



A YEAR OF BIG VICTORIES 2021



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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Acasia Berry, *Finance & Operations Director*
Lorri Epstein, *Water Quality Director*
Lauren Goldberg, *Legal & Program Director*
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**Join the conversation and keep up
with the latest from
Columbia Riverkeeper!**



RIVER NOTES

A Letter from the Executive Director



Brett VandenHeuvel

Columbia Riverkeeper's membership exemplifies what happens when we pool resources for a common good. We earn big wins because you volunteer, you testify, and you take action. Some of you even take a January dip in the Columbia for a fundraiser or sing breakup songs to the Zenith oil terminal on Valentine's Day.

You also donate money to protect clean water and our climate. You can dig into our annual report (p. 12) to see how Columbia Riverkeeper uses your donations and the victories you have powered. Let me know if you have any questions. I am proud that we earned the highest ratings from charity watchdog organizations, including a Platinum Seal of Transparency.

Where, specifically, is your money invested? Our number one expense—by far—is people. From attorneys and organizers to media specialists and database pros, we recruit, train, and retain the best staff possible. We win with good people running creative, disciplined campaigns.

Here's an example: When the Yakama Nation asked Columbia Riverkeeper to help push the federal government to clean up toxic pollution at Bradford Island, we could have commissioned a big glossy report or hired a lobbyist in Washington D.C. Instead, we put boots on the ground. Our Senior Organizer, Ubaldo Hernández, spoke to dozens of fishers and helped organize community forums. Liz Terhaar, Communications Director, secured front-page stories and compelling digital media. And Lauren Goldberg, Legal and Program Director, worked with Yakama leaders to design and execute a campaign plan. By building political pressure from the ground up, we helped force federal leaders to designate the newest Superfund site and invest in cleanup. Because of your support, there will be less pollution in Columbia River fish and the people who rely on them. This is where your donation goes.

I wish there were a silver bullet to defeat fossil fuel terminals, save salmon from hot water, or clean up Hanford's nuclear waste. There's not. Your donation is powering victories earned by grassroots organizing, tenacious legal work, and strong relationships. This takes time. And people power. Check out our staff and board page at columbiariverkeeper.org. We benefit from a variety of lived experiences that make our organization more effective and resilient.

This work can be tedious or thrilling, maddening or hopeful. I'm honored to fight for clean water with amazing coworkers, board members, volunteers, and you—our members who power this work. We are all in this together.

Brett VandenHeuvel

Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director

Cover: Photo by Paloma Ayala (ayalapaloma.com).

Back: Illustration by Marcella Kriebel (marcellakriebel.com).

A YEAR OF BIG WINS

Because you deserve some good news

By Lauren Goldberg, Legal and Program Director

What will you remember from 2021? What lessons will you carry into the future? How will you retell the history if your great-grandchildren ask for a school project in 2050?

Early in the pandemic, my nine-year-old daughter interviewed her great-grandparents about their memories of World War II. I eavesdropped. My grandparents were children of Jewish immigrants, living in Chicago during the war. What struck me: memories punctuated by joy. Pride in a victory garden (I still have the ribbon my grandmother won in a neighborhood contest). Picnics and fishing with aunts, uncles, and cousins. Playing games during air raid blackout drills. They relayed the sadness, the unspeakable fear. The personal losses. But most of the interview centered on the simple joys of childhood.

I listened with tears in my eyes. The takeaway: remember the joy in dark times.

In the following pages, we pause to reflect on our remarkable, uplifting victories in 2021. First, enjoy a bird's eye view of big wins and campaign milestones. Then dive deep: explore the path to victory in a multi-year campaign to protect river communities from Zenith Energy's oil-by-rail terminal.

Communities came together and fought for justice. You pushed elected leaders and agencies harder than they've ever been pushed before. Behind each victory were people brainstorming late into the night. Calling their mayor or senator. Designing banners and crafting testimony. Reaching out to neighbors to sign a petition. Underpinning this activism were incredible coalitions coordinating strategy and pooling resources; attorneys combing local, state, and federal laws for every legal hook; and digital communications virtuosos who helped activate the masses on social media. On Zoom, in the streets, and in the courtroom, together, we won big for our climate and clean water in 2021.



