



The Columbia River's Newest Superfund Cleanup Site: *Bradford Island and Surrounding Waters*

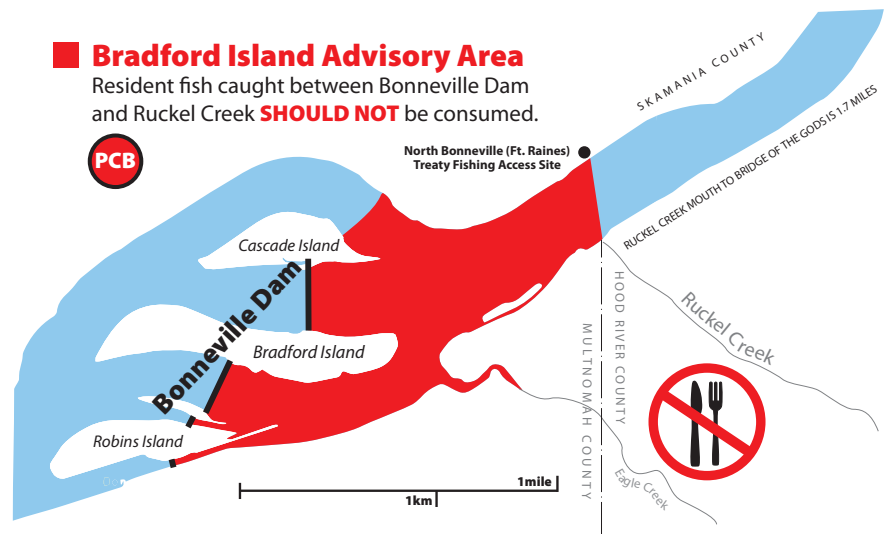
In 2022, the U.S. the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prioritized cleanup of Bradford Island and surrounding waters of the Columbia River by designating the areas as a Superfund Site. This is a huge victory for people who depend on a clean Columbia River and healthy fish to eat. Now the critical work of cleanup begins. Here is what you need to know.

What is a Superfund site?

Superfund sites are highly contaminated sites identified by EPA to be in urgent need of cleanup due to the threat to public health and the environment. In 1980, Congress established the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), also known informally as Superfund. The law allows the EPA to clean up contaminated sites. It also forces the parties responsible for the contamination to either perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanup work. When there is no viable responsible party, Superfund gives EPA the funds and authority to clean up contaminated sites.

Why was Bradford Island listed?

For over 40 years, the U.S. government dumped toxic pollution in and along the shores of the Columbia at Bradford Island, located near Bonneville Dam—leaving the area contaminated with cancer-causing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other harmful pollutants. As a result, resident fish caught upstream of Bonneville Dam near Bradford Island contain the highest levels of PCBs in the Northwest making them too toxic to eat.



Why does this matter?

Bradford Island and surrounding waters are fishing areas for multiple Tribes. Today, Tribal people and diverse communities use the area for subsistence and recreational fishing, despite advisories warning not to eat resident fish such as bass and sturgeon. The toxins in resident fish are a threat to human health, and that health burden disproportionately affects those who depend on the fish.

Who is in charge of the cleanup?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps), a federal agency, is responsible for the cleanup. Federal agencies and their facilities must comply with environmental laws and requirements, including the Superfund law, in the same manner and to the same extent as any other regulated facility. EPA has authority to review and approve of cleanup plans and enforce Superfund requirements. As a first step, the Corps and EPA will develop a Federal Facilities Agreement.

What are the next steps for Bradford Island cleanup?

Currently, the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers are negotiating the development of a Federal Facilities Agreement, a document that will guide the cleanup process. The completion of the Federal Facilities Agreement is expected in 2023. The general goals of this agreement are to:

- Ensure the environmental impacts at the site are thoroughly investigated and appropriate remedial action taken as necessary to protect public health, and the environment;
- Establish a framework and timeline for developing, implementing and monitoring appropriate response actions at the site in accordance with applicable law; and,
- Facilitate cooperation, exchange of information, and participation of involved parties.

(Source: <https://www.epa.gov/fedfac/agreement-department-energy-model-provisions-cercla-federal-facility-agreements>)

Once the Federal Facilities Agreement is complete, the critical process of cleanup work can begin.

Is cleanup possible?

Yes! EPA has overseen the cleanup of federal facilities across the country, including in the Pacific Northwest. Relative to other cleanup sites in the Pacific Northwest, such as the Hanford Nuclear Site and Portland Harbor, Bradford Island and surrounding waters should not require decades of active cleanup due its size. The in-river pollution presents serious, but not insurmountable, technical challenges. There is a lot of work to be done, and that is why it is so important that we use our voices to urge the EPA and the Army Corps to execute a Federal Facilities Agreement.

What can I do?

Here are three things you can do right now to support a clean, fishable Columbia River:

- 1. Take action** Sign the petition urging the EPA and the Army Corps to engage in swift and effective negotiations of a Federal Facilities Agreement to advance the critical cleanup of the Bradford Island Superfund site, which includes surrounding waters of the Columbia River. bit.ly/Bradford-Action
- 2. Learn more** Check out more details about what is threatening the resident fish and the waters around Bradford Island and how you can get engaged.
- 3. Share the news** Tell your friends and family about this exciting news and encourage them to support a clean, healthy, and safe Columbia River.

Concerned about which fish are safe to eat?

Check out Columbia Riverkeeper's *Guide to Fishing Near Bradford Island*: bit.ly/BradfordFAQ