

COLUMBIA RIVERKEEPER®

RIVER CURRENTS | 2017 Issue 2

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Columbia Riverkeeper is a non-profit organization working to protect and restore the water quality of the Columbia River and all life connected to it, from the headwaters to the Pacific Ocean.

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Join the conversation and keep up with the latest from Columbia Riverkeeper!



Columbia Riverkeeper board retreat on a windy day in Astoria, Oregon. From left to right: Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director; Paloma Ayala, Board Secretary; Captain Peter Wilcox, Board Member; Ted Wolf, Treasurer; Linda McLain, President; and Colleen Coleman, Vice President.

River Notes

A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

I spent three months in Antarctica in 2000 studying the ice sheet's response to climate change. Yes, it was cold, and I loved it. After returning home and writing research papers, I realized that the urgency of climate change demanded advocacy. Today, the West Antarctic Ice Sheet is deteriorating at a rapid pace, President Trump pulled out of the Paris Climate Agreement, and corporations want to turn the Columbia River into the nation's fossil fuel highway. Our times demand advocacy.

Climate science is clear. It's all politics now. We need to take action and lead from the grassroots up. You are making a difference by speaking out at hearings, demanding more from state leaders, and supporting conservation groups.

When Bill McKibben spoke with activists in Vancouver, Washington, he said that we in the Pacific Northwest have the honor of deciding the fate of the most important fossil fuel infrastructure projects in the nation. We are, through good fortune, at the heart of a major climate battle right here in our backyard.

By the end of our president's first term, against all odds, we will have defeated a dozen of the nation's largest coal, oil, and fracked gas export terminals here on the Columbia River. Together, we are going to pass strong local and state climate policies. And we are going to reform elected bodies like port and county commissions and city councils that make incredibly important decisions. We are going to move forward, not back.

When the re-supply helicopter landed next to our tent in Antarctica, the pilot jumped out with a huge grin framed by his handle-bar mustache. This proud Texan, our connection to the outside world, couldn't wait to tell the liberal scientists the result of the Bush v. Gore election. That day, I had trouble collecting more ice-sheet data when I knew the president was going to set back environmental policy by a decade. Today, when President Trump takes reckless action, I hope you will join me in filing lawsuits, defeating fossil fuel infrastructure, and building a better future.

Brett VandenHeuvel

Executive Director, Brett VandenHeuvel

Cover: The Columbia Wetlands in British Columbia via the "From Source to Sea" photo project by Peter Marbach. To find out more about his Columbia River project, follow him on Facebook (facebook.com/peter.marbach.1) or contact Peter via email at marbachphoto@gorge.net.

Back: Join us for Love Your Columbia Day, Aug. 26, 2017. Team up with hundreds of volunteers in communities along the Columbia to clean local beaches and restore river habitat. Learn more on our website (columbiariverkeeper.org/blog/love-your-columbia).

"From Source to Sea"

Photographer Peter Marbach Shares His Journey a Decade in the Making

By Liz Terhaar, *Communications Director*

He summited Mount Hood nine months after open-heart surgery. He traveled from the Columbia River headwaters to the Pacific to show us the bigger picture. Meet Gorge-based photographer Peter Marbach, who honored his return to health by capturing the stories told by Nch'i-Wána—The Big River.

The Columbia's headwaters inspired Peter's 10-year, critically acclaimed photography project, "From Source to Sea." He drove 14 hours to the Columbia's headwaters, a small spring bubbling out of the ground in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia.

"It's a very emotional experience to find it and stand there and get a sense of how humble the river begins, and up there, the first two-hundred miles or so are wild and free and looks as it has since the beginning of time," Peter said.

Since then, as time allows, Peter has traveled along the Columbia's 1,243 miles, photographing riverscapes, wildlife, and the people who live and work along the river. Lecturing and sharing his photos creates a space for dialogue about pressing Columbia River issues, including the Columbia River Treaty renegotiation and tribal efforts to restore salmon to the upper Columbia.

"This project is really a labor of love; it is something I felt compelled to do," said Peter, adding that the arts provide an opportunity to educate stakeholders.

His advice to fellow Riverkeeper members: "Everyone who is passionate about the Columbia River should put it on their bucket list to someday go to the headwaters. When you go there, it puts the Gorge and everything else in perspective. We're all in this together, and what happens upstream affects what happens downstream and vice versa."

What's next?