BIG WINS: A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

WASHINGTON

Climate Victory

The Wash. Dept. of Ecology (Ecology) denied a key permit to shut the door on the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery.

Kalama

Salmon Survival

at Stake EPA issued a new temperature-pollution budget for the Columbia and Snake rivers, the culmination of years of litigation by Columbia Riverkeeper and partners.

Dawn of a New Era

The City of Portland denied a key authorization for an existing oil-by-rail terminal, Zenith Energy.

Portland

Clean Energy Win

The Oregon Clean Energy Opportunity campaign succeeded in passing three laws to promote clean energy and center frontline Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities that are disproportionately impacted by the fossil fuel industry.

Forgotten Toxic Waste Dump No More

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed Superfund listing to clean up the Columbia at Bradford Island and in surrounding waters.

Salem

OREGON

RD'S EYE VIEW

Tribal Solidarity to Protect the Irreplaceable Ecology Ecology denied a Clean Water Act certification for a pumped-storage development proposed on sacred lands, a first step in stopping the development.

Fracked Gas Fizzles Backers of a new fracked gas power plant announced plans to abandon the project. (But stay tuned: The company is still quietly courting a new buyer and we continue to challenge this development in court.)

Extinction? Not On Our Watch The Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality rejected the Middle Fork Irrigation District's proposal to violate hot water limits at a dam that threatens endangered bull trout.

Columbia River

Mt Hood

5

WORLD'S EYE VIEW

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PATH TO VICTORY

BIG OIL MEETS IT

The Problem: Zenith Energy's Portland Terminal is a former asphalt facility that became a fossil fuel transloading facility in 2013. The 39-acre site has 84 tanks with a total storage capacity of over 1.5 million barrels. In 2017, Zenith quietly started receiving tar sands and crude oil on mile-long trains from Canada and North Dakota.

Activism Takes Roots: "Have you ever stayed in a relationship too long? Kept on keeping on, even when you knew it was over? Well, it's time to show our love for future Portlanders and as pop songs through the ages tell us: Wash that crude right out of our hair; get off the [fossil] bus, Gus; go your own way; shake it out." So began a Valentine's Day email from Riverkeeper Community Organizer Kate Murphy, sharing an incredible soundtrack of favorite tunes set to lyrics urging the City of Portland to "break up" with Zenith. From protests to sing-a-longs to call-in days, creative community organizing tactics flourished in this oil-by-rail campaign.

Activism Grows: Grassroots activism spurred overwhelming, statewide opposition to Zenith.

- 46 neighborhood organizations signed and submitted a letter demanding the city deny Zenith;
- 20 Oregon state legislators called for Commissioner Dan Ryan to stop Zenith;
- The Multnomah County Board of Commissioners issued a statement opposing Zenith;
- 17 environmental and community advocacy organizations sent a letter calling on the city to reject Zenith; and
- Thousands of residents called or emailed city officials.

The Victory: In August, the city denied Zenith's Land Use Compatibility Statement, declaring that Zenith's oil-by-rail storage and transfer facility is inconsistent with the city's land use rules. The decision marked a new chapter in the Northwest's jawdropping success over fossil fuel infrastructure: The city's decision will shut down oil-by-rail operations at a facility that's been operating for years. That takes moxie.

What's Next: Zenith sued. On September 20, 2021, Columbia Riverkeeper and Willamette Riverkeeper intervened in the lawsuit. We will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Portland to defend its bold climate decision.

