voices, appreciating all the knowledge that diverse communities bring to the table, and combining that with a strong legal case against Tesoro proved to be a winning game strategy.

Ready to soar

I'm proud of the victories we accomplished together for clean water and our climate. What gives me hope is the amazing team at Columbia Riverkeeper that will far surpass anything we have accomplished so far. I've seen them in action and I know how talented and dedicated they are.

Sometimes when a long-time executive director moves on, organizations struggle to fill the leadership gap. But we have prepared for this inevitable transition by building leadership throughout the organization. Our success is due to far more than one person. We have strong experience across our board and staff. For example, we have 10 people who have worked at Columbia Riverkeeper for at least five years, along

with talented new staff to push us forward.

I'm happy to hand over the E.D. mantel to Lauren Goldberg. Lauren has led Columbia Riverkeeper's legal and policy work for the last decade and has been the architect of major victories. Lauren is a rare talent. She is a brilliant attorney and strategist: I've worked with thousands of advocates and have never seen anyone better. Lauren is a compelling advocate in court, with government agencies, and the media. The first year I worked with Lauren I was amazed at how much work she accomplished—that has not changed in our 15 years together.

The best part? Lauren is a strong leader who makes everyone around her better. I benefited from this immensely. She builds teams, lifts people up, and motivates.

Lauren did not come to this work by accident. As a kid, Lauren would organize meetings with her stuffed animals, complete with agendas. I can just picture her making sure that all the stuffies were clear about their goals together and comfortable with their roles. In high school, Lauren decided she wanted to be an environmental attorney for a Riverkeeper group after reading a book on Riverkeepers. She then made it happen (as she does) by attending the top environmental law school, becoming a law clerk at Columbia Riverkeeper, and earning a promotion to executive director.

My decision to step down is certainly bittersweet. But change is good, both for me personally and the organization. Columbia Riverkeeper has grown into a powerhouse and is poised for even better success. With Lauren's leadership, Columbia Riverkeeper's fantastic staff and board, and the incredible support from our dedicated members, I'm excited to watch this organization soar.

FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT

Meet Columbia Riverkeeper's New Executive Director, Lauren Goldberg

By Tina Lassen, Guest Contributor and Columbia Riverkeeper Member

When Lauren Goldberg was eight years old, she penned the essay "Bag in the Water," lamenting the trash she found in a river near her childhood home. The cheeky third grader was just getting warmed up. As a young teen, she was already writing letters, knocking on doors and speaking before government officials on behalf of her school's environmental club and Amnesty International chapter. In high school, Goldberg and a classmate convinced school purchasing authorities to specify recycled paper and organized an online drive for other schools to do the same—an initiative that earned her an award from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and an invitation to the White House.

In August, Goldberg will apply her talents as the new executive director of Columbia Riverkeeper, known for achieving David-vs.-Goliath success over multi-billion-dollar fossil fuel interests. In pursuit of its mission—to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it—Columbia Riverkeeper has racked up significant, and some would say unexpected, victories. In the last decade, it has defeated every new fossil fuel project on the Columbia River, halting what would have been the world's largest fracked-gas-to-methanol refinery at the Port of Kalama, the nation's largest coal export terminal in Longview, the nation's largest oil-by-rail terminal in

Lauren Goldberg with her daughters. Photo: Modoc Stories.



Vancouver, and the onslaught of rail traffic up and down the Columbia that would have accompanied them.

Goldberg led in many of those challenges as a Columbia Riverkeeper staff attorney and then as its legal and program director. In fact, she's been part of the organization since 2006, when she first volunteered as a law clerk while earning her law degree at Lewis & Clark Law School in Portland.

"It was a treasure to have found Columbia Riverkeeper so early in my career," says Goldberg. "I knew I wanted to work with a place-based group. I wanted to understand the Columbia, get to know its people and fight for its protection. It's incredibly gratifying to make a difference in the place where you're raising your kids and have built relationships with your neighboring communities and Tribal Nations."

Goldberg takes over the executive director position from Brett VandenHeuvel, who has led the organization since 2009. "It's hard to imagine a better person to lead this organization than Lauren," VandenHeuvel remarks. "She's a strategically brilliant lawyer and has designed some of our most successful campaigns over the years."