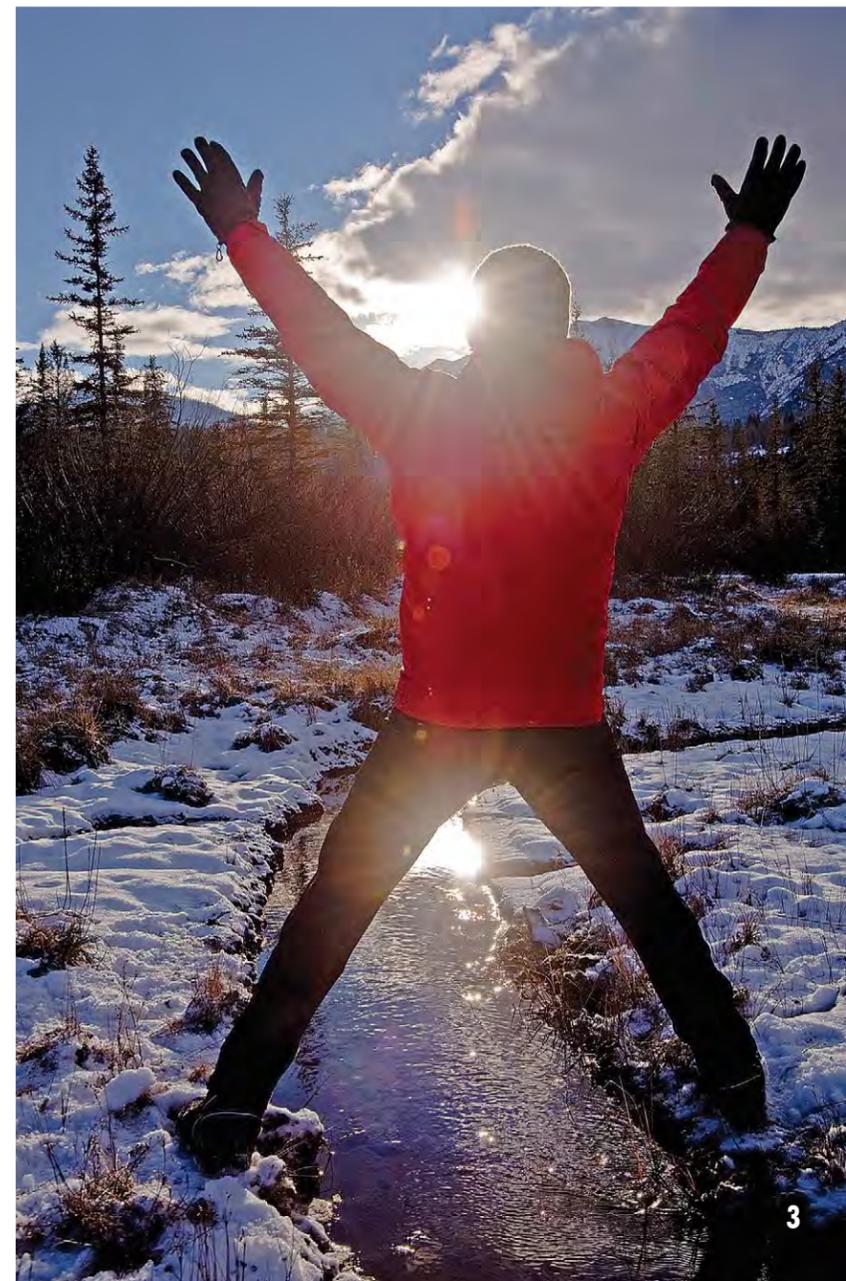
Peter hopes to share "From Source to Sea" as a coffee table book. To find out more about his Columbia River project, follow him on Facebook (facebook.com/peter.marbach.1) or contact Peter via email at marbachphoto@gorge.net.

Save the Date:

Join Peter for an exclusive Columbia Riverkeeper member event on October 8, 2017, at Eagle Creek near Cascade Locks, Oregon, to view and photograph spawning salmon. Learn how to capture wildlife on film from a professional photographer while observing the final stage of the salmon lifecycle. Registration is required. For more information, contact Lorri Epstein at lorri@columbiariverkeeper.org or register online (columbiariverkeeper.org/blog/love-your-columbia).



Photos by Peter Marbach.



Oil-by-Rail:

By Dan Serres, *Conservation Director*

Mosier Derailment Ignites Opposition

Everyone at Riverkeeper remembers where we were when an oil train derailed, spilled, and burned in Mosier, Oregon, on June 3, 2016. The derailment and fire prompted evacuations, the closure of Interstate 84, and a massive emergency response. Riverkeeper's Executive Director Brett VandenHeuvel and Communications Director Liz Terhaar were on the scene early, after a tribal fisherman told them an oil train had derailed just miles from our Hood River office. Development Director Acasia Berry helped her Mosier neighbors cope with evacuations, smoke, and a shutdown of the town's water and sewage systems. Clean Water Attorney Miles Johnson called his wife, a teacher, who left with other staff and students when the Mosier schools evacuated. I was in a meeting, of all places, with the Washington Department of Ecology discussing emergency response plans for an oil train derailment, spill, and fire.

The Federal Railroad Administration concluded that a single broken bolt on Union Pacific's tracks caused the derailment.