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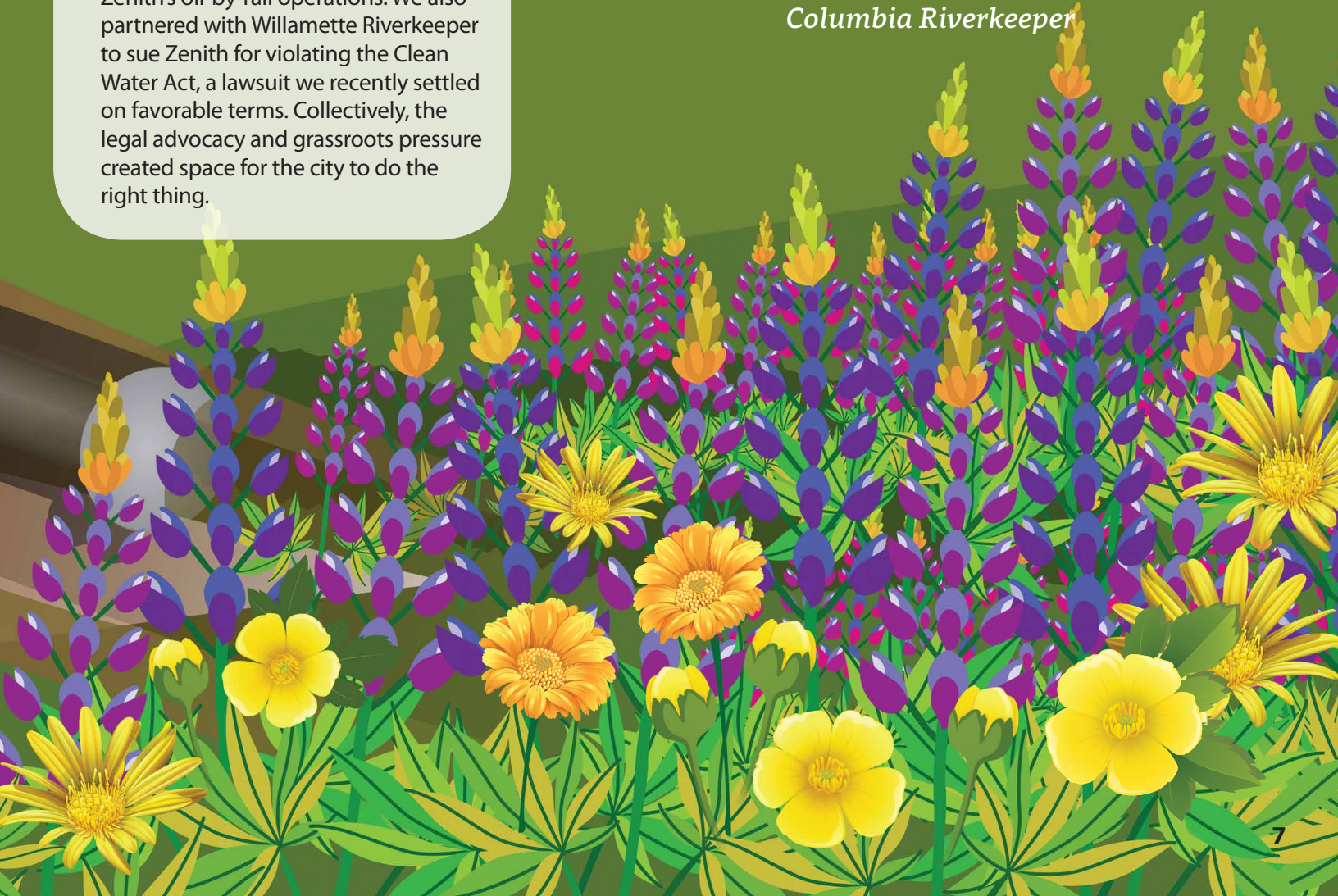
A YEAR OF BIG VICTORIES
2021

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“No one really knew, not even the state regulatory agencies, that Zenith had started handling tar sands crude oil until these mile-long oil trains started moving through the Columbia River Gorge and Portland.”

– Erin Saylor, Staff Attorney,
Columbia Riverkeeper

Legal Wizardry: Ever heard of a Land Use Compatibility Statement? You are not alone. Riverkeeper’s attorneys and partners advocated for the City of Portland to exercise an obscure authority to stop Zenith’s oil-by-rail operations. We also partnered with Willamette Riverkeeper to sue Zenith for violating the Clean Water Act, a lawsuit we recently settled on favorable terms. Collectively, the legal advocacy and grassroots pressure created space for the city to do the right thing.



