

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

~ Discussion Draft (September 8, 2011)

WORK GROUP 1

1. Introduction

The 2011 Washington NPDES wastewater discharge permits issued by the Department of Ecology for facilities discharging into the Spokane River include the creation of a Regional Toxics Task Force (Task Force). These permits state that the Task Force membership should include the NPDES permittees in the Spokane River basin, conservation and environmental interests, the Spokane Tribe, Spokane Regional Health District, Ecology, and other appropriate interests. It is anticipated that similar permit requirements will be in the permits issued to the NPDES permittees in Idaho by the Environmental Protection Agency. The goal of the Task Force will be to develop a comprehensive plan to bring the Spokane River into compliance with applicable water quality standards for PCBs.

To accomplish that goal it is anticipated that the Task Force functions will include:

- (1) Identify data gaps and collect necessary data on PCBs and other toxics on the 2008 year 303(d) list for the Spokane River.
- (2) Further analyze the existing and future data to better characterize the amounts, sources, and locations of PCBs and other toxics on the 2008 year 303(d) list for the Spokane River.
- (3) Prepare recommendations for controlling and reducing the sources of listed toxics in the Spokane River.

(4) Review proposed Toxic Management Plans, Source Management Plans, BMPs, and data to be used to develop performance-based limits.

(5) Monitor and assess the effectiveness of toxic reduction measures.

(6) Identify a mutually agreeable entity to serve as the clearinghouse for data, reports, minutes, and other information gathered or developed by the Task Force and its members. This information shall be made publicly available by means of a website and other appropriate means.

To accomplish these functions the Task Force may provide for an independent community technical advisor(s) funded by the permittees, who shall assist in review of data, studies, and control measures, as well as assist in providing technical education information to the public.

The permits also state that if Ecology determines the Task Force is failing to make measurable progress toward meeting applicable water quality criteria for PCBs, Ecology would be obligated to proceed with development of a TMDL in the Spokane River for PCBs or determine an alternative to ensure water quality standards are met.

The permits require 1) the permittees to participate in a cooperative effort to create a Regional Toxics Task Force and participate in the functions of the Task Force, and 2) that by November 30, 2011, the Task Force shall provide Ecology with the details of the organizational structure, specific goals, funding and the governing documents of the Task Force.

The following sections present the Task Force concept and include:

Section 2. Task Force vision statement for 2012 through 2016.

Section 3. Potential Task Force members and their respective roles and responsibilities.

Section 4. Specific Task Force goals / achievements relating to NPDES permit compliance.

Section 5. Milestones and schedule relating to Task Force formation.

Section 6. Task Force operating guidelines.

2. Task Force Vision Statement for 2012 through 2016

Significant efforts, collaboration and funding by many organizations will be required to identify and reduce the sources of toxics to the Spokane River. The Task Force will play a prominent role in this effort. Over the first five years, from 2012 through 2016, the Task Force vision is:

“The Regional Toxics Task Force will work collaboratively to characterize the sources of toxics in the Spokane River and identify and implement appropriate actions needed to make measurable progress towards meeting applicable water quality standards for the State of Washington, State of Idaho, and The Spokane Tribe of Indians and in the interests of public and environmental health.”

Accomplishing this vision will involve, among other things, technical studies, monitoring, education, and recommendations for specific actions that will reduce toxics in the Spokane River. . The Task Force will:

- Provide a forum for the scientific and legal review and discussion of Spokane River toxics issues.
Participate in public education and engagement to advance the understanding of Spokane River toxics issues.
- Consider the results of past and future studies, including those conducted by individual dischargers within their operations and/or service areas.
- Consider the technical studies needed to understand the sources of toxics and advance region-wide understanding of toxics in the Spokane River.
- Provide specific recommendations for the development of a Spokane River toxics reduction plan.

4. Specific Task Force Goals

The specific goals / achievements for the Task Force during the 2011 to 2016 permit cycle following the

Department of Ecology's acceptance of the November 30, 2011 submittal required from the permittees are:

1. Within X months of Ecology's final approval initial Task Force funding will be confirmed. .
2. Within X months of Ecology' final approval, identify and contract appropriate staffing as identified in section 6.
3. Within X months of Ecology's final approval , develop a 2012 through 2016 Task Force work plan that addresses:
 - Approach for analysis of existing data on PCB and other toxics on the 2008 year 303(d) list to (1) understand what is known, (2) identify data gaps, and (3) determine where additional characterization of amounts, sources and locations is needed.
 - Development and implementation of a Monitoring Plan for the Spokane River that, (1) establishes the baseline conditions for PCBs and the other identified toxics on the 2008 year 303(d) list, (2) monitors and assesses the effectiveness of toxic reduction measures, and (3) can be adapted to take into account newly generated data and sampling techniques.

- Identification or establishment of a publicly accessible clearinghouse for storing data, reports, Task Force meeting minutes or summaries, and other information gathered or developed by the Task Force and its members.
 - Review of proposed Toxic Management Plans, Source Management Plans, and BMPs.
 - Approach for preparing recommendations to control and reduce point and nonpoint sources of PCBs and other toxics on the 2008 year 303(d) list to the Spokane River.
 - Public education needs and approach, including pollution prevention and public and environmental health determinations
 - Acquisition of a technical consultant for assistance in Task Force review of technical documents and data.
4. By June 30, 2016, complete 2012 through 2016 Task Force work plan elements.