

GROSS Grant Information – July 21, 2015 Concept Update

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Project statement:

Develop and implement a Strategic Public Education and Awareness Campaign focused on providing information on the water quality challenges facing the Spokane River and the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer and what citizens and businesses can do to make a difference. This project will support the NPDES implementation of the three NPDES jurisdictions—City of Spokane, Spokane County, and the City of Spokane Valley—and will directly benefit the stormwater programs for these permittees.

Goals:

- To build public awareness of water quality concern in the Spokane River, the Aquifer and other connected lakes and rivers, focusing on the influence of stormwater on water quality.
- To provide the public with actions that they can take to keep pollutants out of stormwater runoff and facilities, improving the water quality of the river, aquifer, and lakes.
- To inform the public of what's being done to improve the health of the Spokane River and Aquifer, specifically addressing toxics including PCBs, suspended solids, nutrients like phosphorus, hydrocarbons, and metals.
- To create a educational outreach campaign similar to the "Puget Sound Starts Here" campaign with a consistent message, color scheme, and graphics

Primary Target Audiences:

- City of Spokane residents.
- All residents of Spokane County, including all those in incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County.
- Residents in the rest of the Spokane River watershed, including Lincoln and Stevens counties, Washington, and Kootenai County, Idaho.
- Businesses in the Spokane River watershed.
- Local media.

Partners:

The primary grant partners will be the Eastern Washington Phase 2 Permittees—the City of Spokane, Spokane County, and the City of Spokane Valley. Additional partners include the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force and the University of Idaho. The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force includes representatives from Spokane County, the City of Spokane, the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District, Inland Empire Paper Co., Kaiser Aluminum, Spokane Regional Health District, Washington State Department of Health, the Spokane Riverkeeper (a program of the Center for Justice), the Lands Council, and the Lake Spokane Association. The Washington State Department of Ecology, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Spokane Tribe, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, and Avista have advisory roles. Most of these entities also serve as members on numerous surface and

aquifer water quality organizations, such as the Idaho Washington Aquifer Collaborative and the newly formed Regional Water Quality Public Education Work Group.

Project description:

This project is a high-level public education and awareness campaign that will build understanding and spur action by the residents and businesses within the entire Spokane River watershed. The campaign's focus will be to provide information on the water quality challenges facing the Spokane River and the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer and what we all can do to make a difference.

The campaign will stress the key role of stormwater in bringing pollutants into the river, ground, and lakes and how careful housekeeping measures (source control) by all can make a big difference in water quality. The pollutants of particular concern include toxics, metals, suspended solids, hydrocarbons, and nutrients such as phosphorus.

The campaign will support the work already being done by the City of Spokane, Spokane County and the City of Spokane Valley, the members of the Spokane Regional Toxics Task Force, the Department of Ecology, with its Urban Waters Initiative and Local Source Control programs, and other numerous regional entities providing water quality public education.

The campaign will help meet a variety of requirements related to public outreach and education, and most importantly, it will spur action by the hundreds of thousands of citizens who live near the Spokane River and the aquifer.

The campaign will use a multi-media approach to reach people where they already get their information. Spokane's broadcast and print media outlets have a large reach and can get the message out throughout our targeted region. And social media and other on-line resources will add to those mass marketing outlets.

The partners envision a paid media strategy anchored by TV (the most effective mass awareness medium), with digital and print playing a strong supporting role. The media buy will be designed for maximum reach, based on achieving highest television and gross rating points and reaching across the region for maximum results. The campaign would strive to get 1:1 Public Service Announcement (PSA) air time match from local broadcast stations and to produce 15-second and 30-second spots to maximize the budget and get greater reach and frequency.

The mass marketing/advertising campaign will be complemented by the creation of a "Virtual Stormwater Trail" that details recent stormwater projects in and around Spokane. This would be combined with physical signage at trail highlighted areas, in conjunction with a University of Idaho signage project.

Additionally, the members of the Toxics Task Force will supplement the advertising materials with more detailed messages and information as the campaign progresses. Other partners in the watershed will also be encouraged to use these advertising materials and tailor them to their own specific messages to

keep stormwater clean. The goal of this additional outreach is to invite citizens to learn more and become more active, and will provide residents with information that they can use and share with neighbors, coworkers, and friends.

This work will include news releases, social media posts, blog posts, newsletters, utility bill inserts, and other communication efforts by individual partners. The graphics and related elements will be shared with all regional entities to brand these additional stormwater, river health, and aquifer protection projects and messages with the overall look of the campaign. These messages could include fish consumption advisory information by the Spokane Regional Health District, information on construction projects to manage stormwater or improve water quality, and more.

Timeline/Schedule:

Date	Major Tasks
August 31, 2015	Receive notice of final list of funding from Department of Ecology
October 2015	Finalize RFP for marketing and advertising agencies to provide proposals for the public education and awareness campaign.
November 2015	Seek proposals in response to the RFP.
December 2015	Evaluate proposals, interview top proposers, select vendor, and finalize contract.
January 2016	Review existing studies, surveys, and other materials and fill in with needed research to develop strategic direction. Develop a campaign implementation strategy and performance tracking measures.
February 2016	Prepare campaign graphics and other deliverables, including radio, TV, social media, web, billboard, and print advertising, as needed according to the implementation strategy.
March-May 2017	Develop Virtual Stormwater Trail, a web tool that highlights the work that's been done to reduce stormwater flows and pollution going to the river and aquifer. Include physical signage to be installed at stormwater locations highlighted in the virtual trail.
March 2016 – February 2017	Run advertising. Install signage. Launch Virtual Stormwater Trail.
March 2016 – February 2017	Supplement the advertising campaign with blog posts, news releases, social media posts, videos, and longer-form informational pieces to provide more information on what the City of Spokane, Spokane County, the City of Spokane Valley and the members of the Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force are doing to address stormwater runoff and other sources of pollutants—including PCBs, nutrients, and heavy metals—to the river and aquifer. Encourage neighboring jurisdictions to do the same.
June 2016	Develop a package of base materials to share with members of the Toxics Task Force and other regional jurisdictions that can be tailored to their specific needs.
Throughout with final report completed after the completion of the	Track results of campaign and develop a final report on the campaign and its reach. (Final report due March 31, 2016)

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Measurable outcomes:

Reach of advertising campaign, including audience numbers and demographics, numbers of impressions, and reach on social media and on-line components.

