

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 develop and recommend plans or approaches on specific activities. 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 & Scope of Work

From time to time, the Task Force may determine a work group is appropriate to carry out a specific activity. In forming the work group, the Task Force will identify a leader for the group and request Task Force members make their or their entity's commitment to participate in the group known.¹ The Task Force assigns each work group its purpose or charter, along with a high-level scope of what it needs to accomplish. Each work group then takes responsibility for developing specific, detailed scopes for individual projects and presenting each to the Task Force for approval.

If 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 documents needed to issue a contract to a third party for carrying out the work and assisting with any 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 each individual work group deems is most efficient/effective for them.

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 makes 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.

¹ Not joining a work group at its formation does not prohibit a member or entity representative from joining later.

Leadership, Meetings and Notices, and Updates to Task Force

Each work group's chair or leader takes responsibility for the group's operations, including incorporating new work group members. Work groups meet or exchange information as often and as many times as each group determines necessary to accomplish its agreed-on charge. Work groups can meet in person, by phone, or via videoconference technology—or using a combination of these. When a work group schedules a meeting, it is recommended, but not required, that the work group chair follow the protocols for Meetings and Notices from pages 17-18 of the signed Task Force MOA—specifically setting an agenda, giving notice to the full SRRTF listserv five business days in advance (if possible), making all meetings open to the public, and providing at least high-level meeting notes afterward for posting on the Task Force website.

Work group leaders will also provide updates on relevant information to the Task Force at meetings.

Communications

All work groups and participants agree to abide by the Communications Protocols on pages 17-18 of the signed Task Force MOA.