A major 2022 win for clean water

One big victory came earlier this year at Bradford Island, on the Columbia River near Cascade Locks, Oregon. Beginning with the construction of the Bonneville Dam in the 1930s well into the 1970s, the island and surrounding waters were used as a dumping site for toxic chemicals like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Working closely with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Goldberg and team lifted up the voices of Tribal members, neighboring communities, fishers and other river users. For three years, relentless political pressure from the ground up accomplished what no one had been able to do for decades: In March, EPA listed Bradford Island and surrounding waters as a Superfund site, giving it priority for funding and cleanup. And the new Superfund site victory is the latest in a string of successful efforts working in solidarity with Tribal Nations.

"Columbia Riverkeeper has built strong relationships throughout our region," adds Don Sampson, executive director of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation based in Pendleton. "Ten years ago, Lauren supported the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation in pushing Oregon to pass the nation's strongest limits on toxic pollution. Ever since she has been a trusted ally for protecting clean water, cleaning up nuclear waste and restoring salmon runs."

An upbringing of activism

The perils of toxic pollution have driven Goldberg for much of her life. Rattled by a cancer diagnosis in her family as a child, Goldberg began digging into the connections between cancer and chemicals in consumer products and the environment. In college, she spent two summers volunteering at a camp for children with cancer. "While I wasn't called to the medical field, I saw a path to make a difference through environmental activism," she says.

That path was a legal one—figuring out how to beat polluters in the courtroom. Some of her first accomplishments at Riverkeeper were strengthening laws to restrict toxic pollution and enforce the Clean Water Act. "We use the law to stop corporations from dumping dangerous chemicals into the Columbia River," remarks Lauren. "What an amazing job."

Her upbringing in a tight-knit Jewish family also instilled in her the confidence to stand up to power and authority. The stories of her great grandparents who emigrated from Poland and Russia resonated deeply. "The freedoms we have in America were never taken for granted by my family," she explains. "I was taught that questioning, standing up for values, engaging and participating is the work we all have to do to keep our democracy alive."

What lies ahead

There's no shortage of work on the Columbia Riverkeeper docket and, in keeping with its resolute style, some sizable targets top the list: Defeat every fossil fuel infrastructure project on the Columbia River. Remove dams on the Lower Snake River to prevent salmon and orca extinction. Stop a pumped-storage hydroelectric project on sacred Tribal land near the John Day Dam, as well as an 800-acre industrial zoning expansion in the Columbia River estuary.

The organization will continue to work in close partnership with Tribal Nations on its many campaigns and continue to amplify Latinx voices in Columbia River Gorge communities through Comunidades, an independent organization for environmental and social justice fiscally sponsored by Columbia Riverkeeper.

VandenHeuvel emphasizes that Goldberg will lead Columbia Riverkeeper's efforts with the full support of its staff and board, which unanimously selected her as its next executive director. "It says a lot about Riverkeeper that we recognize the people who have put their blood, sweat and tears into this organization to make it what it is," he says. "They should be and will be the ones to carry it forward."

DEFENDING YOUR RIGHT TO CLEAN WATER

By Miles Johnson, Senior Attorney

Columbia Riverkeeper affirms that access to clean water is a basic human right. To us, this means that we should all have clean drinking water coming out of the taps in our homes, schools, and workplaces. It also means that we should all have access to clean rivers, lakes, and coastlines where we can swim, play, work, and catch fish and other wild foods without fear of toxic pollution. These two meanings of “clean water” are often intertwined, because clean, plentiful drinking water typically comes from a clean and healthy river, lake, or aquifer.



Like so many basic human rights, our right to clean water requires constant and unwavering defense. The Columbia River and many of its communities face real challenges to water quality and availability. For instance:

- Contamination from sites like Bradford Island, the Hanford Nuclear Site, and hundreds of smaller toxic cleanup sites is leaching into the river.
- Industrial water bottling companies like Nestle seek to privatize and control public water resources.
- The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is working to restore access and infrastructure for clean water to its members, many of whom lack reliable or convenient sources of clean water.
- Thousands of pipes discharge toxic pollution from industry, cities, and dirty stormwater runoff into the Columbia and its tributaries.
- In parts of the Columbia River, like the Columbia Slough in North Portland and Bradford Island just upstream from Bonneville Dam, the Oregon Health Authority recommends eating little or no resident fish, due to toxic contamination.

Clearly, our right to clean water depends on strong defenders—including Columbia Riverkeeper and our dedicated members.

Strengthening and Defending the Laws that Protect Clean Water

Broadly speaking, how does Columbia Riverkeeper defend your right to clean water? In partnership with concerned community members, Tribes, and nonprofit groups, we advocate for government agencies and legislatures to make our environmental laws and regulations more protective and equitable. We defend against ever-present attempts to weaken those laws, even going to court if necessary. We enforce laws like the Clean Water Act, the Endangered Species Act, and other regulations to make sure that big corporations can't find loopholes or illegally pollute the river. And we work to stop new development proposals that would threaten our right to clean water and a healthy Columbia.

