



Clean Water Act

Reflection at 50 years

Spokane River Forum, April 26, 2023





Clean Water Act 1972



Senator Edmund Muskie, Maine (D)

“Can we afford clean water? Can We afford rivers and lakes and streams and oceans which continue to make possible life on this planet? Those questions were never asked as we destroyed the waters of our Nation, and they deserve no answers as we finally move to restore and renew them.”



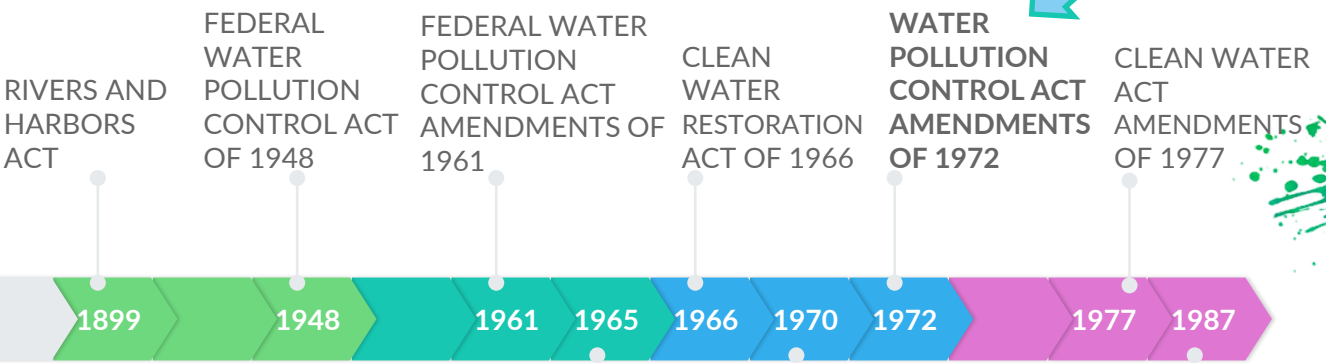
Senator Howard Baker, Tennessee (R)

“I believe that the [act] is far and away the most significant and promising piece of environmental legislation ever enacted by Congress...if we cannot swim in our lakes and rivers, if we cannot breathe the air God has given us, what other comforts can life offer us?”



Clean Water Act Timeline

“CLEAN
WATER
ACT”



WATER QUALITY ACT OF 1965

1970 WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACT

WATER QUALITY ACT OF 1987





Spokane River Relevance

Clean Water Act Vision

**Restore AND maintain
the chemical, physical,
AND biological integrity
of the Nation's waters**

ELIMINATE pollution flowing into waters by 1985

NATIONAL POLLUTANT DISCHARGE
ELIMINATION SYSTEM PERMITS

ACHIEVE protection and propagation of fish,
shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the
water by 1983

“FISHABLE AND SWIMMABLE”



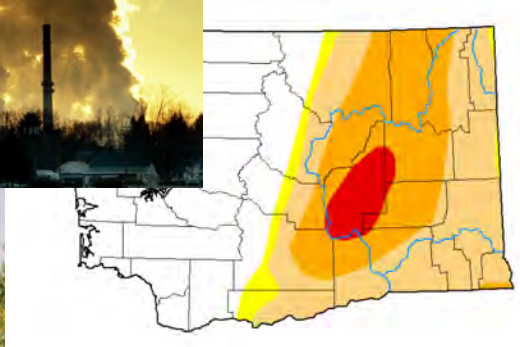
Tying It Together

Permits + Standards =

Thriving Aquatic
Communities,
Human Uses,
Healthy Downstream
Communities



Today's Challenges



Clean Water Act Foresight

- Use of the waters will change
- Pollution will change
- Technology will improve

ARE WE GETTING IT RIGHT?

- Downstream impacts
- Public, local knowledge knows best



Thanks

Grateful for the opportunity...

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