

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force DRAFT Meeting Summary
Facilitated by The William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Kara Whitman and Shane Carnahan)
DRAFT Summary Notes | Wednesday, July 26, 2017 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Spokane County Water Resource Center | 1004 N. Freya Street | Spokane, WA
Meeting Documents posted: <http://srrttf.org/?p=8192>

Attendees:

Voting Members and Alternatives (*Denotes Voting Members)

Tom Agnew* –Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
Galen Buterbaugh* –Lake Spokane Association
Elizabeth Schoedel*, Cadie Olsen, Jeff Donovan, Adrienne Pearson –City of Spokane
Don Keil*, Mike Anderson, Kris Holm (phone) –City of Coeur d’Alene
Dave McBride*(phone) –Washington Department of Health
Mike LaScuola*, Vicki Barthels –Spokane Regional Health District
Rob Lindsay*, Ben Brattebo, Mike Hermanson, Dave Moss –Spokane County
Bud Leber*, Brent Downey –Kaiser Aluminium
Doug Krapas* –Inland Empire Paper
Jerry White* –Riverkeeper
Lisa Manning* (phone) –Kootenai Environmental Alliance

Advisors

Kevin Booth –Avista
Adriane Borgias, Jim Ross, Diana Washington, Kathy Falconer, –WA Department of Ecology
Brian Nickel (phone) –Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Public/Interested Parties

John Beacham, Monica Ott –City of Post Falls
Sarah Hubbard-Gray –Spokane River Stewardship Partnership (SRSP)
Dave Dilks (phone) –LimnoTech
Eric Williams –Gallatin Public Affairs
Ken Windram –Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board (HARSB)

Introductions, Agenda Review, Acceptance of Prior Meeting Summary

After introductions, the Task Force added a discussion of Ecology job vacancies to the “Updates and Announcements” section. The Task Force approved the June 28th, 2017 meeting summary with no changes.

DECISION: The SRRTTF approved the June 28th, 2017 meeting summary.

ACTION ITEM: Kara Whitman to finalize and post 6/28/17 meeting summary to the Task Force website.

TTWG Report and Technical Topics

ACE Commitment report

Bud Leber reviewed ACE committed and uncommitted funds. \$46,475 has not been allocated. ACE will meet Tuesday August 1 to discuss the contract with Ecology for \$310,000 in the state budget.

Homolog Mass-Balance Memo

Dave Dilks reviewed changes made in response to comments. He fixed typographical errors and clarified the treatment of outliers (excluded in 2014; included in 2015 reports). This draft report is now consistent with each prior report. He was also asked to reconsider the use of estimated Greene St. flows for 2014. He still used the Greene St. flows, but added caveats to the interpretation of results. He also synthesized available groundwater model results using estimated flows instead of observed flows.

Q&A/COMMENTS

- **Q.** The scope of work described ‘disaggregation’ of the Trent to Greene reach; why is there no mention of this in memo? **A.** Disaggregation was conducted but not discussed because it had little effect on model results. The Trent-to-Greene reach contains: a section where flow is lost to groundwater, a section where flow is gained from groundwater, a point source discharge (Inland Empire), and the Spokane County Waste Water Treatment Plant. (*Explanation: The original model treats the reach as one well-mixed segment and assumes water leaving via groundwater outflow exits at an average segment concentration. This may have been too simplistic, so the new model ‘disaggregates’ the Trent-Greene reach into two segments and assumes that water leaving through groundwater outflow leaves at the concentration at the upper end of the segment. This disaggregation had little effect on results.*)
- **C.** The fact that there was no change in the results should be included in the memo, as this is part of the findings. On-the-ground sampling is needed to understand what is going on here. **A.** A sample now won’t tell us about 2014/2015 results or allow for back-casting. But yes, the lack of an outcome is still an outcome, so LimnoTech will add that to the memo.
- **Q.** Why did this disaggregation have no impact? Was it because we lack data? **A.** In hindsight, the reason it didn’t have much of an impact is because the County’s treatment plant load wasn’t big enough to skew the process. If that load was large enough, the earlier assumption (that the average of the entire segment would suffice) may have proved adequate. Note: *Some in the group question whether there are enough data to make this analysis meaningful.*
- **Q.** Groundwater samples were taken at the same time as synoptic samples, adjacent to the river – did you use any of that data? **A.** That is the next step, and will be included in future analysis. Additionally, all available groundwater data will be included, not just those recent samples.
- **C.** There is still a gain in the homolog mass balance. We were basically trying guess the concentration at the bottom of Upriver Dam. If we want to know what is happening in those two different reaches, i.e. where the higher concentration came in, we must sample by Upriver Dam.
- **C.** We have multiple cleanup sites near the River; there is a lot going on in that reach including a high ppm value from a nearby groundwater plume. **Q.** Could this be the “urban bubble” effect (i.e. re-volatilization due to ecosystem, land, air, and water movements) we might be missing?
- **C.** There will be one more step to include data from the wells into this data, starting immediately with interim results in August and final results September.

