Spokane River Toxics Advisory Committee Charter

May 2024

**MISSION:**

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.
* Help to identify best management practices that can be employed to reduce toxics.
* Advise Ecology in the development of an Implementation Plan for the Spokane River PCB TMDL when it is completed.

**SRTAC PARTICIPATION**

Ecology promotes voluntary participation by a broad coalition of people and organizations that have interest in finding and playing a part in reducing sources of toxics in the Spokane River. This may include:

* 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

**PARTICIPANT ROLES**

The roles and responsibilities of the workgroup members includes:

* Participants will be prepared to discuss issues by representing their organization and their perspective.
* Help to carry forward the goals set forth in the Mission Statement.
* Work to be informed and knowledgeable about water quality as it pertains to toxics.

**ADVISORY PROCESS**

As an advisory committee, the opinions of participants hold weight. While we value advice from the committee and will seek out those thoughts that represent the diversity of our community, if no consensus is reached Ecology will make the final decision.

**MEETINGS**

SRTAC Meetings will be held monthly on the 4th Wednesday of each month, provided there is meaningful content to share. Primary SRTAC meetings will offer a hybrid meeting option, but may choose to be solely virtual on occasions that deem it necessary. In person meetings will be held at the Spokane County Water Resource Center at:

1004 N Freya St.

Spokane, WA 99202

The advisory committee may schedule it’s own Work Groups to discuss topics in more detail. Additionally, a Work Group will be developed to specifically advise on the development of the Implementation Plan for the Spokane River PCB TMDL.

**Workgroups-** scheduled as decided by the group.

**Commitments:**

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.

Ecology will work to strengthen the credibility, trust and transparency of our efforts in regards to toxics in the Spokane River Watershed.

This engagement for advice will include the following commitments:

* Engage in a professional and respectful way with all SRTAC members and members of the public.
* Ensuring transparency, provide meeting materials and any documents generated on the Spokane River Watershed Advisory Committee EZ View Page.
* Provide a space for sharing ideas and meaningful exchanges to further the efforts of toxics reduction in the Spokane River Watershed.