CHAPTER 2022: WHAT LIES AHEAD



By Lauren Goldberg,
Legal and Program Director

On my 80-billionth Zoom meeting of the pandemic (not that I'm counting), former Columbia Riverkeeper board member and executive director of Seeding Justice, Se-ah-dom Edmo, introduced herself. Her detour from the typical "name/title" script reminded me why I still love connecting, even if it's on Zoom. "I'm drawn to the complicated issues," Se-ah-dom explained. "Those are the only ones worth fighting for." Se-ah-dom's remark sums up our work along the Columbia.

As we make plans for 2022, we are drawn to the vital, complicated issues that typify activism in our corner of the world. Check out the highlights of what lies ahead.

Unite to Stop Fossil Fuel Development. We have an ambitious goal: defeat every new and expanded fossil fuel infrastructure project. Thanks to our incredible members and partners, we've had great success. But our work is not done. We will continue to fight fracked gas and oil infrastructure in Columbia River communities. The climate crisis demands a rapid move from climate-wrecking fossil fuels.

Dig Deep on Salmon and Orca Recovery. Dam removal. That's what leading biologists say it will take to stop Snake River salmon and orca extinction. In 2021, we made major headway on the historic effort to remove the four Lower Snake River dams. In our view, we must unite around solutions to remove the dams, honor Tribal rights, and reinvest in regional transportation, irrigation, and energy infrastructure. That's why we will continue to demand action from Northwest members of Congress and governors. And we will continue to prosecute lawsuits that challenge salmon-killing operations at federal dams.

Protect an Irreplaceable, Sacred Place. We will continue to work in solidarity with the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and Nez Perce Tribe to stop a pumped-storage hydroelectric development proposed near the John Day Dam in Washington state. The price for alleged "green energy" is the destruction of nine culturally significant areas. As Elaine Harvey and Bronsco Jim

Jr. of the Ka-milt-pah Band explain, "These ridges are sacred to us. Without them, some spirits don't make it out of this world and are sent back. We tell the story of this ridge and how it stood above the flooding waters. This ridge is our history, our beginning, our future." Our position: developments must be sited in a manner that does not place the disproportionate burden on Tribal communities or other Communities of Color. Period.

Tackle New Plans for Nuclear Power Development along the Hanford Reach. The Hanford Nuclear Site is the most toxic place in the Western Hemisphere. Yet a company wants to plop a new modular nuclear energy development adjacent to Hanford. Not so fast. In late 2021 we released an in-depth report examining the risks of nuclear energy along the Columbia and why more nuclear energy is not the answer to the climate crisis. 2022 ushers in the next stage: grassroots organizing and legal strategizing to convince decision makers to deny nuclear energy. And, if that falls short, lay the groundwork for a court challenge.

Thwart Industrialization in Critical Salmon Habitat. Imagine another Port of Vancouver—over 800 acres of industrial development, including fossil fuel terminals—in the heart of the Columbia River estuary. That's what the Port of Columbia County proposes: rezoning high-quality farmland adjacent to the Port's existing Port Westward property for a massive industrial buildout. Stopping the rezone is a big deal and a long-term commitment for Riverkeeper. We will protect farmland, adjacent salmon habitat, and water quality if successful.

Fight Every Day for Clean Water. From suing polluters for violating the Clean Water Act to working in coalition with family-farm and animal-rights groups to stop high-impact mega dairies, our team of attorneys and organizers will never let up on our efforts to keep our rivers clean so we can all eat locally caught fish without fear of getting sick. This includes engaging in the long-overdue public-participation process for the Pacific Northwest's newest Superfund site: Bradford Island and surrounding waters of the Columbia.



"Columbia Riverkeeper is a valued partner of the Yakama Nation in our efforts to honor, protect and restore the Columbia River. Riverkeeper was instrumental in getting Congressional support for the Bradford Island Superfund listing."

– Rose Longoria, Yakama Nation Fisheries Program Superfund Section

COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER IN YOUR NEWSFEED



By Liz Terhaar,
Communications Director

The stories we tell about the Columbia River and the people who live and work on this river are important. Our team makes it a priority to tell those stories. On any given day, Columbia Riverkeeper's conservation director keeps a button-up shirt in the back of his car so he's TV-ready. You might find our senior attorney tromping around riverbeds looking for sockeye salmon with a photographer, or our community organizers working the phones to connect volunteers with reporters to share their stories of triumph. On a calm day, our executive director might be on the water taking a journalist for a tour of the Columbia, sharing the beauty and challenges the river holds.

