WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

UPRIVER DAM
PCB SEDIMENTS SITE UPDATE
(Spokane River PCB Contamination Project)

The Washington Department of Ecology began investigations in the fall of 2002 to determine where and how much polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) contamination exists in sediments found in and along the Spokane River behind Upriver Dam. The studies cover the area from Upriver Dam (approx. rivermile 80) to the Centennial Trail footbridge (approx. rivermile 85).

Ecology entered into a Consent Decree with Avista Development, Inc. and Kaiser Aluminum & Chemical Corporation in January 2003 to perform a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) which focuses on PCB contamination in sediments. The Consent Decree is a legal agreement between Ecology and parties responsible for the contamination. It provides specifics of how the investigations and evaluation of cleanup alternatives will be carried out in accordance with Washington's toxic waste cleanup law - the Model Toxics Control Act, or MTCA. Although Kaiser is currently in bankruptcy, participation in the Consent Decree is approved by the federal bankruptcy court. Liberty Lake Sewer District and Inland Empire Paper Company have also been identified as responsible parties, but are not participants to this decree.

Ecology is continuing to gather data to determine the nature and extent of contamination in the study area. The investigation phase will be completed by the middle of 2004. The feasibility study will then be conducted to evaluate and propose certain cleanup alternatives. Remedial Investigation and Feasiblity Study reports will be completed and made available to the public for comment in late 2004. After the comment period is closed and the report is finalized the project will proceed with the development of a Draft Cleanup Action Plan. This plan will contain Ecology's selected cleanup alternative and will be made available for a 30-day comment period.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) are a group of manufactured chemicals, either solids or oily liquids. In pure product form they may range from colorless to light yellow in color and have no smell or taste. These chemicals have been used in the past for several industrial and commercial purposes including as coolants and lubricants, in electrical equipment and inks and various other uses. Since 1977 PCBs have not been manufactured in the United States because of evidence they build up in the environment and may cause harmful health effects.

Humans may be exposed to PCBs from the Spokane River by eating fish caught from certain locations of the river. Swimming in the river is safe and does not pose a threat to health.

Concerns about PCB-contaminated fish in the Spokane River prompted the Department of Health, the Department of Ecology, and the Spokane Regional Health District to issue a fish-consumption advisory in 1999 that was updated in March 2001. The current advisory issued in July 2003 by the Department of Health and Spokane Regional Health District recommends that no fish caught between Upriver Dam and the Idaho border should be consumed. People are

being encouraged to eat fish from Lake Spokane (Long Lake) where PCBs in fish are lower and to be aware of ways to reduce any potential consumption of PCBs through good preparation and cooking methods. As a courtesy, we have enclosed the July 2003 advisory. The advisory may also be found on Department of Health's website at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/oehas/EHA_fish_adv.htm or Spokane Regional Health District at www.srhd.org.

Other Studies

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) under authority of CERCLA (the federal Superfund) has also been conducting studies on the Spokane River. The USEPA work focuses on metals such as zinc, arsenic, cadmium and lead associated with historic mining operations in Idaho. These metals have been broadly distributed throughout the upper Spokane River, including and extending beyond the fine grained sediment areas behind Upriver Dam where the PCBs under study are located. The USEPA Record of Decision, or ROD, (September 2002) selects capping or dredging as the cleanup alternatives to reduce metals risks in sediments associated with Upriver Dam. A final alternative has not been selected between these two sediment cleanup options. In addition, ten shoreline beach areas in Washington upstream of Upriver Dam, which are impacted by metals, also are slated to be cleaned up. For more information on the USEPA metals cleanup efforts in the Coeur d'Alene Basin and information on the Spokane Regional Health District beach use advisory see the following websites:
http://yosemite.epa.gov/r10/cleanup.nsf/sites/cda
http://www.srhd.org/safety/environment/pdf/ShorelineSoilsAdvisories.pdf

Ecology plans to coordinate, to the extent possible, the cleanup actions focused on PCBs in sediments at the Upriver Dam Site with the USEPA's metal cleanup plans.

Ecology is also developing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) assessment of PCBs and an associated water quality improvement plan for the Spokane River. This improvement effort focuses primarily on controlling PCBs through reductions in the discharge of PCBs, rather than the cleanup of PCBs in sediments. The TMDL study plan, called a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), is currently available for comment and may be found at Ecology's website: **http://www.ecy.wa.gov/biblio/0303107.html.**

ECOLOGY CONTACTS: John Roland (509) 329-3581 or e-mail at jrol461@ecy.wa.gov
Site Manager for PCB cleanup in sediments behind Upriver Dam

Ken Merrill - (509) 329-3515 or e-mail at kmer461@ecy.wa.gov
Project Manager for TMDL/PCB work - Ken Merrill