

Minutes

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

Liberty Lake Water and Sewer District Office

January 11, 2012, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Conference bridge: (360) 407-3780 PIN Code: 530807#

Present: Jim Bellatty, Dave Moore, Doug Krapas, Bud Leber, Tom Agnew, Bart Mihailovich, Doug Krapas, Rick Eichstaedt, Diana Washington, Sarah Hubbard-Gray, Pat Hallinan, Bruce Howard, Lee Mellish, Carrie Holtan, Galen Buterbaugh, Mike Petersen, Lynn Schmidt, Arianne Fernandez, Neil Kersten, Dave Moss, Jani Gilbert, Ted Knight, Kris Holm, Brian Crossley, Jon Welge, Mike Neher, Dale Arnold, Mike LaScuola, Kathryn Van Natta, Tom Herron, and Don Martin arrived following the EPA Grant discussion.

On Phone: Mary Lou Soscia (except during the EPA Grant discussion) and Paul Klatt
SRF Staff: Andy Dunau (facilitator in Don's absence), Tonilee Hanson

Materials Available on-line at srrttf.org:

Agenda

SRRTTF Draft Memorandum of Agreement

Facilitation and Coordination Services – Project Description & Scope of Work

EPA comments to MOA

Administrative Funding

The ad hoc funding committee continues to meet as necessary. The SRSP contribution will be \$31,000. The Washington Department of Ecology will provide \$25,000. When Brian Crossley arrived at a later in the meeting, he noted the Spokane Tribe has a request pending that would provide \$14,000 of support. If approved, the total available for the next calendar year is \$70,000.

Dave Moore will initiate the process of executing funding agreements and depositing funds into an Ecology account. Sarah Hubbard Gray will provide Dave an SRSP list of who is contributing funding. The priority use of these funds is to support hiring of a facilitator/coordinator to support Task Force work. Funds must be in place before a facilitator/coordinator can be contracted with.

EPA Urban Waters Small Grants

Diana Washington reported there is a \$60,000 funding opportunity available through EPA's competitive Urban Waters Small Grants program. An ad hoc workgroup meeting was held and a consensus reached that EPA's priorities and Task Force priorities best matched up with a focus on community education and outreach. Brainstorming led to the following recommendations:

- Create a “plain speak” document explaining the technical track work plan for PCB and other toxic reduction strategies.
- Create “outreach in a box” materials to reach out to elected officials, policymakers, school age children and teachers, underserved populations, resource managers, and other interested citizens and groups.
- Integrate outreach materials into an on-line information clearinghouse, which is also a specific Task Force objective.
- Roll out the plain speak document, increase awareness and further outreach needs at a Spokane River Forum conference.

This is a one-time grant that can be expended over a two year period. Lands Council has agreed to carry the grant on behalf of various community partners. The grant is due January 23rd and notification is likely in spring. Each EPA Region has four grants to disburse and the competition is expected to be strong. Diana reviewed how Lands Council, the Spokane River Forum, Riverkeeper, City of Spokane, and Ecology are working together to write the grant narrative. Each partner is working on the grant deliverable(s) they will be responsible for. For instance, Ecology will be taking the lead on creating the plain speak document.

Discussion occurred over opportunities to review the grant and letters of commitment needed by partners. Commitment letters are required from partners providing matching resources. For SRSP members on the Task Force, it was agreed Sarah would work with SRSP to draft a letter that she would sign on behalf of their membership.

Diana also clarified that the grant writers are making sure that proposal elements support and leverage with existing efforts. Examples include Ecology GIS work with Urban Waters Initiative and Regional Health District/Ecology/Forum work with businesses. This discussion also addressed concern that the education/outreach effort not become so focused on PCBs that other toxics issues are not addressed.

The Spokane Tribe is very supportive. Whether they can prepare a letter of commitment in time is unclear.

Toxics Workshop and Technical Work Plan

Dave Moss and Sarah Hubbard Gray filled in for Bruce Rawls, who was out ill.

SRSP proposes a toxics workshop that is technical in focus. Goals include “jumpstarting” and informing development of the technical work plan. Participants would include: agencies engaged in task force issues, consultants/research firms providing or interested in providing assistance; universities; conservation groups; others with technical interests.

The agenda would be based on elements of the work plan. Workshop planners would determine format, priority topics, etc. Examples of topics: what we know and don’t know, addressing data gaps, best management practices, etc. The technical workshop conducted to support phosphorus treatment technical needs could serve as a model.

Discussion clarified interest in bringing in presenters from other areas of the country engaged in similar work, that the target date for the workshop would be spring 2012; that there is some synergy with permit timeframes for technical plans; that further discussion is needed regarding if toxics beyond PCBs will be discussed; and there is desire for a public health component.

Participants agreed that the technical workgroup would spearhead development of the workshop. Arianne Fernandez with Ecology's Urban Waters group offered to assist as she's been to related conferences and can share names of presenters and possible topics.

