# Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

 Quarterly Report (07/1/17 – 09/30/17)

**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:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | July |  | August |  | September |
| **Task Force Meetings** | **2017** |  TT | TF |  | TT | TF |  | TT | EO | TF |
| 12 | 26 |  | 2 | 23 |  | 6 | 6 | 27 |
| **Chris Page, Facilitator** |  |  |  | 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 six meetings including three Task Force (TF) meetings and three Technical Track Work Group (TTWG) meetings. Chris facilitated 4 meetings. Kara Whitman facilitated one meeting of the TTWG and one meeting of the TF. Kara also developed the agenda for and facilitated one meeting of the Education and Outreach Work Group (EO). Kara drafted and distributed announcements, materials, and summaries for each meeting and for general Task Force communications. Chris and 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.
* **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 provided communication assistance to, and quarterly check-ins with the multiple working groups of the Task Force related to the Comp Plan.
	+ The Center also assisted the Task Force in prioritizing control actions and monitoring to meet the goals of the Comprehensive Plan by.
	+ The Center developed a survey to provide insight into the ranking and priority level of all ideas pulled together by the Task Force.
	+ The Center facilitated a budget summit at the September 27, 2017 Task Force meeting where the Task Force prioritized projects in order to allocate funds from the 310,000 legislative funding.
* **Outreach:** The Center also continued to facilitate the Task Force Education and Outreach workgroup, which has begun to develop the outreach website and revise the existing Task Force outreach poster display for use at the upcoming Spokane River Forum. The group will also add another panel to the poster display that focuses on public outreach.
* **University Resources:**
	+ Chris Page has contacted the director of a joint Washington State University / University of Idaho consortium of faculty and graduate researchers (the Center for Environmental Research, Education, and Outreach), along with a University of Washington professor, to see if the Task Force might potentially utilize academic expertise in the form of an independent science panel to provide peer review, applied research, and other impartial vetting of Task Force science.
	+ Kara Whitman oversaw the work by a Washington State University undergraduate student working with the Task Force developing a system map of PCB outreach in the Spokane Basin (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. Brenden plans to present his research on a poster display at an undergraduate research exposition at WSU in fall of 2017 or spring of 2018.

**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 Center will continue to assist in identifying and scheduling presentations on topics of Task Force interest by the Environmental Assessment Program, Representatives from the Duwamish River PCB Cleanup, and other groups.
* The Center will facilitate the Task Force through identification and prioritization of future sampling needed to monitor the success of the Comprehensive Plan.
* 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 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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