Let's get specific. Here's how your membership is helping Columbia Riverkeeper strengthen and defend the laws and regulatory programs that protect clean water and river communities in 2022.

- **Healthy Fish for All:** Columbia Riverkeeper, other Waterkeeper groups, and Tribes are beating back an industry-led attack on Washington's water quality standards, which are designed to protect people who eat fish in the Columbia River and elsewhere from health problems caused by toxic pollution in fish tissue.

- **Safe Drinking Water in Rural Oregon:** Columbia Riverkeeper, a member of the Stand Up to Factory Farms coalition, is petitioning the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Safe Drinking Water Act to address widespread and dangerous nitrate contamination of critical drinking water resources in Morrow and Umatilla counties.
- **Un-doing Trump's Attacks on Clean Water:** The Trump Administration weakened many of America's bedrock protections for environmental and public health. Columbia Riverkeeper, along with Earthjustice and a number of states and Tribes, are still working hard to undo the damage and restore important protections in court. How? We are pushing EPA to re-establish Clean Water Act protections for all waterways and wetlands, as well as restore states and Tribes' full authorities to reject or condition federally licensed projects that would violate water quality standards.
- **Cleaning Up Old Messes:** Columbia Riverkeeper, in partnership with Yakama Nation, is working to compel the U.S. government to clean up its own toxic messes at Bradford Island and Hanford. Decades ago, the Army Corps and the Department of Energy unsafely disposed of toxic and radioactive waste near the Columbia River—and that waste is still leaching into the river today. This year, we helped convince EPA to list Bradford Island and surrounding waters on the national Superfund List. The listing will lead to additional cleanup funding,



Columbia Riverkeeper's work to protect the Pacific Northwest from dirty fossil fuel exports is also good for clean water. Fossil fuel export terminals proposed and operating in the Lower Columbia discharge polluted stormwater into the river and increase the risks of oil spills and other catastrophes.

heightened scrutiny by EPA, and tighter legal controls to reduce threats to public health and the environment.

- Fighting for stronger legal protections, and defending the important protections we already have, involves a lot of complicated and technical behind-the-scenes work. But this work, which is made possible by members like you, lays the foundation for our right to clean water.

Holding Polluters Accountable

Strong environmental protections are great, but are only the beginning. What happens when corporations and government officials ignore the rules and infringe upon the public's right to clean water? Columbia Riverkeeper uses the Clean Water Act to hold illegal polluters accountable and force them to pay penalties to mitigate the harm they caused to public resources.

Hanford Journey. Photo: Sky Bear Media.

In 2022, Columbia Riverkeeper is taking on:

- **Weyerhaeuser:** A 240-acre log export yard in Longview discharges contaminated stormwater into the Columbia River in violation of the facility's Clean Water Act permit.
- **EGT Grain Terminal:** A massive grain export terminal in Longview sent its industrial stormwater into the Columbia River without a Clean Water Act permit.
- **The Ports of Longview and Vancouver:** Both ports discharge under-treated industrial stormwater containing high levels of toxic metals, like copper, that are extremely harmful to salmon.
- **Perennial Fracked Gas Power Plant:** A fracked gas power plant proposed near Boardman illegally began construction without obtaining a Clean Water Act permit.



We'll make sure these facilities comply with the Clean Water Act and pay stiff penalties for their violations—over a million dollars in 2022. Penalty money from our enforcement cases never goes to Columbia Riverkeeper; instead, it funds Tribal governments, other nonprofit organizations, and community groups working to protect and restore the Columbia. Taking on big polluters keeps contamination out of the Columbia River and sends a strong message that breaking the laws protecting water quality doesn't pay.

At Columbia Riverkeeper, it is our pleasure and privilege to defend your right to clean water. Your contributions—whether volunteering, writing letters to public officials, or funding this work—make it all possible. Together, we can protect and restore the Columbia and help ensure that its many communities have clean water flowing from their faucets and in their rivers.

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Taking on big polluters keeps contamination out of the Columbia River and sends a strong message that breaking the laws protecting water quality doesn't pay.

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LOVE, DEFEND WITH LEGACY GIVING

By Lauren Goldberg, Executive Director

What legacy would you like to leave the world? More and more Columbia Riverkeeper supporters are choosing legacy gifts for clean water, strong salmon runs, and our climate.

