

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Meeting

Facilitated by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Chris Page and Kara Whitman)
Draft Summary Notes | Wednesday January 27, 2016 | 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Spokane County Water Resource Center | 1004 N. Freya St. Spokane WA

Attendees

*Voting Members and Alternatives (*Denotes Voting Members)*

Tom Agnew (phone) *, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
Mike Coster, Jeff Donovan, Elizabeth Schoedel, – City of Spokane
Galen Buterbaugh* (phone) – Lake Spokane Association
Adrienne Cronebaugh*, Dr. Lisa Manning – Kootenai Environmental Alliance
Doug Krapas* – Inland Empire Paper
Edgar Scott*, Brent Downey – Kaiser Aluminum
Mike LaScuola*, Sandy Phillips – Spokane Regional Health District
Don Keil* – City of Coeur d'Alene
Dave McBride* (phone) – Washington Department of Health
Dave Moss*, Ben Brattebo, Mike Hermanson, Rob Lindsay – Spokane County
Mike Petersen*, Heidi Montez – Lands Council
Jerry White* (phone) – RiverKeeper

Advisors

Jim Bellatty, Adriane Borgias, Brandee Era-Miller (phone), Michael Friese (phone), Ted Hamlin, Grant Pfeiffer, Jeremy Ryf, – Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology)
Brian Nickel (phone) – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Dan Redline – Idaho Dept. of Environmental Quality
Bryce Robbert – Avista

Public/Interested Parties

Henry Allen, Art Jenkins – City of Spokane Valley
Lisa Dally-Wilson – Dally Environmental
Chris Day, Chris Donley – Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Dave Dilks (phone) – LimnoTech
Mike Reiter – Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc.
Eric Williams – Gallatin Public Affairs, Inc.
Ken Windram – Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board

Introductions and Agenda Review

After a round of introductions, Chris Page went over the agenda. Chris brought up that the Federal Hatchery Permit is out for review. Comments are needed by March.

Decision: The Task Force accepted the December 16, 2015 meeting summary with minor edits (spelling of Mirabeau, and clarification of the completion of an action item).

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to make edits and post summary to the Task Force website. (COMPLETE)

TTWG Report & Technical Topics

Dave Dilks collected feedback from the Task Force and consulted with the Technical Track Work Group (TTWG) to prioritize and obtain consensus on study objectives for wet weather water quality monitoring. The study will look at PCB loading and conventional pollutant parameters. This will be officially delivered in a database (after the database has been selected). They will use the same sampling and analysis crew as the Task Force used for its 2014 and 2015 synoptic sampling (Gravity, SVL, and AXYS).

Q&A/Comments:

- **Q.** Will sampling locations include where the Little Spokane River joins the Spokane? **A.** They will all be upstream of that that intersection.
- **C.** This will be an “iterative sampling process”. **A.** Will revisit after 3-4 months to see if the information is useful, and if sampling should continue (can modify or pull plug if needed based on results to date).
- **Suggestions for the study:**
 - Ensure flow measurement, coordination with Avista at Post Falls and Nine Mile dam.
 - City of Spokane could coordinate with Gravity to sample catch basins at the same time.
 - Direct coordination with locals (boots on the ground) to potentially sample stormwater outfalls.
 - Analysis should include individual congeners/homolog or aroclor level assessment, along with total PCBs. **Q.** Could this provide for source tracking? **A.** Current scope can provide congener levels, but not the analysis needed for source tracking.
- **Q.** Will Gravity collect flows at non-gauged locations? (Lake Coeur d’Alene outlet, Nine Mile (rely on Avista - estimates), Trent Bridge) **A.** LimnoTech will coordinate with Gravity. Also the County has an agreement with USGS for handful of one time measurements. Rob Lindsay can contact USGS ahead of time and make sure they can get to the locations. Meghan Lunney can assist with getting Avista flow estimates.

DECISION: The Task Force approved the LimnoTech scope of work for the sampling with the following additions:

- Get flow measurements where feasible;
- The City of Spokane to coordinate with Gravity to sample their CSOs when the river samples are taken; and
- LimnoTech to report on the congeners found in the samples.

Comprehensive Plan: Timeline

Dave Dilks gave the Task Force a review of the Comprehensive Plan timeline.

- Draft memo defining inventory of known sources and pathways January 22, 2016
- Final memo defining inventory of known sources and pathways February 19, 2016
- Draft memo defining magnitude of loading from each source and pathway March 28, 2016
- Final memorandum defining magnitude of loading from each source and pathway May 18, 2016
- Draft memo defining inventory of preliminary, potential Best Management Practices (BMPs) to be considered February 19, 2016
- Final memo defining inventory of BMPs to be considered May 18, 2016
- Draft memo defining appropriateness of each BMP due June 1, 2016
- Final memo defining appropriateness of each BMP due July 14, 2016
- Workshop to prioritize alternatives, and identify implementing parties July 22, 2016
- Draft comprehensive plan September 15, 2016
- Final comprehensive plan December 16, 2016

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to email Task Force list-serve requesting feedback on the Sources and Pathways memo with comment timeline. Task Force members are asked to review the draft memo prior to the 1/27/16 Task Force meeting and provide feedback at the meeting. Comments on the draft may also be sent to Dave Dilks (ddilks@limno.com) by Monday, February 8th. (COMPLETE)

Workshop Planning

Task Force members expressed concerns about planned BMP breakout sessions and how the information from those will be used. Sandy Phillips, Dave Dilks and Adriane Borgias explained that this session is not about making decision on what BMPs will be included in the Comprehensive Plan, but is a beginning of the conversation on what is known and what is realistic for goals in terms of BMPs and implementation. BMPs can cover a broad variety of actions and activities. LimnoTech came up with the initial list of BMP categories and the BMP work group added a few more.