DECISION: The Task Force opted not to approve this version of the memo, but wait until Dave Dilks makes the edits and consider final acceptance of the memo at the August 23rd, 2017 meeting.

Long-Term PCB Monitoring

Bud Leber provided context for discussing long-term monitoring options (as identified in the SRRTTF Comprehensive Plan). Section 6 of that Plan (“Future Activities”) explores characteristics of a potential long-term monitoring plan, but not with specifics. The Technical Track Work Group (TTWG) began this discussion, but realized this topic would need a lot of consideration. The TTWG will continue the discussion at the 8/2/17 TTWG meeting. The TTWG brainstormed questions and options for the monitoring conversation:

- Timing: a five-year timeframe might not suffice to see trends. How much sampling would be needed to detect a change? It might take many samples, and up to 30 years, to see a notable change. Point sources can be tracked, but more challenges come with sampling non-point sources.
- Frequency of sampling? Some approaches cover the length of the River, but cost more. Some sampling is only possible during low-flow periods.

Funding: Allocating \$310,000 State funds “to identify and remove sources of PCBs in the Spokane River.”

Adriane Borgias congratulated the Task Force on receiving the funding, saying is good to see funding coming into this watershed. The proviso’s specific wording: “One-time funding to remove PCBs” means any monitoring must fulfill this language (i.e., monitoring for trends and changes doesn’t necessarily fit this funding). Adriane suggests the Task Force have a comprehensive budget discussion, considering all ongoing PCB-reduction activities and finding out if there is funding that can help further progress on these milestones. Rob Lindsay suggested a “budget summit” to dig deeper into this discussion.

Q&A/DISCUSSION ON MONITORING AND FUNDING

- **C. Trends:** In memo to court, EPA suggested benchmarks and milestones etc. to address PCBs, e.g. in 2020, goal of instream PCB concentration of 200 pg/L.
- **C. Environmental Assessment Program (EAP):** In fall 2017, proposals for 2019 funding will be due. Task Force should think about what funding is needed for different monitoring strategies.
- **C. Monitoring Goals:** What do we want to know? How do we measure/monitor it? Need to list things we want to track.
- **C.** The adaptive management model has little distinction between monitoring and assessment. Can we gain anything by calling our monitoring “assessment”? **A.** Monitoring and assessment are not the same thing (identifying sources is collecting samples for *assessment*); suggest using different language.
- **Q.** What do we know about fish tissue PCB monitoring? Ecology testing occurs every 10 years, so next in 2022. Chris Donley offered to suggest recommendations for fish monitoring (but could not attend this meeting, or the TTWG meeting).
- **C. Budget:** Since the Task Force formed the legislature has given \$684,000 and SRRTTF members have contributed \$750,000. The next step for ACE is the scope of work – and once that is in place we can develop a contract as well as retroactively reimburse previous work.

ACTION ITEM: Task Force to hold a “budget summit” to broaden discussion, develop ideas for budget allocations, identify options, allow people to think about it, and develop a timeline. *This discussion will continue at the ACE meeting and beyond, since the group agreed a “budget summit” makes sense.*

ACTION ITEM: Task Force members in Washington state contact their legislators about the capital budget, which has not passed.

Data Management Tool: Presentation by Rao Sankarmanchi of CDM Smith.