Independent journalism plays a pivotal role in campaigns to protect the Columbia and our climate: calling on our leaders to do the right thing, sharing information, and inspiring people to get involved.

Across the nation, people are taking notice of our work on the Columbia River thanks to your support. In 2021, Riverkeeper's work made international and national headlines—from The New York Times and Seattle Times to The Guardian and German national public radio, to name a few. In fact, over 100 media outlets featured Riverkeeper's work, including regional and local newspapers like The Tri-City Herald, The Columbian, and Columbia Gorge News. Why? The issues we face on the Columbia River feel universal for many as we hold bad actors like polluters and the fossil fuel industry accountable.

HERE IS A LOOK AT OUR WORK IN 2021 THROUGH THE MEDIA LENS.



"The difference is that this isn't recreation for the salmon. They have no choice. They either make it or they die."

– Brett VandenHeuvel,
Executive Director

Video shows salmon injured by unlivable water temperatures after heatwave, *The Guardian*



"With [the Goldendale Pumped-Storage Hydroelectric Project], we've seen these disastrous impacts that will happen to Tribal cultural resources, and so to call this a responsible, green project for our future to combat climate change is just false."

– Simone Anter, Staff Attorney

Washington denies permit for Goldendale Pumped Hydro, *Spokane Public Radio*



"El Gorge, como le dicen, es la meca de los deportes extremos. Cuando vienes a estas zonas pues el 'wind surfing', 'kite boarding', deslizarse en el agua con papalotes, mucha gente latina empieza a entrar a ese deporte."

– Ubaldo Hernández, Senior Organizer

Sinfín de actividades y paisajes que ofrece el Gorge, *Univision Portland*



"More and more people were recreating outdoors. People were pushed into their environment. A lot of people got out there and thought, this is pretty great. Hopefully this will create stewards of these places."

– Lorri Epstein, Water Quality Director

Swimming with the apps: Local nonprofit helps you swim without fear, *Columbia Gorge News*



"We are determined to make sure those decisions are made in the interest of public health and our shared environment. It's up to us to really make sure our city officials understand how we feel about it."

– Kate Murphy, Community Organizer

Advocates Say City Has Opportunity to Stop Zenith Expansion, City Officials Unsure, *Portland Mercury*

"While we appreciate the Senator's willingness to address BPA's [Bonneville Power Administration] serious financial problems, the appropriate and most effective way to do this would be through comprehensive legislation that addresses the many issues touching BPA's business and the Columbia and Snake rivers. Enabling BPA to continue business as usual is not a solution."

– Miles Johnson, Senior Attorney

Greens blast 'get out of jail free card' for fed hydro giant, *E&E News*



"The City was very clear last week that Zenith's crude-by-rail operation runs afoul of numerous land use goals and policies. Zenith's air permit application has been pending for close to a decade. It's high time the agency takes action to close the book on this dangerous facility."

– Erin Saylor, Staff Attorney

Oregon DEQ says it's denying a permit needed for a crude-oil operation to continue in Portland, *OPB*

"We continue to think the Port [of Columbia County] and Columbia County did not do an adequate analysis to show that a massive methanol refinery would be compatible with high-value farms and the nearby wetlands."

– Dan Serres, Conservation Director

Columbia County commission, environmentalists again debate rezone at Port Westward, *The [Longview] Daily News*



For full coverage on this story scan this QR code >

SALMON IN HOT WATER

This summer Columbia Riverkeeper captured underwater video showing heat-stressed sockeye salmon dying because the Columbia River is too hot. We earned international attention—reaching millions of views across many platforms—in high-profile media outlets.

"Rising river temperatures are stressing out salmon in the Pacific Northwest"

The New York Times

"Shocking video shows salmon almost boiled alive in heat wave"



"Video Shows Salmon With Lesions, Fungus As Rivers Hit Lethal Temperatures" **HUFFPOST**

"Fish Managers Say Salmon Runs 'Could Have Been Worse,' After Underwater Video Shows Heat-Stressed Salmon"



"High River Temps Killing Salmon in Pacific Northwest"





COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER®

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR MISSION

To protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean.

