SECTION VI - REGION 10's SIX PRIORITIES

The Coeur d'Alene Basin (Idaho)

Historically, the Coeur d'Alene mining district in Idaho was one of the largest producers in the world of silver, lead, and zinc, and remnants of those mines are scattered over 600 square miles. More than a century of mining has degraded the ecosystem and contributed to elevated blood lead levels in children. EPA Region 10's efforts in the area are focused on preventing exposure to mine waste and improving water quality in the area.

Region 10's top priority is preventing human exposure to unsafe levels of lead and other metals. Particular emphasis is placed on the following:

- Complete mine waste clean-up work in the 21-square mile area around the smelter complex.
- Implement a Basin-wide clean-up plan that will provide human health protection, environmental improvement, and aid economic development in the Basin
- Improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat in the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River Basin and the Spokane River
- Issuing permits with revised metals requirements for point sources along the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River

The Columbia River Basin (Washington, Oregon, and Idaho)

Multiple public and private interests derive economic, social, and spiritual value from the Columbia River and its tributaries including fisheries, hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, water supply, transport, and recreation. Water quality does not currently meet Clean Water Act Standards for temperature, total dissolved gas, dissolved oxygen, and other toxic substances. This poses risk to both fish and human health. EPA Region 10 aims to protect health and the environment in the Columbia River Basin by improving water quality and aiding in the recovery of Pacific Salmon.

Current responsibility is shared between numerous federal, state and tribal agencies for managing the Columbia River and protecting water quality. Multiple impacts in the Basin will continue to be addressed by working with numerous stakeholders in a manner that focuses attention on the natural landscape and ecological processes. Major emphasis is placed on the development of the scientific tools necessary to make informed decisions about how best to manage the resources of the Columbia Basin. This focus is necessary in order to restore salmon and water quality while protecting the economic and social values of the region. TMDLs (Total Maximum Daily Loads) will be implemented in order to achieve water quality standards. The completion of fish and sediment contamination surveys are also in progress to help define potential health risks and focus future efforts on reducing risks.

Oil and Gas (Alaska)

Development of new energy resources through the leasing, exploration and production of oil and gas reserves, and enhancement of existing fields is a high priority for both the State of Alaska and the nation. As the number of potential projects continues to increase and expand beyond currently developed areas into locations with other resource values, there are associated environmental issues, tribal and subsistence concerns, and regulatory requirements that must be addressed in a timely and relevant way.

EPA Region 10 is approaching our statutory obligations relative to Alaska oil and gas development in a

holistic manner through the Alaska Oil and Gas sector. This sector allows for a dynamic approach to Alaska oil and gas issues with an emphasis on integrated, coordinated Regional response to projects and initiatives that reflects all media programs to ensure consistent, transparent Regional policy and decision making. EPA is engaged with industry, tribal governments, State and Federal agencies and other stakeholders to meet the Agency's regulatory and Tribal trust responsibilities with regard to environmental statutes and goals for protection of human health and the environment.

Clean-Up of Contaminated Sites

Contaminated sites present human health risks through releases to soil, air, ground and surface waters, and sediment. Additionally, many sites also threaten sensitive habitats for fish and wildlife. Completing cleanups is becoming more challenging due to scaled down resources and the magnitude and scope of existing sites. Although the pace of identifying new sites has slowed, challenges remain to improve effectiveness and find new ways to complete cleanups.

EPA intends to continue to protect public health and the environment at contaminated sites from the uncontrolled releases of hazardous substances. Focus will be placed on sites contaminated by historical activities (Superfund), currently operating facilities (RCRA Corrective Action), and leaking underground storage tanks (LUST). Region 10 is also committed to integrating the concept of land revitalization and reuse into the process of clean-up through programs such as Brownfields.

Tribal Environmental Health

EPA Region 10 is responsible for helping tribes develop their own tribally and culturally relevant environmental protection programs by providing extramural funding, technical assistance, and program delegation and primacy to them. The following complex and unique environmental health challenges face the tribes in Region 10:

- landfills as a source of contamination to food sources and living conditions
- basic wastewater needs, as well as drinking water system maintenance and compliance
- protection of tribal water quality and indoor air quality
- alarmingly high rates of cancer and influenza

All of these issues and factors have a wide range of impacts on Tribal Environmental Health. There is a need to assess long and short term effects including cumulative effects due to the impacts of the issues.

Specifically, EPA Region 10's tribal strategy emphasizes increasing the level of resources in each office committed to tribal work and strengthening tribal partnerships. The Tribal Operations Office intends to work on the afore mentioned issues through continued capacity building via the Indian General Assistance Program (IGAP). EPA will promote training in grants management for Tribes while they build their programs. Technical assistance is critical in helping tribes gain the capacity to build and implement their own programs to address community specific priorities and goals.

Fine Particulates from Smoke and Diesel Emissions

Small particles of air pollution - fine particulates - have been linked to respiratory impairments to varying degrees. In the Pacific Northwest, smoke from agricultural burning practices and emissions from diesel

engines are significant sources of these particulates. Population growth in rural communities near agricultural burning and increased levels of toxic pollutants from transportation sources in major cities have made addressing these risks to human health a significant priority. EPA Region 10's focus is on working with state, local, and tribal agencies to reduce emissions of fine particulate from agricultural burning (predominately Northern Idaho, Eastern Washington, and Oregon) and diesel emissions in the Seattle and Portland metropolitan areas.

EPA's overall approach to agricultural burning encourages the use of Smoke Management Plans (SMPs) to minimize the impact of burning activities on air quality and visibility impairment. The use of alternatives to burning is encouraged whenever possible. States, tribes, and federal agencies are aware of their responsibility to meet air quality goals and standards through the development of effective SMPs and the adoption of alternatives.

Human health risks from diesel particulates are substantially decreased by reducing emissions. The following are viable ways to reduce diesel emissions:

- promote the widespread usage of ultra low sulfur diesel
- purchase alternative fuel vehicles
- instal diesel retrofits in more fleets
- reduce idling
- increase local production and usage of bio-diesel

For more information, please see **Region 10's Six Priorities**. Copies may be obtained by contacing the Office of Environmental Management and Information at (206) 553-1250.