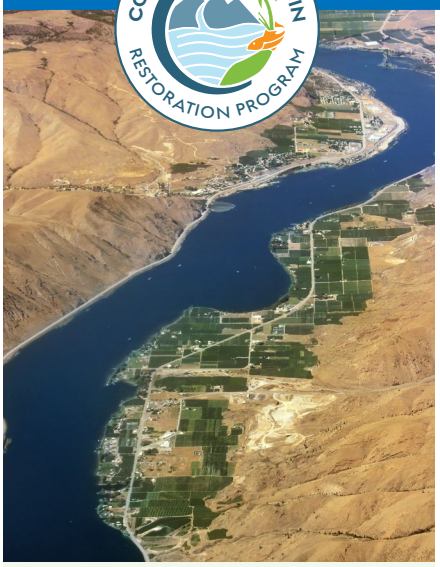
Columbia River Basin Restoration Program



Aerial view over the Columbia River in Cresent Bar, Washington (iStock)

RIVER OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

*The **Columbia River Basin** spans 260,000 square miles, seven states and British Columbia, and:*

- *Is an economic engine for agriculture, hydropower, recreation, and shipping*
- *Serves tens of millions of meals annually from salmon, trout, and other aquatic species harvested by commercial, recreational, and tribal fishers*
- *Provides over 40% of total hydroelectric power generation in the U.S.*
- *Delivers water resources for 8 million people and irrigation for over 7 million acres of farmland*

Note: The points on this map represent a generalized central point of grant activities and/or a grantee's base of operations; in many cases the geographic impact and scope of EPA-funded work extends well beyond these summary points.

***Clean Water Act Section 123** directed EPA to establish a Columbia River Basin Restoration Program to **assess trends in water quality**, collect and assess water quality, identify possible sources of pollution; **provide grants** to reduce pollution, monitor to evaluate trends, provide public education and outreach; and **establish a working group** to recommend projects and review progress.*

EPA'S COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM SUPPORTS POWERING THE GREAT AMERICAN COMEBACK

This program supports two of the five pillars that guide EPA's work:

PILLAR 1: Clean Air, Land, and Water for Every American

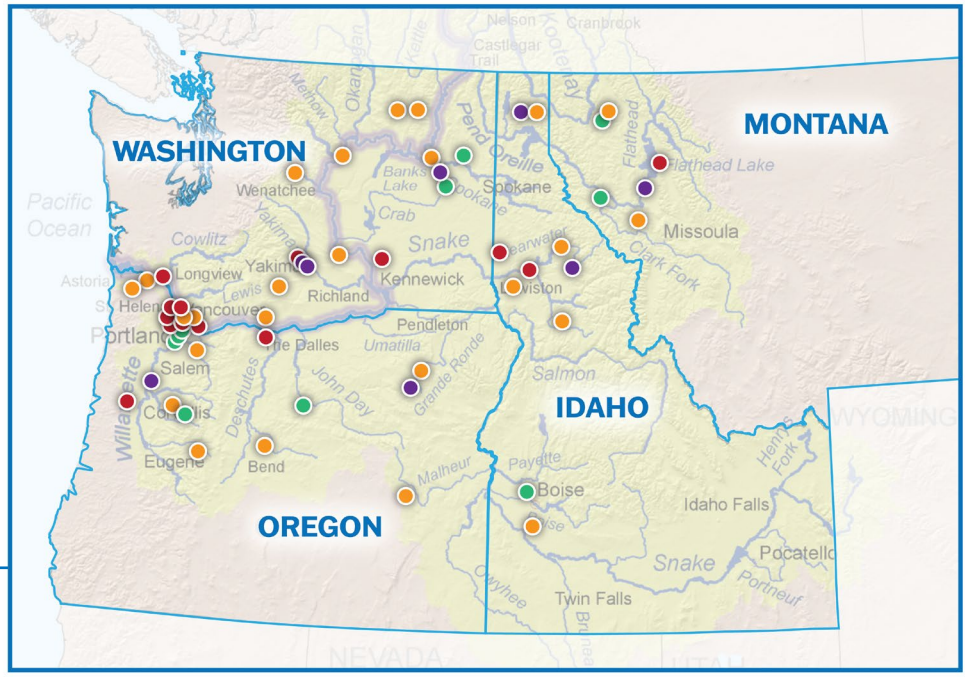
PILLAR 3: Permitting Reform, Cooperative Federalism, Cross-Agency Partnership

The program is grounded in statutory direction, science, efficient use of resources, and meeting the needs of local communities by addressing legacy contamination and preventing new pollution through non-regulatory partner actions.