Over the past year, the Mosier derailment became a rallying cry for our members and the Stand Up to Oil coalition. Activists from Vancouver, Grays Harbor, and Puget Sound defeated oil-by-rail proposals. Portland and Vancouver passed local laws prohibiting new oil train terminals. And Mosier leaders like Mayor Arlene Burns spoke boldly against increasing oil train traffic. "Mosier dodged a bullet, big time," Mayor Burns explained to the Oregon House Committee on Energy and Environment. "It woke us up to what is at stake. I am convinced that oil trains are not safe. Period."

Gaining Steam in the Fight Against Big Oil

Will our region invite even more oil trains into our communities? Tesoro proposes the nation's largest oil terminal at the Port of Vancouver. The project would send four, mile-and-a-half long oil trains rumbling through Columbia River communities every day. In the coming months, Washington Governor Jay Inslee will decide the fate of Tesoro's proposal and either heed, or ignore, Mosier's warning.

If the Governor rejects Tesoro, he will be in good company. Washington Attorney General Bob Ferguson, the Washington Department of Natural Resources, Columbia River tribes, over 101 businesses in Vancouver, the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 4, and hundreds of thousands of people throughout the Northwest now oppose Tesoro's oil-by-rail plans.

Washington State's Counsel for the Environment captured the essence of why Governor Inslee must say no to Tesoro: "Human error piloting a vessel in the Columbia River or one broken bolt on a track could lead to a significant environmental and public safety disaster."

Sprint to the Finish Line

Waiting and hoping is not in Riverkeeper's DNA. Over the last four years fighting Tesoro, I've had the honor of working with incredible educators,

Speak Now or Forever Hold Your Breath



engineers, doctors, longshore workers, and so many others. A fisherman who refuses to accept a future where an oil spill shuts down salmon fishing on the Columbia. A mother who refuses to accept a future where an oil train disaster like Mosier—or worse—devastates her community. We are closing in on Governor Inslee's critical decision for Tesoro. Here are recent highlights of our work with allies from across the Northwest to protect the Columbia:

- **On May 11**, activists gathered in Olympia, Washington, to tell Governor Inslee why he should deny Tesoro's proposal. We presented over 1.5 million statements of opposition to oil and coal projects, collected through the Stand Up to Oil and Power Past Coal coalitions, and launched an online video celebrating our growing movement.
- **On June 3**, tribal leaders, elected officials, and community members gathered again in Mosier to mark the one-year anniversary of the oil train derailment. The message: Governor Inslee, deny Tesoro and protect communities from dangerous oil trains.
- **On June 7**, hundreds attended the final major public hearing on Tesoro's proposed oil terminal.

Has the runner's high that comes in the final moments of a grueling race kicked in for you? It has for me. I couldn't be in better company as we carry this incredible fight for clean water, safe communities, and tribal rights over the finish line.

One Year After Mosier: What's Changed?

By Miles Johnson, *Clean Water Attorney*

Good news:

Local governments made it tougher to increase oil-by-rail.

- **Portland Fossil Fuel Ordinance:** Portland prohibited new fossil fuel export terminals in the city, one of the Columbia's most important deep-water port areas. With no new terminals, there will be no new oil, coal, or propane trains headed to Portland.
- **Vancouver Crude Oil Ordinance:** Vancouver banned the storage of bulk crude oil, partly due to concerns about potential oil train accidents. This ban does not apply to Tesoro's pending oil terminal proposal. The city's leadership and this ordinance block the Nustar's oil-by-rail terminal at the Port of Vancouver.
- **Wasco County rejects rail expansion near Mosier:** Wasco County rejected Union Pacific's application to double the railroad track in the Columbia Gorge near Mosier, which would have increased the number of oil trains traveling through our region.

Bad news:

Oregon, Washington, and the federal government failed to make existing oil train traffic safer.

- **Federal rules are inadequate:** National rules allow old, dangerous rail cars to continue to be used for years. And the new rail cars (called "DOT-117") are only designed to withstand 14-mph collisions. Oil trains roll through the Columbia Gorge at up to 50 mph.
- **Oregon and Washington struggle to pass oil train safety laws:** Even common-sense bills to improve cleanup and notify first responders are caught up in politics, with the railroad industry and its allies seeking to water down rules that could protect communities.
- **Oregon regulators are considering a request from PGE to sell oil tanks to Global Partners at Port Westward, a move that could quietly establish a large oil-by-rail terminal that could increase oil train traffic through Portland and Columbia County.** Riverkeeper and others are calling for the PUC to scuttle the sale and clean up the area instead.

Mosier, Oregon; June 3, 2016



People's Climate March Hits the Water

By Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, *Senior Organizer*

On April 29, one of the first warm days of 2017, two canoes piloted by the Cowlitz and Portland All Nations canoe families entered the swift waters of the Columbia River at Kalama, Washington. The tribal canoes, followed by fishing boats and other small craft, represented an aquatic adaptation of the People's Climate March, a nationwide climate day of action.

