PURPOSE STATEMENT

Spokane River does not meet water quality standards for certain toxics. Department of Ecology is the agency charged with the laws, regulations, and programs that help achieve water quality standards. Ecology relies on scientific data and public feedback to implement these regulations and programs.

Ecology recognizes that all Washington residents, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, color, or national origin, have a right to live, work, and recreate in a clean and healthy environment.

We will reach out in a variety of ways to ensure that there is meaningful involvement from all sectors of the public including, low-income communities, communities of color, and indigenous people in Washington who often bear the brunt of pollution and the impacts of climate change. We're committed to making decisions that do not place disproportionate environmental burdens on these communities.

The Spokane River Regional Toxics Task force is an example of one way people can organize to gather information, provide advice to Ecology and take action to reduce toxics.

With the closing of the SRRTTF, Ecology is taking another look at how it gathers information from public and uses it in its decision making. Ecology would like to be more inclusive in the communities it works with and cover a broader range of toxics that affect the river.

The Spokane Regional Toxics Advisory Committee is being established as a replacement for the SRRTTF.

The SRTAC will

* Seek to understand how toxics affect the river and groundwater
* Advise Ecology on approaches to address toxics in order to achieve water quality standards.
* Advise Ecology on studies to identify sources of toxics in the Spokane River watershed
* Identify best management practices that can be employed to reduce toxics
* Advise Ecology on developing the Implementation Plan for the Spokane River PCB TMDL once it’s completed.

Ecology will recognize the participation of the following groups that have interest in finding and reducing sources of toxics in the Spokane River:

* General public- community members, private consulting firms, business owners etc.
* Permittees, if required by permit to participate
* Tribes, local governments, and governmental agencies
* Non profit organizations
* Academic Institutions

Ecology will consider the advice provided by the SRTAC in its decision making processes. Advice that is developed by a consensus process will carry a greater weight in our consideration.

Ecology will also seek advice from other groups and interests in the watershed to ensure we achieve our environmental justice goals.