

## Spokane River Forum Development Framework

### Mission

The Spokane River Forum seeks to preserve and enhance the value of the Spokane River for all segments of society by increasing and deepening public awareness, engagement and interaction with the river's environmental, cultural and economic resources.

### Background and Need

The Spokane River is often referred to as "Spokane's signature," its "premier community asset," or "local treasure." The river can be seen as the blue ribbon of the chamber's "Near Nature, Near Perfect" campaign to draw businesses, talent and tourism to the region.

The Spokane River Forum provides a tool to inspire decision makers, stakeholder groups and the public to find pathways toward a clean and healthy Spokane River watershed that is an asset to all segments of the community.

### Goals and Objectives

The Spokane River Forum has five interconnected goals and objectives:

- 1) **Leadership:** The Forum will be recognized by federal, tribal, state and local authorities, non-government organizations, and the general public as the key coordinating body/clearinghouse for Spokane River information.
- 2) **Coordination:** The Forum will foster interagency communication regarding public awareness needs and initiatives. Further, the Forum will work across agencies and entities to coordinate public information and engagement regarding economic, environmental and cultural issues affecting the Spokane River, including how decisions and objectives in one area may affect another. In short, a platform will be developed to help agencies promote public awareness (of?) across several issues.
- 3) **Public Information:** In understandable, easily accessible terms, the Forum will educate individuals and groups about challenges facing the river, protection and clean-up efforts, and the potential benefits and costs of proposed regulations, restoration and/or cleanup efforts. Information will include:
  - Roles and responsibilities of agencies and groups
  - Overviews and inventory of economic, environmental and cultural issues affecting the river
  - Proposed studies
  - Current/existing study data and information
  - Alternative strategies for regulation, protection, cleanup actions and/or issue resolution
  - Timing of decisions and public comment periods
  - Opportunities to become involved in one or more issues
- 4) **Public Engagement:** The Forum will host and promote specific activities to facilitate direct interaction with scientists, natural resource managers, decision makers and others concerned with river issues. Such opportunities will enable the public to:
  - Become directly involved in one or more issues
  - Encourage mutual gains decision making and collaboration
  - Promote individual, group and organizational behavioral change to address specific needs
- 5) **Student/Teacher Outreach:** The Forum will develop specific materials and resources that students and teachers can use to connect Spokane River issues and experiences to mastery of Washington State Essential Learning Requirements, Washington state grade-level expectations, and university requirements. Materials and activities may include:
  - Print and/or on-line resources
  - Teacher workshops
  - Classroom field trips
  - Internships

## Principles

Specific organizational principles include:

- A non-hierarchical, collaborative organization design
- Activities that promote public information and engagement, but do not develop policies or policy recommendations
- Outcomes of organization decisions do not usurp or diminish the statutory authority, legal mandates, or Treaty rights given to government
- Outreach and engagement efforts maximize administrative efficiency, minimize conflicting public messages, and leverage opportunities for funding

These principles, taken together, the mission, goals and objectives, will facilitate creating an environment that:

- places a premium on collaborative effort
- is entrepreneurial and futuristic in nature
- thinks holistically
- is inclusive of all individuals and groups
- facilitates development of positive, trust-based relationships
- creates transparency via access to people, resources and informational data bases
- honors the needs of all participants by providing information resources that are timely, understandable and easy to access
- fosters win-win outcomes by encouraging mutual gains for all participants
- helps to coordinate and unify public messages.

Such an environment maximizes the community's ability to act collectively to support the highest good for the Spokane River watershed.