Supported on shore by Cowlitz Indian Tribe spiritual leaders Tanna Engdahl and Cassie Sellard-Reck—and over a hundred people from throughout the Columbia Basin—the event emphasized the importance of clean water, abundant salmon runs, and a stable climate.

The Columbia River is a target for coal, oil, and methanol export. Kalama was chosen to host the Columbia River People's Climate March because the town is the proposed site of the world's largest methanol refinery and export terminal, and local Kalama leaders have excelled at organizing their community against methanol refining.

After the river-focused People's Climate March, activists gathered for lunch at the Kalama Community Building, followed by workshops to share tools and tips for community organizing. The lunch buffet featured smoked salmon caught in the Columbia River. Sharing this local, sustainable, wild-caught food with friends and allies was a powerful reminder of how fortunate we are, and what's at stake.

The Columbia River has two futures. The first: a superhighway for fossil fuel exports—oil tankers, refinery smoke stacks and flares, and piles of coal eight stories high. The second: a future of strong, healthy communities united to protect our salmon and preserve clean water.

The Columbia River People's Climate March was a strong vote for the clean water future.

Photos by Rick Rappaport



People's Climate March locations on the Columbia:

- Cathlamet, Washington
- Kalama, Washington
- Vancouver, Washington
- Richland, Washington
- Portland, Oregon
- Hood River, Oregon

Now Is The Time

You are making a difference during a critical time for clean water

By Brett VandenHeuvel, *Executive Director*

Thanks to your help, the movement to protect the mighty Columbia is bigger and better than ever before. Your donation to Columbia Riverkeeper powers on-the-ground organizing and legal advocacy.

The Problem

The iconic Columbia River, and the communities that rely on it, face tremendous threats. Thirteen populations of Columbia River salmon are threatened with extinction. Despite the multibillion-dollar effort to restore imperiled salmon, energy companies seek to turn our river into the nation's fossil fuel highway. This includes proposals for America's largest coal export terminal in Longview (Millennium), America's largest oil-by-rail terminal in Vancouver (Tesoro), and the world's largest fracked gas methanol refinery in Kalama (Northwest Innovation Works). Additionally, toxic pollution from industry, stormwater, and contaminated sites make it unsafe to regularly consume some Columbia River fish. According to a government study, adult Columbia River tribal members who frequently eat fish may have cancer risks up to 50 times higher than the general public. Under the Trump administration, we expect more pressure to export fossil fuels, less enforcement of environmental laws, and weaker efforts to clean up contaminated sites.

The Opportunity

In response to these threats, people in our region are standing up to protect clean water like never before. Because coal and oil trains pass through dozens of communities, we have a special opportunity to organize more deeply in rural and river communities. Incredible activists, from farmers to pastors to mill workers, are standing up to protect the places they love.

Second, we are working more closely than ever with several tribes. While the Standing Rock pipeline fight in North Dakota received much of the national press, Columbia River tribes have shown great leadership in fighting fossil fuel exports, reducing toxic pollution, and restoring salmon runs. Now is the time to strengthen our advocacy work together.

Third, people are motivated to stop the Trump administration's environmental and climate policies. Our strategy is to harness the outrage, provide hope, and strategically focus on state and local decisions where we can make lasting, positive changes.

Thank you for making a difference. Please contact Riverkeeper's Development Director, Acasia Berry, if you'd like to discuss monthly giving, a legacy gift, or gifts of stock: acasia@columbiariverkeeper.org or (541) 399-9119.

GET WET!

Portland-Area Columbia Swim Beaches

By Lorri Epstein, *Water Quality Director*

Spending time in Portland this summer? You don't need to travel far for a refreshing dip in the Columbia River. You'll find sandy beaches, sun-drenched shorelines, and shady riverside hideouts. Here are some of our favorite swimming holes and tips for staying safe in the mighty Columbia. Grab your beach towel and we'll see you in the river!

Walton Beach

This family-friendly beach on Sauvie Island is popular with sunbathers and swimmers. The long, sandy shore is great for building sand castles or flying kites on a windy day. You'll need a permit to park, and swimmers should beware that the shoreline can drop off suddenly. Our advice? Make a day of it and take home a flat of ripe berries from one of Sauvie island's many u-pick farms.

Kelley Point Park

Why enjoy one river when you can enjoy two? Kelley Point Park sits conveniently at the confluence of Portland's iconic rivers, the Willamette and the Columbia. Kelley Point offers great access for bikers; bonus points for getting to the river on your own two wheels! A paved walking trail circles the point, and you can explore the sandy shores. With mature shade trees, bathrooms, and picnic tables, bring a blanket and stay all day. A word of caution: the City of Portland recommends no swimming at Kelley Point Park due to swift currents and drop-offs.

