



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.

MONITORING, REDUCTION, AND COLLECTION OF AGRICULTURAL PESTICIDES IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN (WA)

EPA awarded \$200,000 to the **Washington State Department of Agriculture** to begin developing a Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program. This project has three elements, all aiming to prevent pesticides from entering streams in the Columbia River Basin, helping to provide clean water for salmon. These three elements are collecting water samples to test for pesticides, sharing the results and practices for safe pesticide use with growers, and collecting unusable pesticides for proper disposal. Key partners include the **Palouse Conservation District**, which is collecting samples in the Palouse River Watershed and has strong and ongoing relationships with growers in the region, and the Washington State Department of Ecology’s Manchester Environmental Laboratory, where the samples will be tested.

The project is happening in the Palouse River and Yakima River watersheds. Each of these watersheds is upstream from critical salmon habitat, and each is a unique agricultural region in Washington State. Growers in the Yakima River Watershed cultivate nearly 90 different crops, primarily under irrigation, including tree fruit, hops, vineyards, wheat, hay, and pastures. The Palouse River Watershed supports a unique dryland cropping system of wheat and fallow rotations, and also most of the garbanzo beans and lentils grown in Washington.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

- The Palouse Conservation District has collected samples from two sites, a total of 32 samples in 2021 and 18 more so far in 2022. Washington State Department of Agriculture staff from the Natural Resources Assessment Section have collected samples from three sites, 51 in 2021 and 38 so far in 2022. Each sample is tested for more than 150 pesticides and pesticide-related chemicals.
- Hosted two virtual workshops (Palouse Pesticide Education Event), one in February 2021 and one in February 2022, sharing information on Washington State Department of Agriculture’s free waste pesticide collection program, the surface water monitoring program, and EPA’s pesticide registration



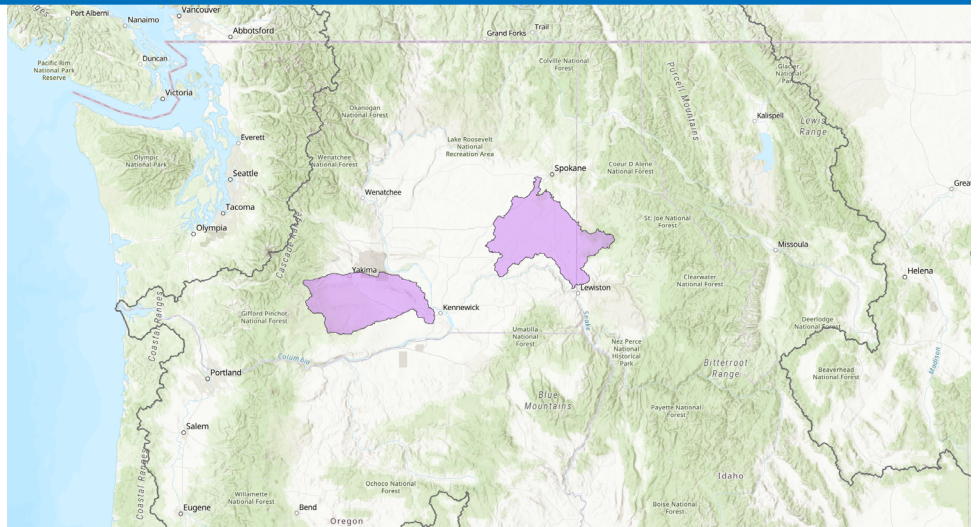
Collecting water quality samples in the Palouse River Watershed.



COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM

“During this project, with the help of the Palouse Conservation District, we expanded our surface water monitoring program to a region and crops we have never sampled before. We also removed more than 17,000 pounds of pesticides from these watersheds. This has been an amazing opportunity to expand our programs and begin building the long-term partnerships we need to work alongside Washington’s growers to reduce the amount of pesticides entering our waterways.”

*– Margaret Drennan,
Washington State
Department of Agriculture*



The Washington State Department of Agriculture Pesticide Stewardship Partnership project area includes the Yakima River and Palouse River watersheds.

review and risk assessment process. Each workshop was attended by more than 100 licensed pesticide applicators as well as growers from the Palouse region.

- Washington State Department of Agriculture’s Technical Services and Education Program collected almost 10,000 pounds of unusable pesticides during collection events in the Palouse River Watershed in September 2021 and May 2022. The Palouse Conservation District helped promote this event to growers in the region.
- The Technical Services and Education Program also collected waste pesticides in the Yakima River Watershed in March 2022, where nearly 8,000 pounds of pesticides were collected.

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

- This fall, Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Palouse Conservation District will finish the second full water sampling season of this project.
- Washington State Department of Agriculture is reviewing and analyzing data from the 2021 field season now and will begin review of 2022 data at the end of the field season. Washington State Department of Agriculture compares pesticide concentrations found to amounts known to cause harm to aquatic life to help understand how pesticides might be affecting these environments.
- After the data is compiled for each season, Washington State Department of Agriculture will create fact sheets for each site to share information on the pesticides found with growers, crop consultants, regulatory agencies, and members of the public.
- In addition, Washington State Department of Agriculture and the Palouse Conservation District will continue expanding these efforts into a full-fledged Pesticide Stewardship Program. With a subsequent award from EPA, they will work together with regional partners to plan future work to study voluntary management practices that could be used to reduce the amount of pesticides entering streams.

To learn more, check out the Washington State Department of Agriculture Pesticide Stewardship Partnership website: <https://agr.wa.gov/AgScience> and follow the links for Water Quality, then Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships.