Our Vision - The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force will work collaboratively to characterize the sources of toxics in the Spokane River and identify and implement appropriate actions needed to make measurable progress towards meeting applicable water quality standards for the State of Washington, State of Idaho, and The Spokane Tribe of Indians and in the interests of public and environmental health.

Direct to Implementation Approach to Toxics Reductions

To accelerate clean-up actions, interest groups and governments in the Spokane River basin have collaborated on a unique and innovative approach to reduce PCBs and dioxins in the river. We are pursuing a direct-to-implementation strategy that includes the establishment of a Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (Toxics Task Force) to identify and reduce PCBs and dioxins at their source in the watershed.

The Toxics Task Force’s current mission is to tackle the most difficult problem in the Spokane River, PCBs. This toxic chemical is ubiquitous and can be found in nearly every water body around the world.

“We fully recognize these efforts will need to continue for years to come given the ubiquitous nature of PCBs. We are convinced that a collaborative effort is the best approach to environmental improvement and is necessary to keep our river healthy and clean.”

The SRRTTF

The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force (SRRTTF) was formed in 2012. Participants include: City of Spokane, Spokane County, Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District, Inland Empire Paper Company, Kaiser Aluminum, Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), Spokane Regional Health District, Washington State Department of Health, Lake Spokane Association, The Lands Council, Riverkeepers, and the Cities of Coeur d’Alene, Post Falls and Hayden in Idaho. Ecology has joined as a Task Force member, and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (IDEQ), and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) serve as advisors to the Task Force and are very supportive of this innovative and cooperative approach as a more direct means of improving the quality of our waters.

The SRRTTF is working to identify sources of PCBs that continue to enter the watershed and develop a plan for their removal. To start the process, we are actively engaged in water quality data collection.

- We have conducted a data gap analysis.
- We are currently conducting the first comprehensive and methodical sampling program for PCBs from the outlet of Lake Coeur d’Alene to Nine Mile Dam.
- The information from this sampling effort will provide the first comprehensive snapshot of PCBs in our river system and identify unknown sources of PCBs to the river.
- We are the first in the country to measure PCBs at these very low levels in the river, and are pushing the limits of technology in both sampling and analytical techniques needed to measure PCBs at levels that are important for achieving our water quality standards.

2012: Task Force formed

2013-2015: Technical analysis, source ID, collaboration with cities and businesses

2016: Sewage and water cleanup plan and implement cleanup actions

On-going PCB reductions of known sources: catch basin cleaning, street sweeping, treatment facility upgrades, community education, etc.

Disclaimer: This display is a summary of the challenge of PCBs in the Spokane River and the purpose and activities of the Task Force. There is more to the story. For more information visit the Task Force website at www.srrtff.org or follow the QR code.