Broughton Beach

City-dwelling sun-seekers love Broughton Beach. If a big sandy beach, lots of sunshine, and a cool, crisp Columbia floats your boat, Broughton Beach is for you! Come early to snag a parking spot.

Wintler Park

Looking for a sandy beach where you can picnic and swim while enjoying stunning Mt. Hood views? Look no further than Vancouver's Wintler Park. On the banks of the Columbia, this park also marks the end of the 5-mile Renaissance Trail.

Chinook Landing

Located just upstream from Portland in Fairview, this 67-acre park has one of the largest public boat launches in Oregon. But it's not just for boaters; Chinook Landing offers a swimming area, picnic tables, restrooms, and walking trails.



Visiting your favorite Columbia River beach?

Tag your photos with:
#LoveYourColumbia
#AmaTuColumbia

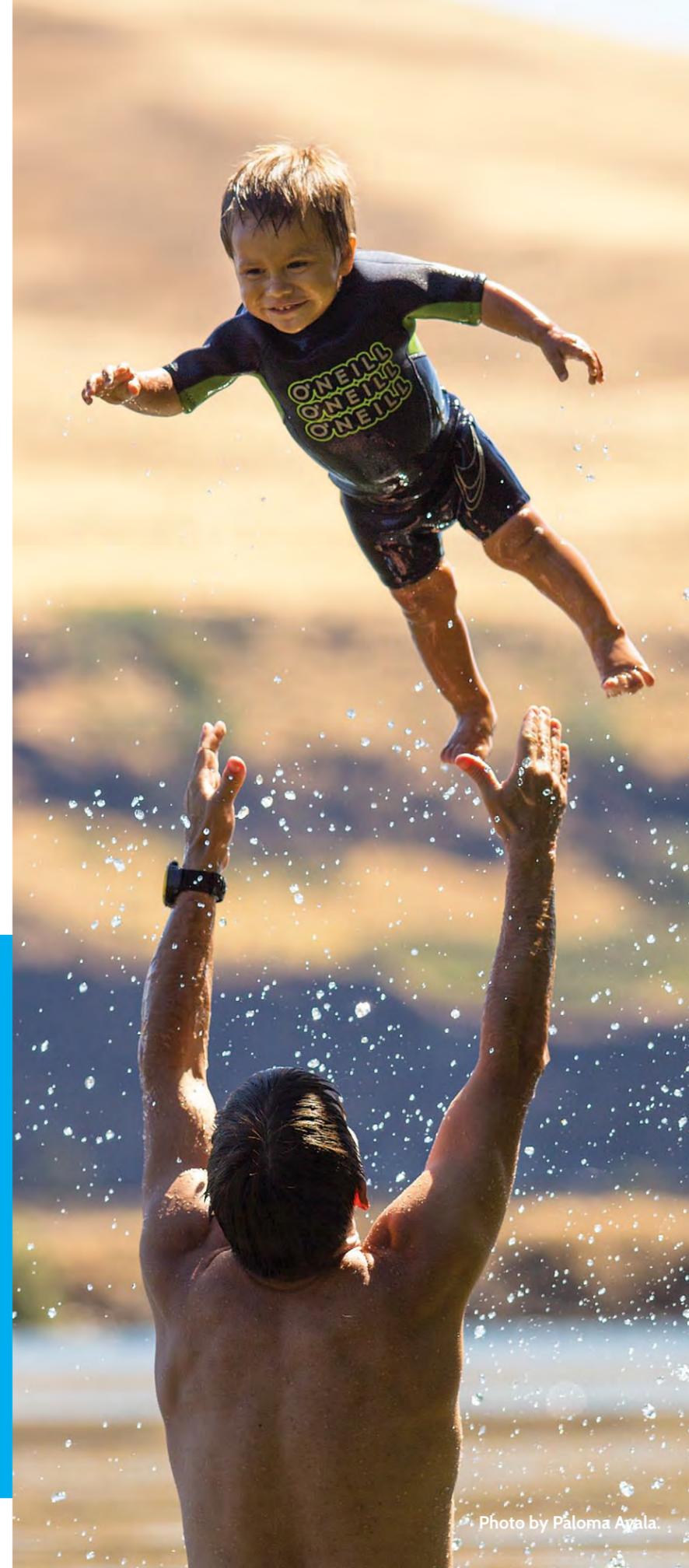
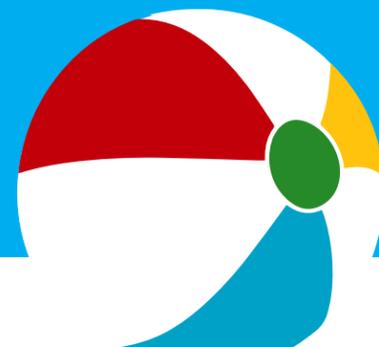


Photo by Paloma Ayala.

