

Background Information

Toxics Task Force

The Spokane River Regional Tasks Task Force (Task Force) was formed for the purpose of developing a Comprehensive Plan for achieving the water quality standards in the Spokane River for PCB. Task Force participants include NPDES permit holders, conservation groups, state and federal agencies, tribes, and other interested parties. Task Force formation began in late 2011.

Spokane River

The Spokane River begins in northern Idaho at the outlet of Lake Coeur d'Alene and flows west 112 miles to the Columbia River. The watershed encompasses over 6,000 square miles in Idaho Washington and Idaho as well as the Spokane Indian Reservation. The river flows through the cities of Coeur d'Alene and Post Falls in Idaho as well as the cities of Liberty Lake, Spokane Valley, and Spokane in Washington. There are seven dams along the river. There are six municipalities (three in Idaho and three in Washington) that hold NPDES Permits as well as two industrial facilities.

The Spokane River flow is seasonally highly variable due to spring snowpack melt. This leads to minimal areas of sediment being present in the river due to the significant flow increase from the spring snowpack melt. There is also significant interchange between the sole source aquifer and the river as evidenced by losing and gaining reaches in the river.

Water Quality Standards for PCB

Fifteen waterbody segments of the Spokane River are on the 2008 303(d) list for not meeting Washington State's human health water quality criterion for PCB. In addition to Washington State criterion, federal and tribal criteria apply. The tribal criterion is the most restrictive at 3.37 picograms/liter as it applies in the most downstream portion of the river.

Current Understanding of PCB Sources

The current understanding of PCB source loadings is summarized below.

- Loading at Idaho/Washington State Line – 477 mg/day
- Municipal Treatment Plants in Washington – 197 mg/day
- Industrial Facilities in Washington – 110 mg/day
- City of Spokane Stormwater – 690 mg/day
- Tributaries (Little Spokane River) – 97 mg/day
- Unidentified – 2,093 mg/day

Current Technical Effort

In 2013, the Task Force hired LimnoTech as its technical consultant to assist with a multi-phased effort that would lead to the development of a Comprehensive Plan. The main deliverable from the first phase of this work is a monitoring plan for PCB.

Resource Materials

The following resource materials are provided:

Spokane River PCB Source Assessment 2003-2007, Department of Ecology
Publication No. 11-03-013 (April 2011)

The Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer Atlas 2009 Update, City of
Spokane, Washington

LimnoTech Technical Memorandums to Task Force