Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

Suggested Protocols for Work Groups

Roles & Responsibilities

The Task Force regularly convenes small (3-10 person) work groups to oversee the execution of PCB control action projects / implement the Comprehensive Plan, and to develop and recommend plans or approaches on specific activities as directed by the Task Force. Work groups will take on a larger role as the Task Force implements its Comprehensive Plan to identify and reduce sources of PCBs to the Spokane River. For this reason, the Task Force developed these protocols to guide work group operations.

Operational Overview

From time to time, the Task Force may determine a work group is appropriate to carry out a specific activity. At a high level, the scope of the activity will be defined by the Task Force. In forming the work group, the Task Force will identify a leader for the work group and request that members of the Task Force make their or their entity's commitment to participate in the work group known. (Not joining the work group at its formation does not prohibit a member or entity representative from joining later.) Once formed, a work group will develop a charter and scope of work and present it to the Task Force for approval. When consultant or other services are required, the leader of the work group will, after approval by the Task Force, work with ACE directly or through the Task Force's projects coordinator to develop the appropriate documents needed to issue a contract to a third party for carrying out the scope of work for the activity and assisting with any necessary follow-up. During the execution of the activity, the work group leader will provide routine updates on the status of work to the Task Force, including any requests for additional direction from or interim decisions by the Task Force. Any work products (i.e. – reports or materials) produced by the work group will be presented to the Task Force for final review and acceptance. Once the work product has been accepted by the Task Force, the work of the work group is deemed completed.

Work Group Functionality

It is left to the discretion of each work group as to how best to accomplish their specific activity. A combination of approaches such as meetings, conference calls, email communication, or other means may be utilized over the course of the operation of the work group as it completes its specific activity in a manner that an individual work groups deem is most efficient/effective for them.

Scope of Work

The scope of work in the work groups will be assigned by the Task Force.

Decision-Making

Work groups do not make final decisions on behalf of the Task Force projects, actions, or policies. Instead, on whatever the task or topic, the workgroup evaluates options, identifies risks associated with each option, and presents the options along with the risks to the SRRTTF for a decision / makes suggestions or recommendations to the full SRRTTF for consideration and potential adoption. Just as

the Task Force makes decisions using consensus, it encourages work groups to try and reach agreement among all participants as it undertakes its activities. If consensus within the work group cannot be reached, the work group leader will bring the issue to the Task Force during an update for resolution.

Leadership, Meetings and Notices

Each work group should have a chair or leader to take responsibility for **the group's operations,** including maintaining a roster of interested/participating members**. Work group leaders will also provide updates on relevant information to the Task Force at meetings.**

Work groups meet as often and as many times as each group determines necessary to accomplish its agreed-on charge. Some work groups may opt to set a regularly monthly meeting date; others may set meetings as schedules allow (using electronic scheduling, or verbally setting any upcoming meeting(s) at the end of the prior one). A work group or its leader(s) may adjust the frequency or schedule of meetings; all members must be notified of any change in the meeting schedule or if additional meetings are implemented. Work groups can meet in person, by phone, or via videoconference technology—or using a combination of these.

NOTE: to date, some groups have operated primarily via email, overseeing the implementation of projects; others have formalized to the point of scheduling and publicizing meetings, developing and distributing agendas and supporting materials, making sure a work group member takes meeting notes if requested by the Task Force, and posting meeting notes and other materials on the SRRTTF website. The Task Force can allow this range of structure and documentation, or institute blanket protocols.

Facilitation planning group suggests that the basic, key pieces of this, with questions, are:
- *There needs to be a WG lead. Should s/he make sure the full TF knows? Or communicate directly to work group members, and they can tell whomever?*
- *There should be documentation. Do you want to go as far as asking for notes for each meeting for each group? For certain groups as TF decides? Or let leader decide how to document deliberations and progress, to support the updates/reports to the Task Force??*

Work Groups will strive to meet the following:
- All meetings open to the public.
- Once meeting notes are finalized, they will be made available on the Task Force website.

Communications

The following Task Force protocols extend to work groups as well:
- To promote trust and respect, in our work together we agree to:
  - Respect each other in and outside of meetings.
  - Operate in good faith.
  - No backroom deals.
  - Respect the personal integrity and values of participants and organizations.
  - All participants in the negotiation bring with them the legitimate purposes and goals of their organizations. All parties recognize the legitimacy of the goals of others and assume

that their goals will also be respected. These negotiations will try to maximize all the goals of all the parties, as far as possible.

- o Honor agreements; commitments will not be made lightly and will be kept.
- o Regard disagreements as "problems to be solved," rather than as "battles to be won."
- To enhance open and honest dialogue, we will:
  - o Participate in discussions and will encourage each other to "explore without committing." This frees up the group to explore potential solutions without viewing those explorations as formal proposals.
  - o State interests, problems, and opportunities, not positions – positive candor is an effective tool.
  - o Air problems, disagreements, and critical information during meetings to avoid surprises.
  - o Commit to search for opportunities and alternatives. Group creativity can often determine the best solution.
  - o Substantiate rumors at the meeting before accepting them as fact.
  - o Do not spend the time of the group grinding your own ax.
- To communicate clearly in specific discussions, we agree to:
  - o Disclose interest.
  - o Listen fully to understand.
  - o Look for ways to address not only your own interests, but those of others as well.
  - o Participate, share the floor, and be concise.
  - o Look ahead – acknowledge the past but don't rehash it.
  - o Be explicit and factual – ask for clarification if confused.
- To ensure inclusivity and transparency, we acknowledge and expect that:
  - o Participants represent a broad range of interests, each having concerns about the outcome of the issues.
  - o Participants commit to keeping their colleagues/constituents informed about progress.
  - o Participants will not publicly represent the views of others.