



Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Success Stories from the 2020 Grant Projects



COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN
RESTORATION PROGRAM

ABOUT THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION FUNDING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Congress amended the Clean Water Act in 2016, which required EPA to establish a Columbia River Basin Restoration Program. EPA was directed to develop a voluntary, competitive grant program for eligible entities to fund environmental protection and restoration programs throughout the Basin. Eligible entities include state, Tribal, and local governments; regional water pollution control organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and soil and water conservation districts. Funded work must be for the purpose of environmental protection and restoration activities within the Columbia River Basin; and may include programs, projects, and studies. EPA funded 14 projects in the 2020, inaugural round of grants that address the following four priorities:

1. Increase monitoring and access data from monitoring.
2. Reduce stormwater and agricultural runoff.
3. Reduce toxics through small scale cleanup of non-CERCLA (also known as Superfund) contaminated sites.
4. Promote citizen engagement, education, and involvement to increase pollution prevention actions.

In September of 2020, EPA was able to provide the full amount requested by successful grantees for a total of \$2,053,903 in FY19 and FY20 grant funding. These are their stories of progress made to date.

COLUMBIA RIVER GORGE POLLUTION PREVENTION EDUCATION AND OUTREACH (OR, WA)

EPA awarded \$91,991 to **Columbia Riverkeeper**, a non-profit organization based in Oregon that works to improve and protect the Columbia River. For this grant project, Columbia Riverkeeper partnered with local Spanish-language radio station, **Radio Tierra**, and the **Hood River Soil & Water Conservation District** to reduce toxic pollution in the Columbia River Gorge by educating and inspiring students and community members on how they can help prevent pollution.

The project is providing pollution prevention education to more than 20,000 students and community members through public events and outreach in Hood River, Wasco, and Klickitat Counties in Oregon and Washington. Students and community members will learn how pollution prevention protects the Columbia River, including how riparian zones protect water quality and create habitat, as well as specific actions people can take to prevent pollution. These online-based pollution prevention educational materials will reach diverse communities throughout the Columbia River Gorge.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To date, Columbia Riverkeeper has:



- Launched **4 pollution-prevention curriculum modules** that teach pollution prevention and reduction strategies. These online modules are targeted for middle school students in the Columbia River Gorge, and focus on four topics: Household Contaminants; Stormwater; Riparian Zones; and Microplastics.
- Created two, bilingual pollution prevention fact sheets in English and Spanish, and distributing them via websites, email, and social media.
- Produced two, bilingual radio shows, “**Conoce tu Columbia**,” aired on Radio Tierra, and posting them on the Riverkeeper website as podcasts. These include:
 1. Interview with Dominica Navarro from the **Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides**, working to protect communities and the environment by reducing pesticide use.
 2. Interview with Ana Molina and Jennifer Eisele from **Beyond Toxics**, an Oregon-based environmental justice organization.

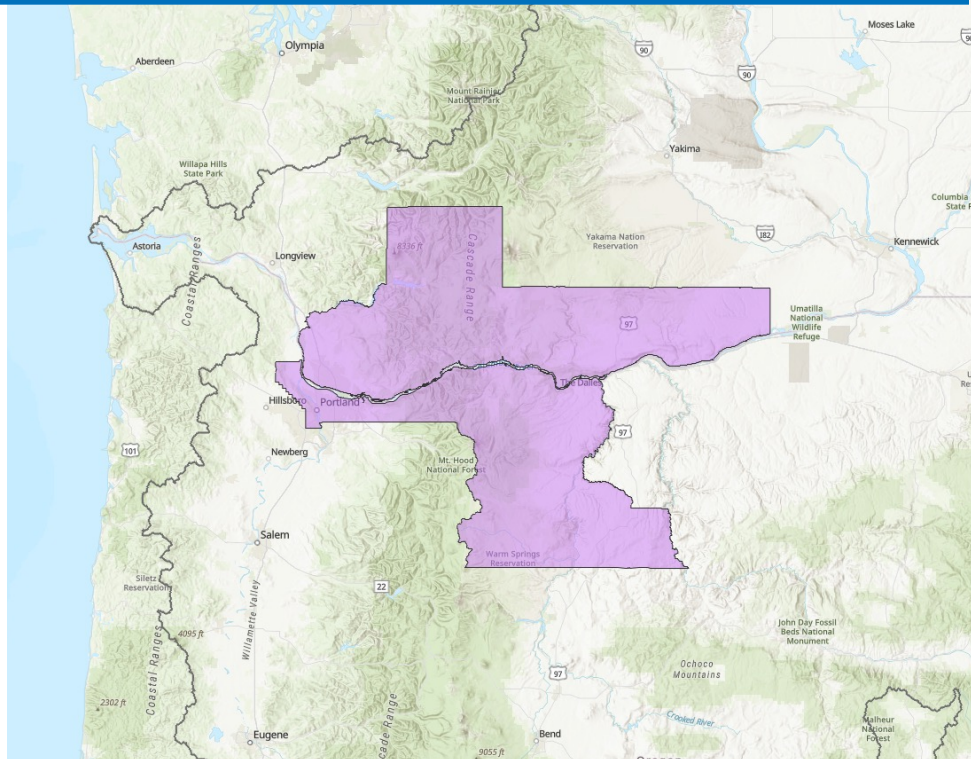


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Having “...to pivot and shift our events online has had a silver lining. The two webinars we hosted each had an excellent turnout and we reached far more people than we would have been able to through an in-person event. We were also able to access to speakers and presenters that would have been much more difficult to secure for an in-person event.”

– Lorri Epstein,
Columbia Riverkeeper



Columbia Riverkeeper Project Area

- Completed two community education webinars. The recordings have been viewed over 1,000 times to date and will continue to be available via the **Riverkeeper website** and shared on social media channels.
 1. **“Homebodies and Waterbodies”** with Dr. Arlene Blum, Executive Director with the Green Science Institute, using science to fight for healthier products, healthier homes, and a healthier environment. Dr. Blum discussed how the chemicals found in household products make their way to the Columbia River and what people can do about it.
 2. **“Environmental Advocacy and Justice Perspectives from La Comunidad Latina”** with leaders from the Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides, Beyond Toxics, and **Comunidades**, a collaborative effort to engage Latinos and people of color in social justice and environmental issues across the Columbia River Gorge.

WHAT'S NEXT? WHERE DO THEY GO FROM HERE?

- There will be two more community restoration and pollution prevention education outreach events to be held over the coming year.
- Two additional bilingual radio episodes focused on pollution prevention will be coming in the spring of 2022!
- More social media posts, educational emails, and fact sheets to come!

To learn more, visit **Columbia Riverkeeper’s website:**
<https://www.columbiariverkeeper.org/>