

Managing the Columbia Basin for Sustainable Economy, Society, Environment

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The Columbia River Basin (CRB) is a vast region of the Pacific Northwest covering parts of the United States, Canada and Tribal lands. As the Columbia River winds its way from Canada into the US, the river passes through numerous multi-purpose reservoirs and hydroelectric generation facilities, providing energy for much of the region, while at the same time providing water supply and flood control for agriculture, industrial, urban and rural systems. The river basin also provides bountiful recreational opportunities, aesthetic and spiritual value and contains critical habitat for fish and wildlife. In the first half of the class, you will learn about the CRB's many features through film, recorded interviews and lecture and will also learn about the concepts of sustainability and ecosystem services. In addition, we will discuss how climate, population, land use and global economic changes could affect the CRB. In the second half of the class you will have the opportunity to assume the role of a key CRB decision maker or influencer and engage your colleagues in a fun (and sometimes rollicking) exercise of participatory democracy. Your instructor/facilitator, Thomas Fontaine, Ph.D., Director of EPA's Western Ecology Division in Corvallis, will supply information about who your character is and what their key goals are. The rest is up to you!