"The first time I saw the Columbia River, it took my breath away. I included Columbia Riverkeeper in my will because there is simply no other organization as effective at protecting the ecology, health and beauty of that magnificent river corridor," reflects Legacy Giving Circle member Nadene LeCheminant.

Let your values live on by joining our Legacy Giving Circle today. By including Columbia Riverkeeper in your planned giving, you leave a legacy of clean water and healthy communities for future generations. How? Consider a gift to Riverkeeper in your will or trust, retirement plan, or life insurance. Legacy giving provides an opportunity for deeply meaningful and restorative impacts.

Columbia Riverkeeper partnered with FreeWill to provide you with a free will-writing tool. You may think estate planning is not for you. Here are some common thoughts—and why they should not hold you back.

- 1. But I don't have an estate!** You don't need to own a villa in France to need an estate plan. It's important to have a plan for the things that matter to you—like who might take care of a pet, or who you want to have your favorite painting or family heirloom.
- 2. I'm too young to make a will.** Whether you're eighteen or eighty, a will is an expression of care for the people and causes you love, and you do not want to be stuck without one.
- 3. Won't the government take care of my wishes?** Without a will, the government can take control of your assets, making it far more complicated for your loved ones.
- 4. My spouse has a will, so I don't need one.** You absolutely need one! Even if your plans are identical, both parties should have a legal document. The most important part of estate planning is being prepared for any situation that may arise.
- 5. How can I get started?** Consider contacting an estate planning attorney. You may also want to consider FreeWill. You can create your plan in less than 20 minutes online. You will complete the process with a will that is legally valid in all 50 states, at no cost. Visit bit.ly/ColumbiaFreeWill



By including Columbia Riverkeeper in your planned giving, you leave a legacy of clean water and healthy communities for future generations.

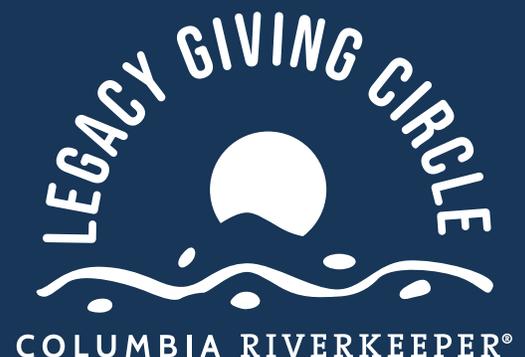


JOIN THE LEGACY OF GIVING

Protect the places you love. Leave a legacy of clean water. Your gift can power important conservation victories for future generations.

Have you already included Riverkeeper in your plans in any amount? Please let us know so we can thank you and welcome you to the Legacy Giving Circle.

To learn more, contact Columbia Riverkeeper Development Director Dianne Riley dianne@columbiariverkeeper.org and 541-399-3260, or visit columbiariverkeeper.org/legacy-giving.



YOU CAN'T TAKE A SABBATICAL FROM CLEAN WATER

By Liz Terhaar, Communications and Marketing Director

After eight years with Riverkeeper, 2022 arrived with an opportunity to take a month-long sabbatical. Having a child at the start of the pandemic who is now a toddler, her version of a big adventure is going to the grocery store. I knew we needed to get her out of the house and into nature before her next birthday! We stuffed our teardrop trailer with camping supplies galore, food, bear spray, countless fishing poles, stuffed animals, art supplies, books, a dog bed, and a guitar for good measure. Over the course of three weeks, we traveled more than 2,000 miles, touching on four states and two national parks. It was an epic trip.

To be honest, fighting polluters and working on climate issues can feel overwhelming at times, and getting off Zoom was a welcome break. But even away from computer screens, I couldn't escape work.

Heading east, the highway ran parallel to "choo choo trains," as my daughter calls them. As we raced alongside uncovered coal trains, I reflected on the long-fought Millennium coal export terminal proposed in Longview, Washington.

Driving through Idaho, we thought it would be adventurous to stay at a campground near an old mining town. My husband hoped to fly fish while my daughter and I hiked. I plotted frying fresh-caught trout in our cast-iron skillet. When we arrived, we researched the fishing regulations, only to find out there were no fish in the creek: it was a Superfund cleanup site from mining, tainted with residual metal and chemical runoff.

Realizing our next campsite at an abandoned ghost town was yet another Superfund cleanup site, we decided to go further west.

