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# THE HANFORD SITE

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**Media Contacts:**

Dieter Bohrmann, CPCCo, 509-987-3158, [Dieter\\_G\\_Bohrmann@rl.gov](mailto:Dieter_G_Bohrmann@rl.gov)  
Ed Dawson, 509-376-2422, [edward\\_m\\_dawson@orp.doe.gov](mailto:edward_m_dawson@orp.doe.gov)

## Hanford Treats More Than 2 Billion Gallons of Groundwater Seven Years in a Row

**RICHLAND, Wash.** – The U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) [Hanford Site](#) is closing in on treating 28 billion total gallons of groundwater to remove contamination since treatment began in the mid-1990s, significantly reducing risk to the Columbia River. That is a volume roughly equal to the amount of water that flows over Niagara Falls in 12 hours.

Operators will treat nearly 2.4 billion gallons of groundwater in fiscal 2021 alone, which ends Sept. 30. This is the seventh consecutive year Hanford has treated more than 2 billion gallons of groundwater to remove contamination caused by decades of producing plutonium for the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

“Protecting the Columbia River was our primary goal when groundwater cleanup began more than 25 years ago, and it continues to drive our treatment efforts today,” said Mike Cline, DOE project director for cleanup of soil and groundwater at Hanford.

DOE contractor Central Plateau Cleanup Company (CPCCo) operates six treatment systems to remove radioactive and chemical contaminants from groundwater along the Columbia River and on Hanford’s [Central Plateau](#), located near the center of the site. This is where massive chemical processing facilities separated plutonium from fission products from the 1940s through the 1980s, discharging billions of gallons of contaminated liquids into soil disposal sites.

“The efficiency and reliability of our treatment systems are key components of Hanford’s groundwater program success, but it’s the experience and professionalism of our operators and support teams that allow us to meet our treatment goals year after year,” said Mark Cherry, director of CPCCo soil and groundwater operations.

Hanford’s treatment systems have removed about 600 tons of contaminants over the life of the groundwater cleanup mission, including most of the chromium contamination along the Columbia River, as well as other contaminants of concern, such as carbon tetrachloride, uranium, and technetium-99 on the Central Plateau.

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*The Department of Energy (DOE) is engaged in one of the great public works of this century at the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Responsible for the federal government’s cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of producing plutonium through the 1980s, DOE is transforming the site back into a 24/7 operations mode to treat tank waste from the production era. The DOE Office of River Protection (ORP) is responsible for the safe and efficient retrieval, treatment and disposal of the 56 million gallons of chemical and radioactive waste stored in Hanford’s 177 underground tanks. The mission includes building and commissioning the world’s largest radioactive waste treatment plant, which will immobilize the legacy tank waste through vitrification. The DOE Richland Operations Office is responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on stabilizing and demolishing former plutonium production structures, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, treating contaminated groundwater, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future, with an emphasis on supporting the tank waste mission. Hanford Site work is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 11,000 personnel. Visit [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov) for more information about the Hanford Site.*

