

American Water Resources Association
2009 ANNUAL WATER RESOURCES CONFERENCE
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Seattle, WA

Tuesday, Nov. 10

1:30 PM – 3:00 PM

SESSION 29: Panel - Spokane River TMDLs

Moderator – Laurie Mann

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Lake Spokane (also known as Long Lake) is a 25 mile long reservoir downstream of Washington's second largest city, Spokane, and several smaller communities. It has experienced a long history of water quality problems. Toxic algae blooms in the 1970s resulted in the court-ordered establishment of a phosphorus TMDL, which has since been shown not to be protective of water quality. In October 2004, Ecology proposed a new DO TMDL. In the summer of 2008, just prior to issuance of a final dissolved oxygen TMDL, EPA directed the Washington Department of Ecology to revise the draft Spokane River TMDL to consider the cumulative impact of nutrient-related pollutants from both Idaho and Washington sources. Since that time, EPA, Ecology, Idaho Department of Quality and the Spokane Tribe of Indians have been developing a TMDL that not only considers the cumulative impact of pollutants from both states, but considers the decrease in assimilative capacity for nutrients and oxygen demanding pollution caused by Long Lake Dam. A recently issued 401 certification of the dam's FERC license requires the operators to comply with water quality responsibilities to be identified in the pending TMDL. The Washington State water quality standard requires near-natural conditions, which makes the available loading capacity extremely small. This capacity must be divided between Idaho and Washington. It is anticipated that the wasteload allocations in the pending TMDL will be 50 ug/L or less, among the lowest in the country. Panelists representing local, environmental, and regulatory perspectives will briefly review the development of the Spokane River dissolved oxygen TMDL, including:

- Challenges of modeling dissolved oxygen impacts in a reservoir from the discharge of 3 pollutants (phosphorus, BOD, ammonia) by 7 point sources and 3 tributaries
- Technical and cultural challenges of assigning one of most stringent wasteload allocations for phosphorus in the country; and
- Implementation of permit limits, nonpoint source reductions, 401 certification requirements - and looking ahead to water quality trading.

In a moderated discussion, panelists will then share perspectives on the development of the TMDL, its impacts on river health and urban growth, and its implementation.