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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COMMUNITY-LED STATE OF THE SITE MEETING IN VANCOUVER: "HANFORD, OUR RIVER & YOU"

Public Involvement Needed for the Nation's Most Contaminated Nuclear Site

March 17, 2015 (Vancouver, WA) — A coalition of public interest groups are hosting community-led "State of the Hanford Site" meetings in Washington State. The next meeting is Saturday, March 28, 2015, from 9:30AM to 12:00PM in Vancouver. The meeting will involve both public interest and agency perspectives on the cleanup progress at Hanford. This is a unique opportunity to learn about the latest challenges and advances in cleanup at the nation's most contaminated nuclear site. The event is free and open to the public.

[Columbia Riverkeeper](#), [Hanford Challenge](#), [Heart of America Northwest](#), and [Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility](#) joined together to plan these meetings throughout Washington State after learning that state and federal agencies did not plan to hold government-sponsored State of the Site meetings in 2015. Although there has been progress at Hanford, missed milestones and worker safety concerns continue to plague the Department of Energy's cleanup efforts. This event highlights the importance of public involvement in cleanup decisions and provides an opportunity for communities downstream of Hanford to learn more.

"The health of the Columbia River depends on successful cleanup of the Hanford nuclear site and its dangerous nuclear and chemical pollution. Residents throughout the Pacific Northwest have a huge stake in the cleanup effort at Hanford, and we are reaching out to help give them a greater voice in the process," said Dan Serres, Conservation Director for Columbia Riverkeeper.

"Hanford cleanup will leave a legacy of toxic chemicals and radioactivity in its wake. It is critical that decisions about how much contamination to clean up, and how much to leave behind are informed by community values. By working together and igniting interest in the broader community we can make a difference, ensuring protection for the Hanford workforce and generations to come," said Liz Mattson, Outreach Director for Hanford Challenge.

"We have been working for years on the cleanup of the Hanford Reservation, and protecting the Columbia River has always been one of our priorities," said Gerry Pollet, Executive Director of Heart of America Northwest. "Toxic sludge, left over from making plutonium during World War II, sits only 400 yards away from the river and its removal is years behind schedule. Contamination has been flowing into the Columbia River for decades, and unless the citizens and the states of Washington and Oregon work together to require the federal Energy Department to clean up to more stringent standards, the risks to the river will grow and grow."

“The hard truth is that our children and grandchildren will inherit Hanford. It is critical that we take steps today to clean up the contaminated Hanford site in the safest, most effective way possible. Citizen engagement in this process helps to ensure that human health and safety is the highest priority at Hanford, both today and hundreds of years from now,” said Daniel Noonan, Project Manager for Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility.

This meeting will include presentations from each group as well as from the Washington State Department of Ecology and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The Department of Energy has also been invited to participate in this event. Following presentations, there will be a question and answer portion for the participants to discuss concerns regarding cleanup progress at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation.

Event Details:

Saturday, March 28, 2015, from 9:30AM to 12PM at the Marshall Community Center (Oak & Elm Rooms) located at 1009 E McLoughlin Blvd, Vancouver, WA. Complimentary food and beverages will be served at the open house starting at 9:30AM, followed by presentations.

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About Columbia Riverkeeper

Columbia Riverkeeper's mission is to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean. Representing a diverse coalition of members and interests, Columbia Riverkeeper works to restore a Columbia River where people can safely eat the fish they catch, and where children can swim without fear of toxic exposure. The organization is a member of Waterkeeper Alliance, the world's fastest growing environmental movement, uniting more than 200 Waterkeeper organizations worldwide and focusing citizen action on issues that affect our waterways, from pollution to climate change. For more information go to columbiariverkeeper.org.

About Hanford Challenge

Hanford Challenge exists to transform Hanford's nuclear legacy into a model of safe and effective cleanup. Our mission is to help create a future for Hanford that secures human health and safety, advances accountability, and promotes a sustainable environmental legacy. For more information go to hanfordchallenge.org.

About Heart of America Northwest

Heart of America Northwest is one of the leading citizen groups working to stop the use of Hanford as a national radioactive waste dump and to protect the Columbia River and our region's health from Hanford's growing contamination threat. They have 16,000 members across Washington and Oregon. For more information go to hanfordcleanup.org.

About Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility

Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility organizes the Washington State healthcare community to pursue peace and health for the human community and the global ecosystem by empowering members, citizens and policy makers to develop and model for the rest of the nation socially just and life-enhancing policies regarding nuclear issues, climate change, environmental toxins, vulnerable populations and other risks to human health. For more information go to psr.org/chapters/washington.