
Date: Sept. 4, 2020

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Richard Whitman, Director

Subject: Item J: Willamette Toxics Reduction Partnership update (Informational)
Sept. 17-18, 2020, EQC meeting

Purpose of item DEQ will co-present with EPA an overview of the Willamette Toxics Reduction Partnership.

Background The Willamette Toxics Reduction Partnership aims to support the Portland Harbor Superfund Cleanup by reducing pollution that enters the Willamette River from reaches upstream of the Portland Harbor Superfund site. The 2017 Superfund Record of Decision (ROD) selected dredging, capping and natural recovery to remedy Portland Harbor sediment, but also acknowledged that contaminants in local fish, even after several decades, would still be too high for people to eat as much fish as they liked. As specified in the ROD, the Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership was formed to help enhance the sediment cleanup remedy. The Partnership is coordinated by Oregon DEQ and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in collaboration with local government agencies, tribal nations, advocacy organizations and community members.

Partnership goals and actions The Willamette Toxics Reduction Partnership was launched in May 2017 by EPA and DEQ, with a broad range of interested partners participating. Since that time, the group has convened three or four times per year. The partnership goals include:

- Compile existing watershed contamination data and identify data gaps
- Describe existing efforts, and evaluate the efficacy of those programs
- Investigate potential upstream sources of contamination to the Portland Harbor Superfund site, considering any data gaps identified
- Identify new strategies to reduce contaminant loading

In 2018, with resources from EPA, DEQ conducted sediment monitoring in the Lower Willamette River, upstream of the Portland Harbor, in an effort to characterize potential pollution sources. In 2019, EPA obtained Urban Waters

funding to work with a contractor to develop a web page for the Partnership and a series of story maps intended to engage people in reducing toxics in the Willamette Basin. Individual “river stories” were developed with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Yakama Nation and the Blueprint Foundation’s environmental science mentoring program for youth of color known as Grounding Waters.

**EQC
involvement**

There is no EQC action associated with this agency initiative; however, DEQ welcomes the commission’s input and questions regarding the Willamette Toxics Reduction Partnership.

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