

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Clark Fork-Pend Oreille

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Clark Fork-Pend Oreille Watershed of the Upper Columbia Basin drains an expansive 26,000 square miles in the majestic Northern Rockies, spanning western Montana, northern Idaho, and eastern Washington. Rainfall and snowmelt from the Rockies feed this powerful river system, which travels 320 miles from its headwaters in Butte, Montana into Idaho's largest freshwater lake, Lake Pend Oreille, and then into Washington's Pend Oreille River, which joins the Columbia River in Canada. Home to many blue ribbon trout fisheries, the watershed supports a diverse array of aquatic life and contains the last remaining stronghold for the threatened Bull Trout. In addition to its biological diversity, the watershed provides an important economic base for the people of the region.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Targeted Watersheds Grant will focus on restoring the high quality waters that have become imperiled by over a century of mining, logging and, in recent years, urbanization.

- Heavy metals and toxic wastes from the nation's largest concentration of Superfund sites in the basin's headwaters threaten fisheries, human health, and water quality.
- Excessive nutrients cause harmful algae blooms that choke tributaries in the upper and middle reaches of the Clark Fork River, and cause heavy growths of slime (diatom algae) in Idaho's Pend Oreille Lake.
- Rapid population growth and urbanization degrade riparian corridors and water quality.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Tri-State Water Quality Council will use EPA Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to carry out an ambitious plan. They will:

- Broaden participation in the Council's Voluntary Nutrient Reduction Program among the basin's dischargers.
- Develop grazing management plans to minimize erosion and protect streams.
- Implement stream restoration projects to stabilize stream banks, restore riparian habitat, and improve stream channel morphology.
- Establish a dairy cow manure management program to reduce phosphorus loadings.
- Complete a shoreline restoration project on Flathead Lake within the Flathead Reservation of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes.
- Conduct a study that will compare historical data with existing levels of algae and nutrients in Pend Oreille Lake.
- Expand the Council's three-state monitoring program to analyze trends in nutrient, algal, and metal pollutants at additional sites located near major tributaries and urbanizing areas.

"Much of the Tri-State Water Quality Council's work over the past decade has focused on point sources.

This watershed grant enabled us to expand our existing partnership even further – to tackle nonpoint sources of pollution in the basin's main tributaries."

– Diane Williams
Executive Director
Tri-State Water
Quality Council



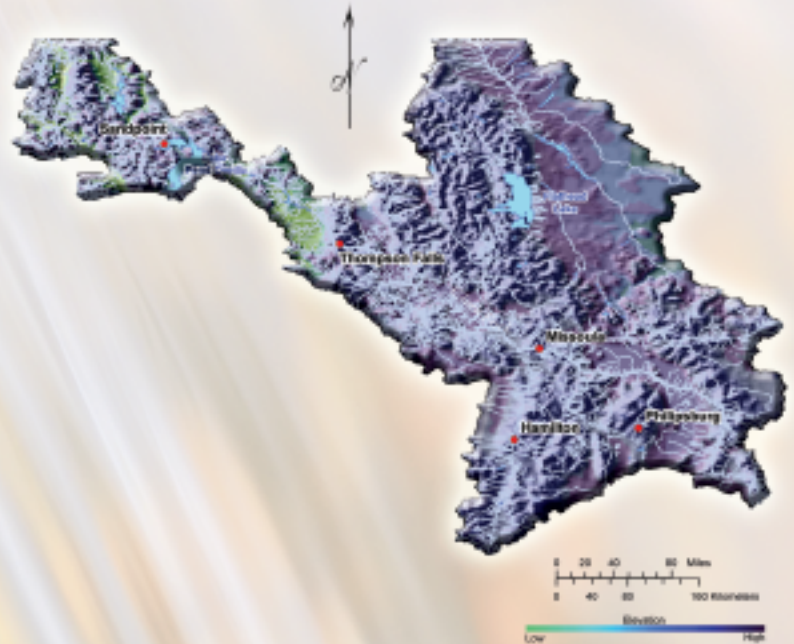
Members of the Tri-State Water Quality Council. Diane Williams, Executive Director, seated second from left.

A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Together, the 5 organizations listed below represent 9 federal agencies, 8 state agencies, 28 local governments and agencies, 3 tribes, 17 non-profit organizations, and thousands of citizens and landowners.

- Tri-State Water Quality Council
- Watershed Restoration Coalition of the Upper Clark Fork
- Blackfoot Challenge
- Bitterroot Watershed Partnership
- Flathead Basin Commission

Clark Fork-Pend Oreille



Taking water samples on the Clark Fork River.



Sunburst over Lake Pend Oreille.

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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