Lower Columbia River

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Lower Columbia River and estuary include the 146 river miles from Bonneville Dam to the Pacific Ocean. They are the last leg of the 1,214 mile run that starts in Canada. The Columbia River has the second largest average flow of all rivers in the United States, averaging nearly 260,000 cubic feet per second. The river and its ecosystems provide critically important permanent and migratory habitat for a wide range of species, including 12 species of threatened or endangered salmon. It is home to nearly two million people, hundreds of fish and wildlife species, five deep water ports, and six major pulp and paper mills.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Targeted Watersheds Grant focuses on a number of serious environmental problems, specifically:

- Declining runs of the once abundant salmon, now listed as threatened and endangered, that affect the ecosystem and the economic basis for the commercial and recreational fishing industry.
- Loss of more than 50 percent of the wetlands since 1900 that has affected the salmon population and has had significant impacts on other wetland dependent species such as bald eagles, otters, minks, osprey, and water fowl.
- Development and land use pressures that have resulted in loss of habitat and increased runoff of toxic and conventional pollutants.
- High levels of toxic contaminants in fish tissue and sediment, which have been recorded in several hot spots in the lower river area.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Lower Columbia River and Estuary Partnership works to protect and restore the lower Columbia River and estuary by providing on-the-ground improvements and educational programs to the region. The Lower Columbia River and Estuary Partnership will use the EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to:

- Remove an additional 12 acres of invasive reed canary grass at Smith and Bybee Lakes Wildlife Area, plant native species, and restore corridor linkages between core areas of habitat.
- Undertake major restoration work at Grays Bay Area to permanently protect 880 acres, restore floodplain connectivity to 440 acres of tidal backwater, riparian, and wetland forested habitat and restore over 300 acres of potential salmonid rearing habitat.
- Re-establish a functioning wetland at Mirror Lake by removing invasive reed canary grass and blackberry, and replanting native species and replacing culverts on approximately 200 acres.
- Reconnect hydrology by removing barriers to species migration by employing grazing management practices and replanting native vegetation protecting over 300 acres of wetlands in the Scappoose Bay Watershed.

"With everyone's help, we are opening habitat again for indigenous species to thrive and establishing connections back to the river – not just for salmon, but for all species."

– Debrah Mariott
Executive Director
Lower Columbia River
National Estuary
Program

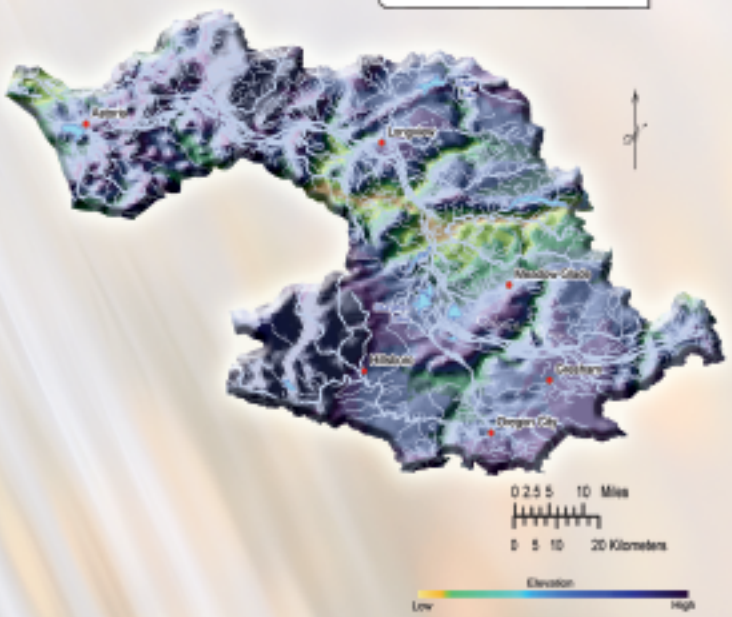
Grays and Seal Slough Project Area

Lower Columbia River

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

The Targeted Watershed Project builds on a broad coalition of regional support. Key partners in the project include:

- City of Portland, Bureau of Environmental Services
- Columbia River Estuary Study Task Force
- Columbia Land Trust
- METRO
- Oregon State Parks
- Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
- Scappoose Bay Watershed Council
- Wetlands Conservancy



Seal Slough

Interior Water Forest

Smith and Bybee Lakes

EPA'S TARGETED WATERSHEDS GRANT PROGRAM

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program is a new, competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit: http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/

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Targeted Watersheds