GRANT PROGRAM

Since 2020, the EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Program has competed and awarded 64 grants totaling almost $94 million (including incremental funding yet to be awarded), to state, Tribal, and local governments, universities, and nonprofits. This does not include over **$119 million in leveraged funds** from partners within the Basin.

Eighteen ***Toxics Reduction Lead and Tribal Lead cooperative agreements*** are underway, with $10 million in new science and monitoring awards just getting started. Many focus on developing toxics reduction strategies for portions of the Basin, as well as subawards creating new jobs for on-the-ground toxics reduction work.



2020 GRANTS | 2022 GRANTS | 2023 TOXICS REDUCTION LEAD GRANTS | 2023 TRIBAL GRANTS

RESULTS FROM THE COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN RESTORATION PROGRAM'S *FIRST 14 GRANTS*, FUNDED IN 2020 INCLUDE:

- Helped farmers voluntarily transition **162,000+ acres** to certified sustainable practices, reducing pesticide use while creating premium market opportunities.
- Treated **1.3+ million gallons** of stormwater annually through installation of 26 Grattix filtration boxes, an effective and inexpensive treatment technology.
- Collected and analyzed over **1,000 water, sediment, and fish tissue samples** for mercury, microplastics, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, industrial compounds, and emerging contaminants.
- Assisted more than **350 Oregon and Washington businesses** with on-site pollution prevention by providing oil and chemical spill kits, and containment structures.
- Reached **4+ million people** through educational websites, videos, webinars, and social media campaigns developed across the Basin.
- Developed long-term toxics monitoring framework for the **600-mile Columbia River mainstem** from the Canadian border to Bonneville Dam.

Green Infrastructure at Sunnyside Elementary School project in Clackamas, Oregon.

EXAMPLES OF GRANT ACHIEVEMENTS

- **Agricultural Innovation:** Using $5.6 million in EPA Columbia River Basin Restoration Program funds, The Freshwater Trust is leveraging $100 million in Idaho Power Company funding to implement high impact irrigation upgrades on agricultural fields along the Snake River.
- **Legacy Mine Remediation:** Trout Unlimited in partnership with the Washington Department of Ecology, private landowners, and corporate partners, worked to eliminate ongoing erosion of legacy mine tailings.
- **Pesticide Stewardship:** Washington Department of Agriculture and partners removed nearly 18,000 pounds of unusable pesticides in collaboration with growers. EPA funded similar programs in Oregon and Montana.
- **Improved Water Quality:** Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership is building green infrastructure projects and removing pavement at 15+ Oregon schools and parks.
- **Monitoring through Citizen Science:** University of Idaho expanded a mercury monitoring program using volunteer citizen science, in 59 sites across Idaho.
- **Public Engagement:** The Western Montana Conservation Commission is increasing the capacity for local governments and watershed groups to address stormwater and septic leachate pollution.

WORKING GROUP

500+ participant Working Group coordinating across states, tribes, industries, and NGOs that meet semi-annually to share information on toxics reduction projects and coordinate on monitoring across the Columbia River Basin.

May 2024 Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Working Group meeting in Spokane, Washington.

"EPA's support for our partnership magnifies the strength of each individual partner and keeps us on the path towards even better stewardship of our local water resources."

— Amy Chinitz, Springfield Utility Board, Oregon

"Many of the producers we speak with every day would like to convert to precision irrigation, but the switch can be expensive upfront... If we could get timelines, cashflow, and funding certainties to line up, we see huge potential to scale up irrigation upgrades in the Mid-Snake."

— Kurt Romans, owner of Romans Precision Irrigation

For more information:
epa.gov/columbiariver