OUR VISION

A Columbia River that unites people to fight for clean water, abundant fish and wildlife, and our climate.

OUR COMMITMENT

Embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion at every level of our work. Communities are the backbone of what we do. As an organization that advocates for the health and safety of river communities, we must fight for social justice and take a stand against racism.

YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Columbia Riverkeeper is powered by members who invest in clean water and a healthy climate because the fight is urgent and the time is now. You accomplished great things.

STOPPING POLLUTION

Pounds of illegal toxic pollution discharge our Clean Water Act lawsuits prevented annually: **50,000**
Amount polluters paid to nonprofit organizations as a result of lawsuits in the last five years: **\$2,850,000**
Lawsuits filed in 2021 against public ports for violating the Clean Water Act: **2**
Percent by which the level of cancer-causing PCBs found in some resident fish caught near Bradford Island exceeds the safe level: **3,200,000**
People who signed petitions demanding EPA to list Bradford Island and surrounding waters of the Columbia: **1,500**

FIGHTING FOSSIL FUELS

New fossil fuel terminals you defeated in last decade: **15**
New fossil fuel terminals built on the Columbia in that time: **0**
Legal victories over fossil fuel projects in the last six years: **18**
Petitions asking Washington state to reject the Kalama methanol refinery: **25,000**
Million metric tons of greenhouse gas pollution per year stopped by defeating methanol refinery: **4.8** (That's equivalent to 3.2 million cars off the road.)
New fracked gas power plants to be built in Oregon after we defeated Perennial Windchaser: **0**

SAVING SALMON

Maximum water temperature (Fahrenheit) in which salmon can survive in the Columbia River: **68**
Days the Columbia exceeded 68 degrees this summer: **80+**
Online views of underwater video we captured of salmon dying in hot water: **3,000,000**
Number of media outlets that featured the video: **30**
Lawsuit victories in 2021 to force federal dam operators to stop rising water temperatures: **1**
Miles of salmon and steelhead habitat in the Lewis River blocked by dams without fish passage: **100**
Endangered Species Act-listed fish species that will benefit from our campaign to secure the Biden administration's commitment to Lewis River fish passage: **4**

ENGAGING COMMUNITIES

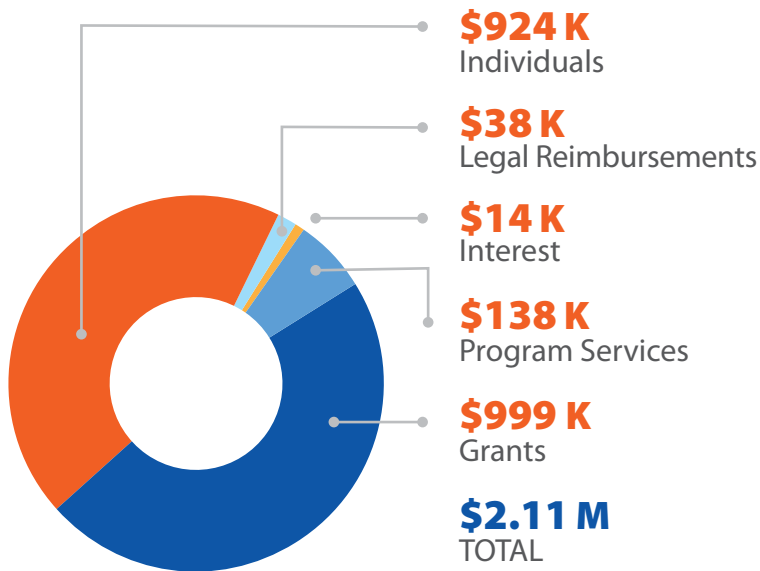
E. coli samples collected annually at Columbia River beaches: **245**
"Conoce Tu Columbia" bilingual radio shows and podcasts aired in 2021: **24**
People who volunteered with Comunidades, a Latino/a/x-led environmental and social justice group fiscally sponsored by Riverkeeper: **700+**
Middle-school curriculums released on how to tackle toxic and other water pollution: **4**

