



# U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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## **Columbia River Sampling Begins This Month**

RICHLAND, Wash. — The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and its River Corridor contractor, Washington Closure Hanford, will conduct an investigation of Hanford Site contaminant releases to the Columbia River starting this month.

The river sampling is a part of the CERCLA process and supports DOE efforts to get final Records of Decision in place to complete work on the River Corridor.

The plan to complete the work was approved by DOE and its regulators – the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the State of Washington Department of Ecology. Preparation of the work plan involved a multi-year scoping and development process that included consultation with regulatory agencies, tribal nations, Hanford Natural Resource Trustees and other stakeholders.

“The Department of Energy takes its river protection responsibilities very seriously,” said Joe Franco, DOE Assistant Manager for the River Corridor. “This field sampling will help us ensure that we’re adequately protecting the river and supports our vision of cleaning up the River Corridor by 2015.”

Washington Closure hired Integral Consulting Inc. of Mercer Island to collect water, island soil and sediment samples from selected sites in the Columbia River from above Wanapum Dam downstream to McNary Dam and a limited area immediately above Bonneville Dam.

Washington Closure will hire a second subcontractor to collect fish samples from above Wanapum Dam downstream to McNary Dam. Samples collected above Priest Rapids and Wanapum Dam will characterize background conditions, while the samples collected downstream of Priest Rapids Dam will characterize Hanford releases.

The subcontractors will collect about 1,200 water, island soil, sediment and fish samples from the river through October of next year.

“Samples will be collected from the flowing river and the river channel, including from behind Wanapum, Priest Rapids, McNary and Bonneville dams,” said Jeff Lerch, manager of Assessment and Integration for Washington Closure.

“Samples also will be collected along shorelines, at irrigation outfalls and at some boat launches and riverfront parks. Soil samples from a number of islands throughout the Hanford Reach area will be collected as well,” he said.

The work plan outlines the requirements and the methods for collecting and analyzing the water, sediment, soil and fish samples.

The project team will focus on finding contaminants in the samples that may have originated from past Hanford operations. The Columbia River has been sampled extensively by DOE and other organizations over the years. The new sample results will be combined with the previously collected data to assess the current risks to people and the environment posed by Hanford Site-related contaminants.

The results will help determine if additional studies or cleanup measures are needed to reduce impacts to the Columbia River and its users. The results will also be used in documents that govern cleanup of Hanford’s Columbia River corridor.

One of DOE’s primary missions is to protect the Columbia River and its users. To do that, DOE established the River Corridor Closure Project in 2005 to remove existing sources of contamination, as well as anything that could be a future source of contamination.

Field sampling began on Oct. 15, 2008 and will be completed by September 2009.

Additional information regarding this effort is located at:  
[www.washingtonclosure.com/Projects/EndState/risk\\_library.html](http://www.washingtonclosure.com/Projects/EndState/risk_library.html)

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