Background and Objective: Rao explained that the Task Force can access significant amounts of PCB data from multiple sources for the Spokane River Basin, but no usable data management system. A comprehensive system is vital to successful implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. CDM Smith tested the SRRTTF-selected data management tool so it could be adapted to meeting Task Force needs. The objective is to “Develop a comprehensive data management plan and application to streamline data entry and generate tabular and graphical outputs.”

Dataset Formatting Review

CDM Smith considered 15 different datasets (from the various dischargers, Task Force sampling, and the Department of Ecology), comparing each dataset to an ideal. The data exists in different formats: AXYS 1, 2, & 3, Pacific Rim, and Ecology’s Environmental Information Management (EIM); the differences include:

- Coelution compounds are not split up
- The method and rinsate blanks for each sample is not clearly identified. This will take the most effort, but is needed so they know the corresponding methods used.

- The sample matrix has not been clearly defined.
- The “CAS number” (a required field) is missing from most of the AXYS 2 format files.
- The date of sampling is missing in some cases.
- Some data fields have been combined, and it would be preferable to have these divided out.

Q&A/COMMENTS

- **Q.** How do we address this, since many of us are still submitting into AXYS 2 system? **A.** The lab (AXYS) must solve this. We will ask them to provide in a different format (this will require us to talk with the funding entities, who can persuade AXYS to change the format).
- **Q.** Are there cost differences between these formats? **A.** No, they most likely just need to ask the lab for a modified AXYS 1 format that conforms with Task Force data needs.
- **C.** Pacific Rim and EIM will require a lot of modification to be useful.
- **Q.** Are the columns the same across the datasets? **A.** No. CDM Smith memo uses a color-coded table to compare datasets.
- **Q.** How will the data management tool deal with the different coelutions? **A.** That will be tough; we may have to live with what we have. Could potentially use an assumption between the compounds, addressing it today to get the right data in the future.
- **Q.** How important is this standardization to PCB monitoring? **A.** Depends on what we will want to do in the future, but consistency is good.
- **Q.** Is there is cost difference between 1668-A or C. **A.** 1668-A takes more effort to implement (this is because the differences between columns in the data are small, and they do more cleaning of the datasets), so most labs run C now.
- **C.** The standard protocol that labs use is the chain of custody, so they ought to have the sample date and time. If we have some without the time, we can fill it in. Sample size is important to include for informational purposes.
- **C.** EIM is different from the others because it is already a database, with managed data. Going forward, Ecology could match SRRTTF data needs although older data (not collected with the SRRTTF in mind) may not include some fields.
- **Q.** Is some data missing because they didn’t include it, or because they don’t have it? **A.** Suspect they have the data but just didn’t send it.
- **C.** As a Task Force, we can set the standard. We should set up the standard now to avoid getting data that does not easily go into the system. Data is used to create information, so when data is not uniform, we will need strategies to synthesize such data into useful information.

ACTION ITEM: The TTWG to discuss difference between 1668-A and C. Bud Leber to follow up with AXYS. (COMPLETED)

Next Steps

Who is going to take the lead on this? The SRRTTF will discuss this. LimnoTech was involved; what is the universe of data that must be incorporated?

- Developing a ‘pilot’ dataset.
- Mining relevant data from EIM and the developed database can provide more information.
- Generally, this is the pilot dataset and we need owners to see if they can get revised datasets based on CDM Smith recommendations/needs.
- We can make assumptions, but we are trying to limit the number of assumptions within the database that CDM is developing.

ACTION ITEM: CDM Smith to send Mike Hermanson an excel spreadsheet that includes necessary columns (Electronic Data Deliverable format), so each data owner can request specific data from AXYS.

Database Modifications Required

Rao demonstrated the current functionality of the database, and discussed items to be added: fish tissue table (to store taxonomy and other non-chemical related fish data), form for automated blank correction reporting method, a report summarizing method blank/rinsate blank acceptability, criteria selection forms and summary table reports for PCB data, export feature for homolog and fish tissue data (to generate spatial GIS reports), the ability to generate PCB data summaries by river zones, other non-PCB parameters (such as dissolved oxygen content, chemical oxygen demand, total suspended solids, total dissolved solids), and the ability to easily switch usage of qualifier for blank correction. Rao also asked the Task Force to consider how the database/information will be available to the public (i.e. web interface, or downloadable database?)