During our trip we inadvertently booked a cabin 30 feet from a railroad track. My daughter loves trains so when I heard one coming, I took her outside to watch it. Seeing familiar black oil tanks, I felt my stomach tighten, recalling the not so distant memory of the Mosier oil train derailment. I slept little that night in our quaint 1970s cabin, despite the charming pool table and taxidermy collection.

The trip had some big highlights too. We toured West Yellowstone, stunned by herds of bison and even saw a gray wolf! Wading the Madison River outside of Bozeman,

my husband caught what he calls the best rainbow trout of his lifetime. We marveled at the beauty of Glacier National Park and spent a few days in Whitefish before circling homeward.

My sabbatical taught me you can't really take a break from who you are and what is important. The work I've done the last eight years is a part of who I am. I want clean water that my daughter can play in, fish that are safe to eat, oil and coal off the rails and replaced by renewable energy sources, and water that's safe for communities to drink.

Extended version with photos online:
bit.ly/ColumbiaSabbatical.



Liz and her daughter. Photo: Modoc Stories.



OUR STORY IS THE RIVER'S STORY

AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVIS/YELLOWASH WASHINES

Davis/Yellowash Washines dedicates his life to protecting the welfare of the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation (Yakama Nation), the Yakama people and the rights guaranteed to them by the U.S.-Yakama Treaty of 1855. As the government affairs liaison in Yakama Nation's Fisheries Program Superfund Section, Davis has been instrumental in advancing the Tribe's decade-long effort to hold the U.S. government accountable for cleanup of Bradford Island, located near Bonneville Dam, and the surrounding waters of the Columbia River. Columbia Riverkeeper is honored to partner with Yakama Nation on threats facing the Columbia River, including the campaign to clean up Bradford Island and surrounding waters.



Let's start at the water's edge, on Bradford Island. Why did Yakama Nation prioritize advocating for clean up of the island and surrounding waters?

The history of this land, of the Columbia River—to us Native people it's called Nch'i-Wána—is the history of the people of Yakama Nation. Our history, through thousands of years of oral tradition, teaches us of our connection to Nch'i-Wána, the land, the natural resources. I hope to impart how important the Bradford Island area, and all of our other areas, are to us.

In the beginning, since time immemorial, we have had a sacred relationship between our people, the salmon, and the Columbia River. This sacred relationship is based on the sacrifice that the salmon made for us at the beginning of time. They are the first to be served at all of our feasts and all of our important ceremonial meals, in recognition of their sacrifice and their willingness to be a part of our way of life.

Among my relatives and friends, I'm known as Yellowash of the Klickitat Tribe. The Tribe is one of the fourteen signers to the U.S.-Yakama Treaty of 1855 that guarantees our Tribe's usual and accustomed fishing places. Bradford Island and the surrounding area is what we call a usual and accustomed fishing place, used since time immemorial. Article 3 of our treaty says that we reserve the right to fish and gather at all usual and accustomed areas. This includes the right to have safe, toxic-free fish, so the water has to be safe and toxic-free. Bradford, for so long, has not been toxic-free.

One of our responsibilities is to speak for those that can't speak for themselves: the salmon, and the fish, and the natural resources. If we're honest, they are speaking to us—if we would only listen. They are telling us that something is wrong because they have to travel through the toxic waters near Bradford.

For over 35 years, you worked as a Yakama Tribal police officer and chief of police, and later the chief of police for the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission. How does your background in law enforcement influence your perspectives on toxic pollution in the Columbia River?

A criminal act occurred at Bradford Island, by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, that created a toxic site. The evidence is there, the motive is there, the opportunity for them to dump that waste is there. We need to deal with these types of acts, to hold them accountable, to hold them responsible.

Let's review what, in my opinion, is the scene of the crime. Bonneville Dam construction started in June of 1934 and it was completed in 1937. The picture (top right corner) depicts what was typical in all the areas where these dams were built on the Columbia River and the Snake River.

These changes were very, very harmful to Yakama Nation in terms of how they affected not only the water, but also the



Cascade Locks and Falls prior to Bonneville.

salmon and the other natural resources that live in the water.

Who are the victims? First of all, it's the water. In our way of belief we understand that water is life. The other victims are the things that rely on the water: the fish, the salmon, and all the other natural resources. And then us humans, especially members of Yakama Nation who revere the salmon as one of our First Foods, and our neighbors who also rely on the resources.

Yes, the Bradford Island toxic waste dump is a crime scene. Environmental laws are being broken. The historical, cultural, and spiritual significance of places like the Bradford Island area for members of Yakama Nation is enormous, as it has been since time immemorial.

