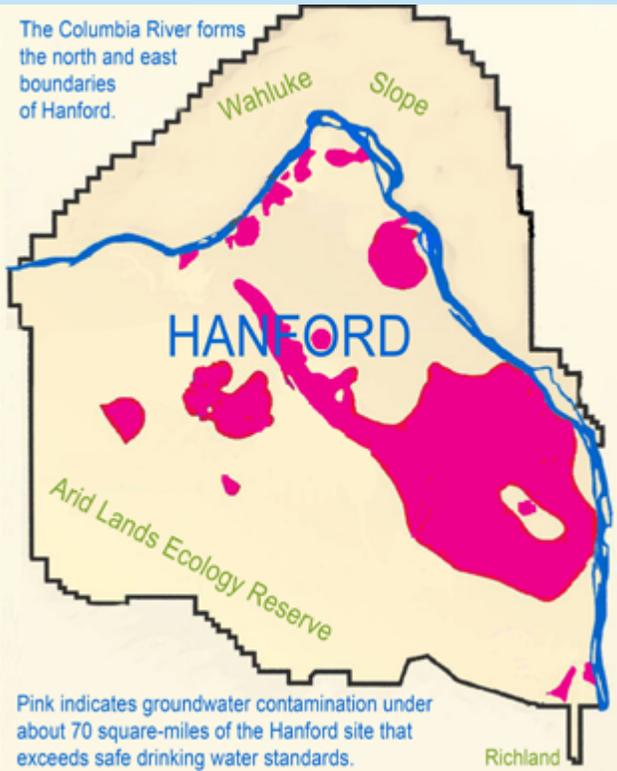


The Columbia River forms the north and east boundaries of Hanford.



protect

Hanford, the River & You

Do your part – Get Involved!

You are important to the Hanford cleanup process. Your voice is critical to ensure safe, continued, and timely cleanup of the Hanford Site.

- Learn more and get active with the online tools listed below.
- Attend public meetings.
- Comment on decision documents.
- Tell others! Hanford cleanup must be fully funded.
- Invite us to speak to your organization.

The longer the wait, the greater the threat

preserve



restore



Find Us Online

Website: ecology.wa.gov/hanford

Facebook.com/[EcologyWAHanford](https://www.facebook.com/EcologyWAHanford)

Twitter: [@ecyhanford](https://twitter.com/ecyhanford)

Mailing lists: <http://tiny.cc/qruqsy>

Questions? Email Hanford@ecy.wa.gov



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If you need this publication in an alternative format, call the Nuclear Waste Program at (509) 372-7950. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with speech disability call 877-833-6341.

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What is Hanford?

Hanford is a 586-square-mile, federally owned site north of the Tri-Cities in south-central Washington. The U.S. government created Hanford in 1942 during World War II for research operations and to manufacture the first atomic bomb. Hanford continued to produce nuclear material throughout the Cold War, with production ending in 1988.

Nuclear reactors were built along the Columbia River and processing facilities to produce plutonium for nuclear weapons were built in the center of the site, about 20 miles from the river. While considered critical to our nation's security, production activities left tons of chemical and nuclear waste in the buildings, soil, and groundwater. They also resulted in the production of billions of gallons of contaminated waste water. The most radioactive and chemically hazardous waste was stored in 177 large underground tanks.

Hanford is owned and operated by the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) and regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology). In May 1989, the three agencies signed the Tri-Party Agreement creating a legally enforceable schedule of Hanford cleanup commitments.

Today, Hanford is one of the largest environmental cleanup projects in the world. About 10% of the land area and 70 square miles of groundwater are unsafe for human use.

Ongoing activities involve soil and groundwater monitoring and cleanup, and demolition of old facilities. Chemically toxic and radioactive materials are gathered, removed to properly lined modern landfills, or sent for disposal in at the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant New Mexico. The waste in underground tanks will be sent to Hanford's Waste Treatment Plant.

Protecting the River

Protecting the Columbia River, which forms the north and east border of the Hanford Site, is Ecology's top priority. Areas contaminated with nuclear and chemical waste throughout Hanford must be cleaned up to prevent further groundwater and river pollution.

Soil and water across the Hanford Site, along the river shore, and in the river are continually monitored. Efforts are underway to treat contaminated groundwater and prevent polluted water from reaching the Columbia River.

“Washington state will not sit idly by while the United States government breaks its promises to the people of our state and puts our health and resources at risk.”

**Chris Gregoire,
Governor of Washington**

The Greatest Threat

56 million gallons of highly toxic radioactive waste is stored in aging and leak-prone tanks. At least 67 of the 149 single-shell tanks have leaked. The waste in the tanks poses a serious threat to groundwater and our river. Removing tank waste and placing it in permanent safe storage is crucial to our health, safety, economy and environment.

The Hanford Waste Treatment Plant will vitrify (immobilize in glass) waste removed from the underground storage tanks. The waste will remain radioactive and toxic, but can be safely stored and monitored without causing further soil and groundwater contamination.

Construction of the Waste Treatment Plant is two-thirds complete, but federal budget cuts, and ongoing safety concerns have caused unacceptable delays. These issues must be resolved to protect future generations and the environment from the threat posed by tank waste. *The longer the wait, the greater the threat.*

Ecology's Nuclear Waste Program is responsible for the safe cleanup of the Hanford Site to protect human health and the environment.