Next Steps for CDM Smith: Rao will work on the discussed modifications of the Delaware River Basin Coalition database. He will also contact Dr. Lisa Rodenburg to discuss formatting needed for her to streamline the Positive Matrix Factorization analysis. Rao will provide the SRRTF a draft of the modified database with a quick reference guide. He will pilot test the database by generating example tables, graphical outputs and spreadsheets, and recommendations for additional modifications. **Q.** How have the labs improved their blank numbers? **A:** The labs are motivated financially, so keeping up data quality is vital. Instruments have improved, and they now pay more attention to the columns used.

ACTION ITEM: Rao to present the database via webinar at the September 6th, 2017 TTWG meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to coordinate with CDM Smith for the webinar, Karin Baldwin to set up webinar access for the meeting.

Prioritizing Duwamish River PCB Presentation Topics – Kara Whitman gave an overview of various options from Rachel McCrae (Ecology) that the TTWG discussed and prioritized. Kara synthesized options 1-4 by priority. The group agreed that option two is highest priority, but all topics will be an agenda item at upcoming Task Force meetings.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to confer with Rachel McCrae on the questions the Task Force has on each topic and work to identify the appropriate presenter for the identified/prioritized topics.

Outreach, funding, events

- Ecology Water Quality Program: State Fiscal Year 2019 financial assistance. Ecology will hold a workshop on 8/16/17 on using its “EAGL” grants system. Some of these grants could further the Task Force mission. **Q.** Will this workshop be an appropriate forum to discuss different scenarios under capital budget uncertainty? **A.** Options can certainly be discussed. The more projects stacked up in the pipeline, the more pressure on the legislature to put through the capital budget.
- EAP proposals for FY2019 should be submitted this fall.

Updates and Announcements

Spokane River Forum: Rob Lindsay reported that Andy Dunau has scheduled Brandee Era-Miller (Ecology EAP) to summarize four recent PCB studies. This will mesh with the keynote speaker on Green Chemistry. The Task Force could introduce Brandi to provide context. Kara Whitman suggested the Task Force present its Comprehensive Plan. Andy had reserved a room for a potential separate Task Force meeting before the Forum; the Task Force decided to not hold that separate session.

ACTION ITEM: Kara to contact Andy about the possibility of the Task Force having a session at the Forum on the Comprehensive Plan. (COMPLETE, Andy has tentatively schedule a session on the second day, after Brandi’s presentation, pending Task Force decision to hold the session).

- **Western WA Court Case on PCB methods:** Jerry White briefly explained the role that Riverkeeper and the Center for Justice had in developing the amicus brief regarding PCB sampling methods. The brief was filed on behalf of the Puget Sound (Riverkeeper) Alliance in support of method 1668-C for PCB compliance monitoring. We know this is not EPA approved, but method 608 is a coarse method not suitable for 7 pg/L levels. Task Force members may follow-up with Jerry for more information.
- **EPA Source Reduction Grants:** Kara explained the Education & Outreach Workgroup considered submitting a proposal, but did not due to time constraints.
- **Ecology Hiring:** Adriane mentioned a delay because most of June was spent preparing for a possible state budget shutdown. The new position description (for her previous position, with the Task Force) is under development. Jim Ross has been hired as the new Urban Waters program specialist. Aug 1st, 2017 Diana Washington will take a new position with Ecology helping small communities in the region in need of engineering assistance; this creates an opening that needs to be filled.
- Jerry White announced that Riverkeeper has given a 60-day notice that they will sue City of Tekoe for exceedance of fecal coliform and ammonia. They are currently working with them on needed upgrades. Jerry urged the Task Force to consider the benefit that SRRTTF representation from these small communities could have, given that many of them have not heard of PCBs.

No Public Comment

The next SRRTTF Meeting: Aug. 23, 2017, 9am -12:30 pm at Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
The next TTWG meeting: September 6, 2017, 10am-12pm at the Department of Ecology