In March 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency officially designated a new Superfund cleanup site on the Columbia River: Bradford Island and surrounding waters. What is your take on this monumental achievement?

I'm glad Bradford is finally a Superfund site. I hope to bring awareness to everyone about the danger of having this toxic waste dump in the Columbia. As our elders said, "We never give up." And we, along with Columbia Riverkeeper, are going to continue to do what we feel is the responsible thing to do.

It's not just for us, it's for our children, our grandchildren, they're the ones relying on us. Our goal: clean, healthy fish that is safe to eat.

The Columbia River, Bradford Island, and its surrounding areas are part of the Yakama history, culture, and people. Yakama Nation will continue to participate in and oversee the cleanup efforts at the Bradford Island site to ensure that our waters and lands are protected and restored.

CARING FOR OUR KIDS AND PETS, CARING FOR THE COLUMBIA

By Jamie Melton*, Communications Consultant and Columbia Riverkeeper Member

Like many of you, I once was a kid who fell in love with the Columbia River, and my parents and childhood dogs played a significant role in the formation of that relationship. As I reflect on family and what it means to support, interact, and learn from the younger generation and our pets, I have a deep admiration for parents who are doing the work to care for and inspire the next generation of activists through direct interaction with the water.

We all have lessons to learn from rivers—and how kids and pets navigate both the potential risks and the sensory joys of interacting with the water. Sitting down with some of Columbia Riverkeeper's kid- and pet-parents struck a deep curiosity as families set out to embrace the exuberance of playing along the banks of the Columbia and its tributaries.

*Disclaimer: I'm not a parent to a human, but I have a cute blue pitbull named Soba Noodles who loves any opportunity to discover a fresh gulp, shady wading spot, or sandy digging hole.

How does your work on the Columbia River impact your relationship with your human or pet children and your approach as a parent?

Miles Johnson, Senior Attorney: My children raise the stakes for my work to protect the Columbia River for everyone. I want my kids to grow up to be able to catch and eat salmon from the Columbia. I want them to see the river, and more broadly the outdoors, as a space where everyone is welcome and safe (or, at least, safe from other people). I can't take these things for granted when I look at my children playing on the beach.

Lorri Epstein, Water Quality Director: Teaching my kids how to be safe on the river and to respect it is a priority. Rivers have been some of my best friends, and I have gotten to know many quite well. I really love creating opportunities for my kids to connect with the river to get to build a relationship with it.

When I am heading to the river to swim with my family, I am so thankful for the knowledge of the water quality status at swim beaches. I am more than happy to be a resource for friends

From left to right: Simone Anter, with her dog; Lorri Epstein with her children; Siobhán O'Halloran, and her family; Alex Smith and his dog. Photos: Modoc Stories.



and other families that check in with me (or the Swim Guide, www.swimguide.org). I appreciate that we have information that can help keep my kids safe when swimming so I can enjoy my time on the water without worrying. My kids love being on the water and at the river; it is a place where we are at our best.

Simone Anter, Staff Attorney: I interact with the river so much more because of my dog. It's a fun way to not only connect with Hoku, but to also see how other people are interacting with and valuing the river. It emphasizes that our work in protecting our waterways is essential for everyone.

Alex Smith, Membership Specialist: It is the strongest force of motivation. Our collective future is on the line. I want my child and other children to have a chance to experience this beautiful bioregion without pollution and life-threatening heat.

Keeping both fun and safety in mind: What advice do you have for parents who aren't sure how to introduce kids (or pets) to the river?

Simone: Let pets approach the river at their own pace if they aren't comfortable. Pay attention to their body language. Bring waste bags to clean up after your pets and follow a "leave no trace" mindset.

Lorri: Check Swim Guide before you go to make sure the water quality is safe, avoid algal blooms (when in doubt, stay out), and know your limits. Rivers have cold water, swift

currents, and uneven, dynamic river beds. Even though my kids can swim they are always in life jackets on the river. Many public accesses have life jacket loaner kiosks if you don't have your own.

Siobhán O'Halloran, Operations Manager: Plan ahead with water, snacks, and sunscreen. Check the weather forecast and the Swim Guide app for water quality.

Miles: I often make the mistake of trying to do too much in an outing. My kids are one and three; they are usually perfectly content sitting by the river throwing rocks in the water 20 yards from the car. For little ones, just being outside in a nice place can be an incredible experience, even if they aren't "doing" anything specific. And that helps me slow down and appreciate the river as well.



Read more: bit.ly/CaringColumbia



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