CLEANING UP HANFORD

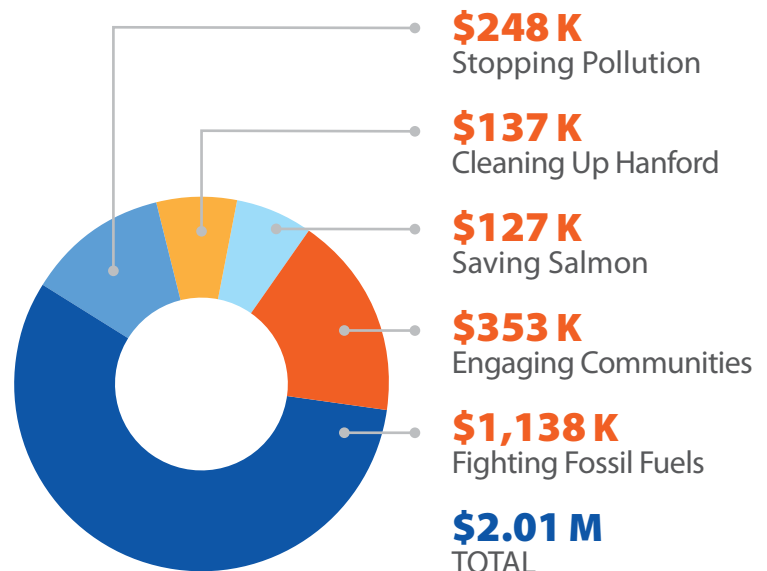
Tanks containing radioactive and toxic waste at the Hanford Nuclear Site: **177**
Gallons of radioactive and toxic waste regulators estimate have leaked from Hanford's tanks: **1,000,000**
People who signed petitions demanding the federal government abandon plans to delay removal, treatment, and disposal of radioactive hazardous waste: **770**

COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER®

\$2.11 MILLION RAISED IN LAST YEAR



Revenue



Expense

Columbia Riverkeeper earned the highest ratings from top charity guides



Four stars = Exceptional.
Exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause



Platinum = Highest Seal of Transparency

WAYS TO GIVE

Columbia Riverkeeper is committed to maximizing every donation to fight for clean water. Giving to a local organization ensures your money is put to work here. Your donations are powering victories to protect the places you love.

In addition to donating online or mailing a check, you can set up monthly giving, donate stocks, cryptocurrency, or property. More and more people are making tax-smart donations from IRAs and retirement accounts, or leaving a legacy gift for clean water. If you have ideas or questions, please contact acasia@columbiariverkeeper.org, 541-399-9119, or visit Columbiariverkeeper.org/ways-give.

DONOR SPOTLIGHTS

As we wrap up a year of victories, let's hear from a few members who made it all possible.



Deena Grossman

What draws you to this work?

Climate change is upon us. We must act to cherish, protect and restore our planet, the only home we have. I support Columbia Riverkeeper as a donor and also as composer-in-residence with my music.

I got involved in the fight against the Kalama methanol refinery, which if built, would have been an environmental disaster for the Pacific Northwest. After seven years the company finally withdrew their plan, thanks in large part to organized protests and legal challenges brought by Columbia Riverkeeper.

Tell us about connecting your music to Riverkeeper's work.

In early spring of 2020 I began walking and observing the waterways in my neighborhood, from the headwaters of Crystal Springs Canyon through Westmoreland Park, to Johnson Creek and the Willamette River, continuing to Sauvie Island at the confluence of the Columbia River and finally out to the Pacific Ocean at Astoria. The result was Waterways, a quartet for two flutes, viola and cello, inspired by the waterways and dedicated to Columbia Riverkeeper. Please stay tuned for a live concert, benefit performance of Waterways in 2022 and join me in continuing to support Columbia Riverkeeper's work!



Cambria Keely

How did you learn about Columbia Riverkeeper?

When I was 14, Columbia Riverkeeper held an informational session about the world's largest fracked gas-to-methanol refinery proposed to be built in my hometown of Kalama. Most recently, I was graciously offered a Community Organizer internship, giving me a peek into the brains behind Columbia Riverkeeper.

Why does our work for clean water and our climate matter to you?

