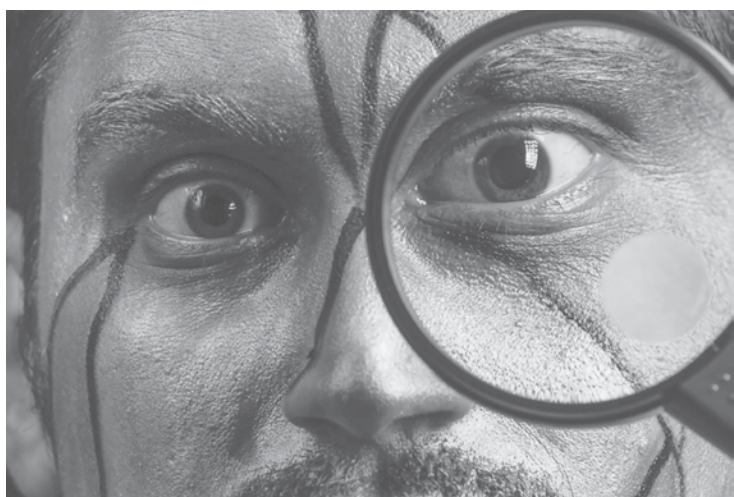


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PHOTO BY DANNY PETERSON/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Citizen advocates representing the Portland Harbor Community Coalition apply pressure to make sure the EPA's Superfund Site cleanup plans to remove toxins in the Willamette River are carried out and benefit the community. Pictured (from left) are coalition members Rahsaan Muhammad, Jackie Calder, Cassie Cohen, Donovan Smith and Bob Sallinger.

# River Keepers

## Citizen activists keep watch on EPA cleanup plans

BY DANNY PETERSON  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Community advocates are raising alarms to how the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency plans to evaluate future cleanup work as plans move ahead to isolate and remove decades of toxic pollutants from the Willamette River.

A sampling plan for the Portland Harbor Superfund site was supposed to track the progress of the cleanup by determining the levels of toxins and contaminants that continue to pass through the

food chain from fish and wildlife, determining impacts from the cleanup work.

The EPA is moving to enforce the industries, governmental agencies and private utilities responsible for the pollution to pay for the cleanup, identified along 11 miles of waterway, from the Broadway Bridge, downtown, to nearly the river's confluence with the Columbia River. The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality also shoulders responsibility for the cleanup efforts. The

first phase of work is expected to take 13 years, with a total cleanup timeline that could take 50 years or more, and estimated to cost about \$1 billion, Kevin Parrett, one of DEQ's clean-up plan managers, told the Portland Observer.

In the Willamette's current state, fish and wildlife can pick up contaminants from pollutants in the water and from the land, and public health department officials recommend that people limit consumption of resident fish, especially young children, women who are pregnant or plan to become pregnant in the future, and immune-deficient people.

A rough draft sampling plan released last June would have included sampling resident fish like carp and small mouth bass and wildlife like crayfish and the eggs from fish-eating osprey birds, as well as migratory fish like salmon and sturgeon.

That was a robust and comprehensive plan compared to a new sampling plan released by the EPA in December which is to only sample small mouth bass.

"Bottom line is we think that

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