Ready to Jump in the River?

Before hitting the water, check the conditions and make sure it's safe to swim. Use Riverkeeper's Swim Guide mobile app to find new beaches, get directions, and view real-time water quality updates. We use volunteer-collected E. coli data to flag our beaches as safe or unsafe for swimming.

Download the app for iPhone & android here: <http://columbiariverkeeper.org/water-quality/swim-guide>

We all deserve to swim, fish, kayak, windsurf, kiteboard, or boat on our rivers. The Columbia's water quality is generally safe for swimming, but use caution. State and federal agencies collect very little site-specific data to inform the public about water quality for recreation. Follow our safety suggestions to help protect yourself.

Safety First!

We hope you enjoy the river and stay safe this summer. While it may appear calm, the Columbia is a powerful river, and swim beaches don't have lifeguards. Parents should watch swimming children closely. The river can have swift currents and water depths can vary. It's always a good idea to wear a life jacket.

Keep these safety suggestions in mind:

- Beware of fast currents and steep drop-offs.
- Know your limits and swim close to shore.
- Don't swim alone or under the influence of alcohol.
- Avoid industrial areas and discharge pipes.
- Avoid swimming in urban areas after heavy rains.
- Shower after swimming; don't swim if you have open cuts or wounds; and don't drink the water.
- Check Swim Guide for up-to-date E. coli levels at popular recreation sites.

Riverkeeper Happenings

There is never a dull moment on the Columbia! Here are some highlights.



EARTH DAY 2017
We participated in three Earth Day events, joining people around the world to celebrate and protect our planet.



NICHOLS NATURAL AREA IN HOOD RIVER, OR: Forty volunteers collected 33 bags of trash along the Hood and Columbia rivers, removed invasive blackberries, and spread mulch to help restore native plants. Thank you to our wonderful volunteers, as well as Riverside Community Church, Footwise Hood River, the Hampton Inn & Suites Hood River, and KEEN for your support.

FRENCHMAN'S BAR PARK IN VANCOUVER, WA:

Twenty-five volunteers removed 700 pounds of litter from the banks of the Columbia. A big thank you to Clark County Parks, SOLVE, and volunteers for making this event possible!



RHEINGARTEN PARK IN WHITE SALMON, WA: Over 200 people gathered to March for Science, a celebration of science and the beautiful Columbia Gorge.



ONE MILLION VOICES: TAKING A STAND AGAINST FOSSIL FUELS
April 29, 2017

We delivered a whopping one million statements to Washington's Governor Jay Inslee requesting that he protect the Pacific Northwest from oil and coal exports. Dozens of partner groups across the Pacific Northwest joined together to urge the Governor to protect our region from dirty fossil fuels.

Photo by Kristi Nakata

EXPLAINED: CLIMATE IMPACTS FROM THE WORLD'S LARGEST METHANOL REFINERY

April 18, 2017
Tarika Powell, senior research associate at the Sightline Institute, delivered a powerful presentation on how the fracked gas industry plans to hijack the Pacific Northwest's clean energy future. A packed house at the Central Lutheran Church in Portland walked away with a deeper understanding of how the proposed Kalama methanol terminal would impact our climate and the Columbia.



PATAGONIA: DEFENDING THE COLUMBIA

May 2017
Patagonia teamed up with Columbia Riverkeeper to highlight fossil fuel export fights and support the cause. Patagonia's new



Portland store (1106 W Burnside St.) donated 10% of all sales on May 6, 2017, to Riverkeeper. On May 11, Patagonia opened its store to Riverkeeper's Senior Organizer Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, who

shared opportunities to defend the Columbia River with store visitors. Stop by the new Portland store to see Patagonia's artist series, including window displays by muralist Blaine Fontana reflecting Riverkeeper's work.

Illustration by Blaine Fontana

AVEDA EARTH MONTH

April 2017
Thank you, Aveda, for another great Earth Month and for standing up for clean water every month. Aveda salons and Experience Centers in the Portland and Vancouver area raised awareness and funds for clean water during April. We had a lot of fun too, including the 2nd annual Trashion Show for Clean Water. Eight teams brought their creativity and talent, transforming trash into fashion. Don't miss out next year!



"NOTES FROM THE RIVERKEEPERS" PERFORMANCE WITH HOLCOMBE WALLER
May 4-6, 2017

The show was a musical culmination of Holcombe's three-month artist residency with Columbia Riverkeeper. A big thank you to Holcombe Waller, Signal Fire Arts, and the Headwaters Theater for their support. Stay tuned for additional tour dates!

DONATE TODAY!

Visit
www.columbiariverkeeper.org
or email
info@columbiariverkeeper.org
Thank you for your support!