Diana will organize technical workgroup meeting in February to begin development of the technical work plan and organize a technical workshop.

RFQ for Facilitator/Coordinator

At request of Ecology, Sarah Hubbard-Gray provided an initial draft of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for a facilitator/coordinator to assist the group. Dave noted an administrative workgroup will be tasked with modifying the RFQ, soliciting applications, and screening responses.

Comments and discussion noted:

- Need for grant writing experience
- Description of toxics should be broader than PCBs
- Note additional documents (electronic or paper) that should be part of submittal
- Strong interest in including interviews as part of selection process
- Desire to ask for and check on references
- Differing opinions on whether to include budget or budget range.
- Information should include projected travel needs and cost
- Criteria should include demonstrated success facilitating similar group and/or topic, which includes explanation of their approach to meeting facilitation and enough background to understand these environmental issues.
- Further work is needed in how to weight selection criteria

A person with similar experience in Oregon noted that what drives up the cost of facilitation is the pre and post meeting activities. Rick Eichstaedt noted that the Ruckelshaus Center (which has an office in Pullman) does this type of work. Admin group should consider reaching out to them. Mary Lou Soscia offered to help out as EPA rep.

Some consultants/firms have already shown interest. Task Force members are encouraged to direct those with interest to Dave Moore, who will put them on list to receive solicitation.

MOA Update and Signature Process

Diana Washington provided an update. A couple of potential signatories were not included in the opening recital of participants.

Although a signature has been provided, she has delayed sending of invitations to join Task Force out until there is clarity on who should receive them. Trout Unlimited, Lake Spokane Association, and City of Spokane Valley are not currently included in recitals although there was previous consensus that they would be invited. Diana clarified that only signatories, as per the MOA, had the ability to vote.

Lastly, EPA submitted comments after the comment period and is not in a position to sign without revisions. Mary Lou Soscia walked through EPA comments and possible revisions. [Note: These are now on-line at www.srrtff.org]

Based on these updates, the following questions were asked:

- Does the MOA needed to be changed to accommodate additional members (Lake Spokane, etc.) in recitals?
- Should revisions based on EPA comments be included?
- If the answer is yes to above, would changes require restarting the signature process? (Note: a couple of signatures were received and elected bodies have reviewed existing MOA as basis for January decisions)

The Spokane Tribe, which is listed in the opening recitals, indicated they are unlikely to sign until EPA becomes a signatory.

A lengthy discussion resulted in the following consensus:

- a. Listing of Task Force members at the beginning of the MOA would be stricken and changed to “below signed parties.” Diana indicated that she would work with Carrie Holtan to change this language.
- b. Invitations to join will go out to list MOA currently lists plus Trout Unlimited, Lake Spokane Association, and City of Spokane Valley. MOA will not be sent out to Idaho for signature until permits are issued and MOA amendment process is complete.
- c. EPA and Spokane Tribe of Indians will continue to be engaged in the Task Force but will not become signatories until Idaho NPDES permits are issued.
- d. Once Idaho NPDES permits are issued, the amendment process identified in the MOA will be used to:
 - i. Consider EPA or other requests for revisions
 - ii. Invitations to EPA, Spokane Tribe of Indians, and Idaho stakeholders to join.

It was also noted that adding members and their signatures must be properly documented and recorded, and copies provided to members. To address concerns regarding tracking of changes to the MOA, each amendment will be documented and added to the original document.

Ecology also clarified that steps taken by WA NPDES permittees to date assure they are in compliance with requirement to initiate Task Force.

Next Steps: Workgroups, Meeting Schedule

At various times during the meeting, the need to form an “Administrative Workgroup” and “Technical Workgroup” was discussed. Dave Moore and Diana Washington will provide administrative support to the administrative group and the technical group respectively.

The focus of the Administrative group will initially be processing/banking of Task Force contributions, and moving forward the RFQ and recruitment process for a facilitator/coordinator. The Technical group will focus on development of a Technical Workshop and initiate development of a work plan. Sign-up sheets were distributed to be on one or both groups. To join a group, contact Diana (dwas461@ecy.wa.gov) or Dave (dmoo461@ecy.wa.gov).

Diana and Dave will send out doodle poll via e-mail for work group meetings in February. Andy will send out doodle poll for next Task Force meeting. It was also recommended that Task Force meetings start to occur on a scheduled, recurring basis so people could set calendars for the next year. Selection of a recurring date will occur at the next Task Force meeting.

Communications

Jani Gilbert with Ecology encouraged the group to consider issuing a press release once signature process is complete announcing formation of the Task Force. She was asked to, and is willing, to draft for next Task Force meeting.

She also encouraged the Task Force to consider who the media should talk to about the organization. Rick noted, for instance, he and Bruce Rawls were on a radio show discussing the Task Force. Participants agreed this needs to be put on a future agenda.

Meeting Adjourned