Use of the materials by campaign partners for their own messages and educational information.

To measure changed impressions and understanding, this proposal anticipates collaborating with the Spokane River Forum the next time they update their water quality public opinion survey.

Background:

The Spokane River begins at Lake Coeur d’Alene, flows through two states, several Washington counties, and the sovereign lands of the Spokane Tribe. It empties into the Columbia River. The Spokane River basin and the Columbia River basin represent two of the four priority water basins listed on the Department of Ecology’s web site.

Meanwhile, the Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer provides safe, clean drinking water for more than 500,000 people in Spokane County and Kootenai County. The aquifer is located in very coarse soils with no confining layers and as a result is very susceptible to pollutants infiltrating into the ground from stormwater runoff.

Studies have widely established that the Spokane River and the Aquifer are closely connected and exchange water. There are distinct locations where the Spokane River loses water to the aquifer, and other areas where the river gains water from the aquifer.

Water Quality

Stormwater is a major contributor of pollution to the Spokane River and the aquifer. Stormwater carries pollutants, including PCBs, flame retardants (PDBEs), dioxins/furans, suspended solids, hydrocarbons, heavy metals, copper, zinc, and nutrients such as phosphorus. The influence of stormwater also causes combined sewers within the City of Spokane to overflow at times, sending raw sewage to the river.

Water quality impairments to the Spokane River have been recorded for over 14 years. The Spokane River has Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and Dissolved Metals. The Water Quality Improvement Report (Publication No. 07-10-073) for Spokane River and Lake Spokane Dissolved Oxygen Total Maximum Daily Load by David J. Moore, Water Quality Program and James Ross, Environmental Assessment Program, was revised in February 2010. Stormwater is allocated a flow rate and a waste-load in the Water Quality Improvement Report for total phosphorus, ammonia, and CBOD.

Several segments of the Spokane River violate water quality standards for the presence of PCBs and have been placed on the state Water Quality Assessments (303(d)) list of impaired water bodies. In 2007, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) published the “Spokane River PCB TMDL Stormwater Loading Analysis” (Parsons, 2007). In 2011, Ecology published the “Spokane River PCB Source Assessment, 2003-2007,” originally as a draft PCB Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) (Ecology, 2011).

The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force was officially formed in early 2012 in response to NPDES permit requirements. The goal of the Task Force is to develop a comprehensive plan to bring the Spokane River into compliance with water quality standards for PCBs and dioxins, which are toxics on the 2008 Category 5 303(d) list. The City of Spokane is a Task Force member, addressing both wastewater and stormwater discharges. Stormwater has been identified as one of the known sources of PCB contamination to the Spokane River.

Additionally, based on information collected through Toxics Task Force efforts, PCBs have been identified in the aquifer and are in connection with the river.

Public Opinion and Knowledge

The City of Spokane and neighboring jurisdictions in the region are investing hundreds of millions of dollars of public money in projects to improve the water quality in the Spokane River and reduce the amount of stormwater pollution reaching the river. Knowledge among area citizens of these efforts and why they are important is limited, as is the knowledge of the pollutants or sources of pollutants being addressed, according to a survey conducted by the Spokane River Forum in May and June 2015.

While respondents indicate that they are aware of pollution/water quality being a concern, only about 3 percent were able to cite stormwater, PCBs, metals, or phosphorus as a specific issue when unaided in their response. When aided, respondents ranked stormwater—and essentially all other pollutants asked about—as “somewhat” of a problem, indicating a knowledge gap. And, finally, some 78 percent of respondents either said nothing is being done to clean up the river or that they were unaware of the efforts.

Nonetheless, some 75 percent of respondents reported visiting the river, with the average respondent reporting visiting the river more than 33 times in a typical year. That’s 16 percent higher than what citizens reported in a similar survey in 2009.

Citizens are interested in learning more. And four in five respondents (82 percent) reported that they are somewhat or very interested in learning more about the challenges facing the Spokane River.

In addition, they seem willing to take steps to protect the river, with 89 percent saying that we owe it to future generations to protect the Spokane River and 79 percent saying the river is an important part of the regional economy. They agreed that individual households could make a difference and even

generally supported banning products that are pollution sources for the river. They believe that delaying actions only will increase costs.

Education requirements

The City of Spokane and other jurisdictions and industry along the Spokane River have specific requirements to provide education on stormwater and its water quality impacts.

The City of Spokane, Spokane County, and City of Spokane Valley are covered by the Eastern Washington Phase II Municipal Stormwater Permit. The permit requires distribution of educational materials and public outreach about the impacts of stormwater discharges to water bodies and steps the public can take to reduce pollutants in stormwater. The permit specifies a multi-media approach and requires outreach to certain audiences, including the general public, businesses, and construction and development professionals including engineers, contractors, and land use planners.

Additionally, the Members of the Toxics Task Force are committed under measurable progress requirements to provide public education and outreach that focuses on pollution prevention and dissemination of public and environmental health determinations. The Task Force's Vision Statement for 2012 through 2016 says its members will "participate in public education and engagement to advance the understanding of Spokane toxics issues."