SECOND GRADERS RAISE MONEY FOR CLEAN WATER

March 26, 2017
Parkdale Elementary School second graders raised money for Columbia Riverkeeper while learning about local watersheds. Shortly before spring break, Ms. Nickerson's class presented a giant check to Riverkeeper's Liz Terhaar. Students discussed what they love about the Columbia River—swimming and salmon were at the top of their lists!



NEW RIVERKEEPER STAFF

We are excited to announce our two newest team members: Ubaldo Hernández, Community Organizer, and Caroline Park, Administrative Assistant. Ubaldo conducts community outreach about clean water while promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Caroline supports Riverkeeper's operations and assists our members.

Share your stories about the Columbia River and photos by emailing us: info@columbiariverkeeper.org. Follow our work on social media, too.



Respecting Sovereignty

Lessons from working with tribes to protect clean water

By Brett VandenHeuvel, Executive Director

"I used to compare environmentalists to the second coming of the missionaries—they always knew what was right for the tribes." I saw the jaws of well-meaning environmentalists drop when Nez Perce leader Jaime Pinkham said those words during a training that Columbia Riverkeeper organized in 2010. The training, initiated by our mentor and former board member Se-ah-dom Edmo, aimed to teach environmental advocates how to work better with tribes.

Today, solidarity and strong working relationships are more important than ever; our rivers and salmon face imminent threats from fossil fuel export and climate change, and the Trump administration's policies threaten our land and water. More and more people, however, are finally recognizing that tribal nations are long-term stewards and co-managers of natural resources. I've had the pleasure of working with several tribal nations over the last decade—here are some lessons I've learned. My caveat: these lessons are personal and specific to me; I'm not an expert, and I don't attempt to speak for any tribal nation or Native American.

Purcell Mountains reflect in calm water near Spillimacheen, BC. Photo by Peter Marbach.

CASE STUDY: Oregon's fish consumption rate

Here is a case study to illustrate a positive collaboration. Riverkeeper worked closely with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Umatilla), the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission (CRITFC), and nonprofit Northwest Environmental Advocates to push Oregon to adopt the nation's most protective limits on toxic water pollution in 2011.

Under the Clean Water Act, states must set water pollution limits based, in part, on how much fish people eat. If the state assumes people rarely eat fish, the state can allow more toxic pollution discharges. So the estimate of how much fish people eat matters. Oregon assumed people eat only a cracker-sized amount of fish per day. This vastly underestimates the amount of fish that many Oregonians eat and fails to protect those people from toxic pollution. In the end, Oregon revised its "fish consumption rate" to one-third of a pound per day—a huge improvement, which forced the state to set new limits on toxic pollution discharges.

What worked?

We listened. We respected Umatilla's and CRITFC's long-term leadership and expertise on fish consumption.

Lessons I've learned:

Talk less, listen more

By listening, we show respect. And eventually earn respect.

Participate

Many wonderful Native American celebrations, events, and conferences throughout our region are open to the public. Attend and learn. You can also support native-owned businesses instead of those that appropriate native art and culture.

Understand how tribal governments are different than environmental non-profits

When talking to a tribal leader about fighting oil trains, I try to remember that the need for a new medical center or economic development may be her nation's top priority. We must appreciate the difference between a non-profit organization's goals and the needs of a tribal nation. For river protection issues, it is unrealistic to think that every tribe will take the same position, or that Riverkeeper will always agree. We have an organizational policy, however, to confer with interested tribes before tackling issues. This builds trust, leads to better outcomes, and avoids unintended impacts. And, regardless of outcomes, we must avoid promoting a damaging settler-colonial narrative.

Build and maintain relationships

Staff turnover at non-profits can make building long-term relationships difficult. Several tribal leaders have mentioned the challenge of building trust when they are dealing with new people all the time. We work hard to maintain staff consistency. Nearly all of our program staff have worked five to ten years for Riverkeeper building relationships.

Don't lump

There are dozens of tribes in the Pacific Northwest. Some are recognized by the federal government, others are not (or were de-recognized). Some have treaties. Some don't. Each is unique. And, as governments that existed long before the United States, all retain the right to self-governance—sovereignty. By speaking about Native Americans as one people, we disrespect the sovereigns and debase a rich array of cultures.

After we were confident we could add value, Riverkeeper's attorneys coordinated closely with Umatilla's and CRITFC's policy staff to advocate for less toxic pollution. Together, we fought against industry loopholes.

We partnered with tribes' media teams to attend editorial board meetings together, draft op-eds, and coordinate messaging.

Because the tribes did not want the new regulations to focus entirely on Native American fishers, Riverkeeper highlighted the impacts to non-tribal fishers, including recreational fishers, immigrants, and low-income people. We organized our members to submit comments and attend hearings to advocate for less pollution.

Overall, we added value to the relationship by providing legal and organizing support, while respecting Umatilla's and CRITFC's leadership.

