# Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

Quarterly Report (01/1/17 – 03/31/17)

**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:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | January | | |  | February | | |  | March | |
| **Task Force Meetings** | **2017** | **TT** | **EO** | **TF** |  | **TT** | **EO** | **TF** |  | **TT** | **TF** | |
| **4** | **4** | **25** |  | **1** | **1** | **22** |  | **1** | **22** | |
| **Chris Page, Facilitator** | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 |  | 1 | 1 | |
| **Kara Whitman, Coordinator** | 1 | 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). Chris and Kara 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 assisted the Task Force in forming multiple Comp Plan implementation work groups as they created work plans for implementing PCB control actions. The Center also drafted a Comp Plan control actions tracking spreadsheet, which has since been embraced by the Task Force and more fully developed by Adriane Borgias.
* **Outreach:** 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. The Outreach work group has developed a work plan, started the development of an outreach web interface. The Outreach work group also drafted a press release for the Final Comprehensive Plan. The press release was approved by the Task Force in January of 2017. The Center finalized and distributed the press release on January 30, 2017.
* **Other Communication:** The Center provided communication assistance between the Task Force and EPA and Ecology to request the attendance of key personnel to present information on key topics of interest to the Task Force.
  + This included EPA region 10 staff (Angela Chung, Lucy Edmonson, Christine Psyk, Mike Szelag) who attended the January 2017 meeting to discuss recent changes to the Water Quality Standards for Washington, 2016; and Mary Lou Soscia who called in to the March meeting to provide information on the Columbia River Restoration Act.
  + Ecology staff also attended the March meeting including, Holly Davies (PCBs in Products update) and Kathy Falconer and Ivy Anderson (Toxics Cleanup Program).
  + The Center also assisted with communication between EPA’s Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP) program and EPA’s Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance (OECA) program to set up a meeting to discuss the current Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) allowances for PCBs and the revised Water Quality Standards for Washington. The meeting to occur on April 26th of 2017.
* **University Resources:** Kara Whitman oversaw the work by a Washington State University undergraduate student working with the Task Force on outreach projects including: YouTube videos using interviews with Task Force members, and an outreach inventory and system mapping (with interviews of all public information officers of Task Force member entities). This work will provide the Task Force valuable information about the PCB/Water Quality outreach work currently being implemented in the Spokane River Basin, and summarize gaps and potential leverage points for future outreach to meet goals in the Comp Plan.

**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 and implement work plans (Comp plan work groups, 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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