# Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

 Quarterly Report (10/1/16 – 12/31/16)

**Project Staff:** Chris Page, Facilitator; Kara Whitman, Project Coordinator; Michael Kern, Strategic Advisor; Cheryl Rajcich, Operations Manager

**Project Purpose:** The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF) is a collaborative group of governmental agencies, private industries, environmental organizations, and interested parties attempting an innovative approach to the reduction of PCBs within the Spokane River.

**Q18 Meeting Schedule:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | October |  | November |  | December |
| **Task Force Meetings** | **2016** |  **TT** | **EO** | **TF** |  | **TT** | **TF** |  | **TT/TF** | **EO** |
| **12** | **12** | **26** |  | **2** | **16** |  | **7** | **7** |
| **Chris Page, Facilitator** | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 |  |
| **Kara Whitman, Coordinator** | 1 | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |  | 1 | 1 |

*TT: Technical Track Work Group*

*TF: Task Force*

*EO: Education and Outreach Work Group*

**Project highlights:**

* **Meetings:** Facilitator Chris Page developed meeting agendas for five meetings including two Task Force (TF) meetings and two Technical Track Work Group (TTWG) meetings, and one combined TTWG and TF meeting. Chris facilitated the five meetings. Kara Whitman developed the agendas for and facilitated two meetings of the Education and Outreach Work Group (EO). Kara Whitman drafted and distributed announcements, materials, and summaries for each meeting and for general Task Force communications. Kara also helped manage communications at the meetings including conference phones, presentations, and the use of webinars.
* **Website Management:** Kara managed and updated the web page on behalf of the Task Force for all meetings facilitated by the Ruckelshaus Center. This included posting meeting announcements, materials and supporting documents, and meeting summaries. Kara regularly updated the Comprehensive Plan page on the website that houses all information related to the development of the Comprehensive Plan, including: scope and timeline, draft and final versions of memos, comments and revisions on memos, and more.
* **Technical Advisor:** The Task Force worked with the Technical Advisor (LimnoTech) and other technical staff (Department of Ecology Environmental Assessment Program staff, representatives from Task Force entities, and TTWG Chair Bud Leber) to assist in Task Force understanding of technical issues, to ensure adequate vetting of presentations and reports before meetings, and to enable the TTWG to discuss and recommend next steps on technical issues to the full SRRTTF for decisions and actions.
* **SRRTTF Comprehensive Plan:** The Center facilitated communication, transparency, and document access for draft chapters of the Comprehensive Plan. This included developing and (continuously) updating a Comprehensive Planning page on the Task Force website, and gathering of and distributing new drafts, comments, and revisions of the Comprehensive Plan memos and appendices. Chris Page also helped facilitate compromises regarding disagreements on specific content in the Comprehensive Plan. The incredible hard work of the Task Force accompanied by the facilitation of the Center led to the completion and approval by all voting members of the Task Force, of the Final “*2016 Comprehensive Plan to Reduce Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) in the Spokane River”*.
* **Information Access:** The Center facilitated open communication with both Ecology and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) around multiple complex, controversial rulemaking processes and decisions. (Policy 1-11, WA NPDES permits, Human Health Criteria and Water Quality Standards, Chemicals of High Concern to Children, etc.)
* **Outreach:** The Center worked to identify opportunities for university research and expertise to inform outreach and public education and the process of reducing PCBs in the River. The Ruckelshaus Center continued to work with undergraduate student Brenden Campbell. Brenden who is working with the Spokane Regional Toxics Task Force on Education and Outreach as part of his Ignite grant program. The Ignite program provides funding for undergraduate students to engage with faculty in research projects. The Center also continued to facilitate the Task Force Education and Outreach workgroup, which has begun to address outreach actions in the final Comprehensive Plan.
* **Other Communication:** The center facilitated the process of the Task Force the development and distribution of a comment letter to the Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program regarding the rulemaking process on the Chemicals of High Concern to Children (CHCC) update of the Children’s Safe Products Act Reporting Rule (CSPA Reporting rule) (WAC 173-334), and also distributed the letter to the EPA and State legislators regarding the Toxic Substances Control Act(TSCA) allowances for PCBs in light of the new Washington Water Quality Standards.

**Upcoming Center work with Task Force members and Work Groups:**

* The Center will facilitate and coordinate meetings of the Task Force and its work groups, as well as to identify opportunities for university research and expertise to inform outreach and public education and the process of reducing toxins in the River, at least through June 30, 2017.
* The Task Force and work groups will continue to meet on a monthly basis.
* The Task Force will continue to work with the Technical Consultant on completing assigned Tasks as well as on any future work that the Task Force will complete in the implementation phase of the Comprehensive Plan.
* The Center will continue to provide support for Task Force ad-hoc work groups as they work to develop work plans (education and outreach, database management, fish and hatcheries, TSCA, etc.) as needed.
* The Center will facilitate the Task Force’s process of considering the addition of new members along with agreement on any further needed changes to the group’s Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) if that becomes necessary. The Center would also assist in inviting new parties as identified by the Task Force after MOA legal review.
* The Center will continue to assist the Task Force as it documents activities and develops and implements a communication strategy.

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