Organizing with tribes shouldn't be limited to times of threat, duress, or crisis; if we are to be effective as a movement, our focus should be on transformational rather than single-issue organizing.

Ubaldo Hernández's Journey from Mexico City Social Activist to Riverkeeper's Newest Community Organizer

By Lauren Goldberg, Staff Attorney



Ubaldo Hernández leading a river education program for Hood River Middle School students.

Ubaldo grew up in Mexico City during the '70s and '80s, as the city was transforming. Farm fields turned to concrete. Rivers filled with trash. "At one time people relied on those rivers for water, but the government failed to protect our shared resources," explained Ubaldo. "The government also tried to stifle community-driven efforts to stand up to polluters."

As a young child, Ubaldo eavesdropped on political organizing meetings his older brother held at their home. And he learned about brutal government efforts to suppress social change. "I learned at a young age that, as a social activist or an environmentalist in Mexico, you had a target on your back."

Fast forward to the '90s. Ubaldo moved to America and, for the last twenty years, worked full time at farms, restaurants, and print shops. On evenings and weekends, he pursued his true passion: community organizing to improve the lives of people around him.

Ubaldo's activism took many shapes. In the early 2000s, he helped found the community radio station Radio Tierra. According to Ubaldo, the radio station was designed for the growing number of Latinos in the Columbia River Gorge who had limited access to news and information in Spanish. Ubaldo also volunteered with Horizons, a Washington State University project to help rural communities identify and overcome challenges related to poverty. He founded a Facebook page and blog—El Papalote NW—focused on issues affecting Latinos in the Northwest. Ubaldo also served on several boards and stayed inspired by other social activists in his new home, White Salmon, Washington.

When Riverkeeper recently looked to expand its community organizing presence in the Gorge, Ubaldo's experience and dedication made him a natural fit. Ubaldo is now a full-time community organizer, based in Riverkeeper's Hood River office. "Ubaldo is a well-respected leader who is committed to making sure many voices are heard," said Riverkeeper's Executive Director, Brett VandenHeuvel. "Because of his intelligence, hard work, and passion for justice, he's already a major part of the team."

I have a favorite proverb that captures my passion for clean water: "El hombre llevó a su hijo al río y le dijo, 'Esta es tu herencia, te lo dejo todo.'" In english it reads, "The man brought his son to the river and told him, "This is your inheritance. I leave everything to you." We are entrusted with protecting clean water, whether we grew up along the Columbia or immigrated to the Columbia Basin from elsewhere. —Ubaldo Hernández



Nichols Natural Area restoration efforts with Hood River Valley High School students, spring 2017.



Early-stage restoration efforts with Hood River Valley High School students, spring 2016.



Ubaldo's Work

- Partner with Latino civic organizations and conduct community outreach.
- Support a diverse, community-led effort to transform an industrial brownfield into an ecologically valuable greenspace at Nichols Natural Area on the Hood River waterfront.
- Increase Riverkeeper's environmental education services to Latino communities.
- Work with Riverkeeper board member Paloma Ayala to launch a radio show on environmental and social justice issues on Radio Tierra.

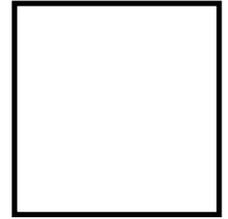
Grants from the Katharine Diack Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation, the Janette G. Drew Fund of The Oregon Community Foundation, and generous donations from members like you support this Community Organizer position.



Mosier Anniversary Rally on June 3, 2017



111 Third Street
Hood River, OR 97031
www.columbiariverkeeper.org

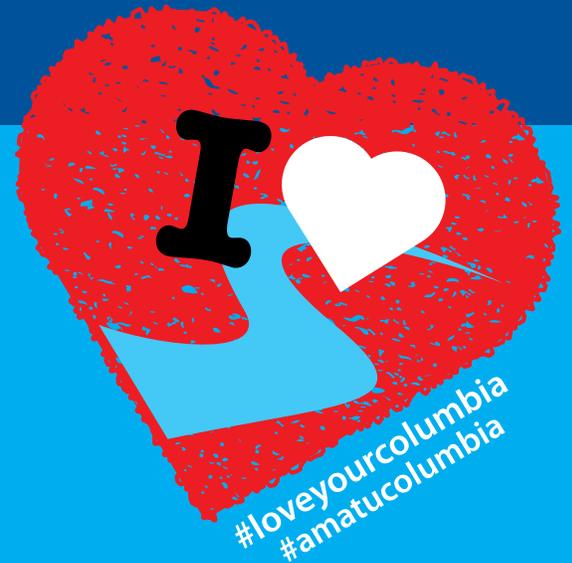


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Save the Date: 8/26 Love Your Columbia Day



Team up with hundreds of volunteers in communities along the Columbia to clean local beaches and restore river habitat.

More info:
columbiariverkeeper.org/blog/love-your-columbia