Columbia Riverkeeper is one of few organizations that considers every issue affecting the health of the river, and the impacts of an unhealthy Columbia. From uplifting Native voices to protecting estuaries to fighting dams in confluencing rivers to terminating fossil fuel dependency, Columbia Riverkeeper leaves nothing unconsidered.

What made you decide to support Columbia Riverkeeper?

I wanted to give back to the organization to expand its reach to even more communities that are facing a direct climate threat.



John Laursen

How did you learn about Columbia Riverkeeper?

I was approached by a canvasser in 2014, and immediately knew that Columbia Riverkeeper was worth supporting.

Why does our work for clean water and our climate matter to you?

I've always loved the Columbia, but during the six years that Terry Toedtemeier and I spent creating "Wild Beauty: Photographs of the Columbia River Gorge 1867-1957," I had grown much more aware of how deeply impacted the river has been by dams and other human activities over the last century and a half. I later presented free slideshows of the book's photographs in communities all along the Columbia and, in doing so, became even more connected to the river.

What made you decide to support Columbia Riverkeeper?

The grassroots effort epitomized by this organization is tremendously valuable. We want to believe that governments will fix our climate disaster, but taking care of our own backyard is critically important for protecting water and habitat. Over the years I have continually been impressed with the work of Columbia Riverkeeper and have been very happy to add my support.



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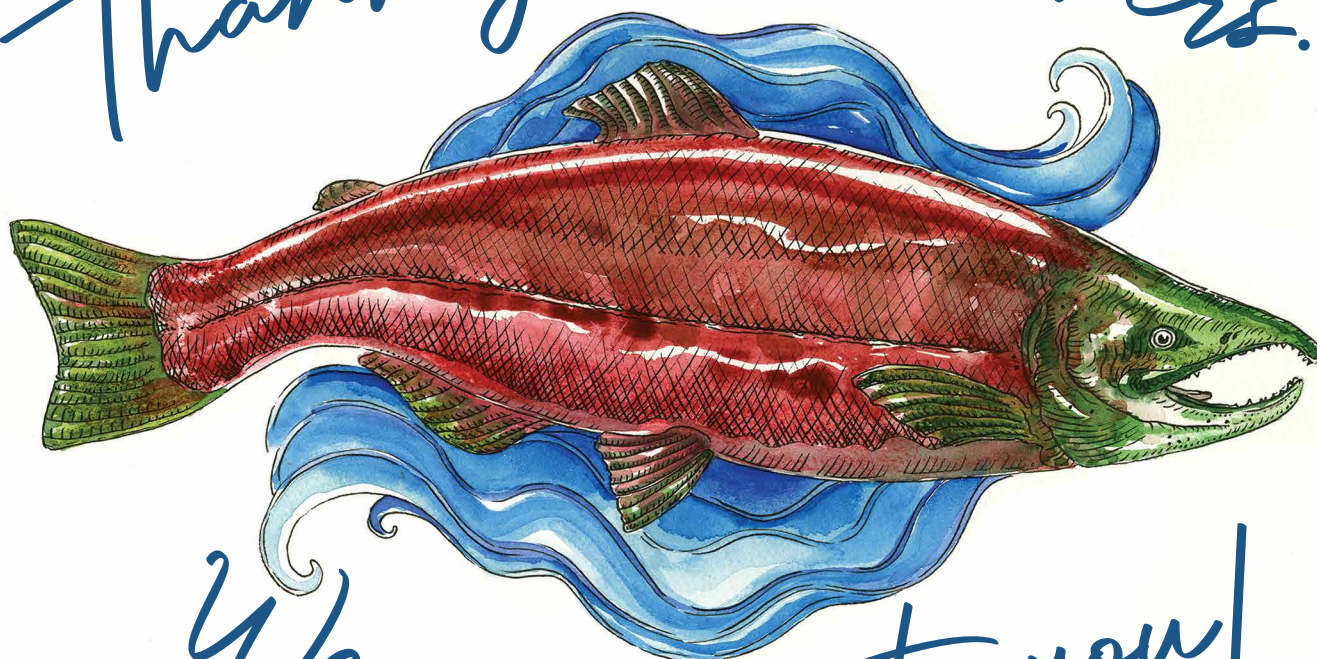
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Thank you, members.



We appreciate you!