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**Spokane River Regional Toxics Trask Force Completes and Releases Comprehensive Plan to address PCB Pollution in the Spokane River**

Spokane, WA – The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF) is a diverse body of stakeholders that represent dischargers, environmental groups, and agencies who are involved in cleaning up toxic Poly Chlorinated Biphenyl (PCB) pollution in the Spokane River. The SRRTTF was convened in 2012 to address PCB issues in the Spokane River. This week, the SRRTTF released a finalized, Comprehensive Plan (Plan) that identified actions that, if implemented, would remove PCBs in the Spokane River.

The Plan lays out the findings of several years of studies that have established sources of PCBs, the extent of PCB pollution in various sections of the River, and have established the pathways that PCBs travel as they enter the river. The Plan goes on to outline concrete actions and practices that need to be taken in order to reduce PCBs in the River. Because PCB pollution has multiple sources and pathways to the River, the actions to control them are diverse and complex. For example, measures to intercept polluted stormwater, such as green building design (Low Impact Development (LID)) are outlined in the plan. State of the Art filtration is recommended for industrial and municipal dischargers to filter PCBs out of their waste water discharges. Education efforts are planned to help the public understand the scope of PCB pollution and reduction actions.

Over the next several years, members of the SRRTTF will begin to implement actions in the Plan and evaluate the success of those actions. It is expected that these actions will result in measurable progress in cleaning up PCBs in the Spokane River.

PCBs are a toxin produced for industrial and domestic use by Monsanto between the late 1930s until they were largely banned as an environmental and human health hazard in 1979. They were used in many industrial and domestic applications including; paints, caulks, garden hoses, transformer oils and industrial lubricants. PCBs are still allowed in products where they are inadvertently produced, such as yellow pigments in paper products, road paints and hydro-seed that is sprayed on landscaping projects.

Because they resist breaking down in the environment, both the older PCBs and the newer inadvertent PCBs still persistin soils, surface water, and groundwater. PCBs do not attach to water but they readily attach to lipids (fats) and carbon. The result is that they accumulate in aquatic organisms and magnify in concentration as they go higher up the food chain. This means that apex consumers such as Osprey or humans that consume fish or other aquatic organisms can bio-accumulate large concentrations of PCBs over time resulting in magnified health risks. .

As a result Washington Dept of Health (link) has had fish consumption advisories for many years and for most species in the Spokane River. These fish advisories recommend the amounts and frequencies that fish should be eaten in the watershed