Q: How will the Task Force evaluate BMPs for effectiveness? **A:** This will feed into the LimnoTech deliverable and will be vetted by the Task Force between February and May 2016.

- **Q.** What is the Ecology process for establishing BMPs? **A.** Really depends on the application. They have many stormwater BMPs, but this is a unique circumstance.
- **Q.** Will there be guest experts? **A.** Yes, some attending via webinar.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to send link to BMP session documents for Task Force to review. **(Complete)**

EPA Draft of the Federal Hatchery Permit

- March 31st deadline for comments.
- There is a requirement for PCB monitoring using 1668 and the Task Force Quality Assurance Project Plan.
- This will cover a hatchery on the Spokane Indian Reservation.
- **Q:** Will it address Feed regulations? **A.** Includes feed (general requirement).
- Jerry White can look into putting together some comments for the February 24th, SRRTTF meeting for comments, with the potential for the Task Force to approve a letter in March? Perhaps group to pull together a comment letter (those appealed the Ecology Draft Hatchery Permit?).

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center send info on Federal Hatchery Permit draft review to Chris Donley of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. Ruckelshaus Center also send out an email to the Task Force list-serve with a link to federal permit draft with a timeline for comments.

ACTION ITEM: Task Force members to send comments on the Draft Federal Hatchery Permit to Jerry White as soon as possible. Jerry White to draft summary of main points of a Task Force comment letter on the Federal Hatchery Permit for SRRTTF review at its February meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to ask Catherine Gockel (EPA permit writer) to attend the February Task Force Meeting. (COMPLETE, Catherine will call in to the meeting)

Blank Correction: The group discussed blank correction and data management. Depending on what blank correction used, the PCB levels change. This will be discussed at the TTWG meeting.

Presentation: “Little Spokane River- PCB in Fish Tissue Verification Study”

Michael Friese gave a presentation on the Environmental Assessment Program Project in the Little Spokane River. The purpose of the study is to assess the levels of PCBs in the Little Spokane River. The study collected composite samples of fish (up- and downstream of the Spokane Fish Hatchery), sediment samples from spatially representative locations, and water samples to analyze for PCB congeners. Water samples were taken using a Continuous Low-Level Aquatic Monitoring collection system (CLAM). For more information on the specifics of the study, see presentation at <http://srrttf.org/?p=5708>.

Michael explained that the results of the study show that three of four composite fish samples exceeded the Human Health Criteria from the National Toxics Rule. Water samples indicate concentrations of PCB in the water that are not high enough to separate definitively from the background noise. The sediment samples have a pattern of PCBs that increase in concentration as they move downstream. Finally, most PCB concentrations in the fish tissue were at or just above the background levels; however, the Northern Pikeminnow had higher levels. They established cleanup levels to the background for “no human influence” systems. This system is low-to-moderate priority. The Pikeminnow is at a higher trophic level. Chris Donley explained that they are old and unexploited. Some insects may have high PCBs.

Michael drafted a report on this project and requests high level/high priority comments from the Task Force.

ACTION ITEM: Task Force to submit comments on the draft report to Michael Friese by 1/29/16. (COMPLETE)

Q&A/Comments

- **Q.** Are the blank samples blank-corrected? **A.** No, they cannot blank-correct a blank. Also, they did not do any blank subtraction. **Q.** Were the field blanks from the CLAM disc corrected with lab blank? **A.** No
- **C.** For sediment, these are really low numbers. The data suggests a cumulative effect, but not a definitive one. Levels increased four-fold throughout the watershed
- **Q.** Is what they are seeing in the Little Spokane River similar to what we are seeing in the Spokane River? **A.** The Spokane River shows fish tissue concentrations significantly higher than those found in this study
- **C.** It has been 20 years since the last study, and there is clearly a significantly lower concentration in the 2014 fish tissue testing. **A.** It is hard to compare because of the parameters of the study. Data is not apples to apples. A more comparable dataset is needed. Need to look at lag time for bioconcentrations, half life?
- **C.** Need a larger sample size before we can tell if PCBs are going down.

Presentation: “Spokane and Trout Lodge Fish Hatchery PCB Evaluation”

Michael Friese explained that the proposed study of the Spokane and Trout Lodge Fish Hatchery will evaluate current PCB concentrations in whole fish from the Spokane and Trout Lodge hatcheries to determine if the hatcheries contribute PCBs to the Spokane River from effluent and/or hatchery fish themselves. The study proposes to analyze whole fish, looking at PCB load contribution. It will collect effluent and sediment from the slough that drains into the Little Spokane River, analyze fish food, and collect data on Total Organic Carbon (TOC) and Total Suspended Solids (TSS) in water. This data will be used to calculate an annual PCB load in the hatchery effluent and fish.

Q&A/Comments

- **C.** Chris Donley explained that the system model is not complete, since it needs to include lake rearing. He suggested the study sample planted fish over time to look at concentrations when stocked, and then look at them as they age. It also might help to look at a creel study to see what is harvested (study completed this year). The hatchery could be a PCB sink.
- **C.** WDFW can contribute to the Comprehensive Plan. They want to be involved.
- **C.** Consider predation from other fish.
- **C.** Important to consider the end use of the data.
- **C.** Unknown outputs: take into account mucking out of ponds/ cleaning them.
- **Q.** Does the hatchery switch feed through the seasons? **A.** WDFW examines vendors until they get the lowest PCB number, in a continual process. The standards for fish food vendors are not very good, and hatchery buying power is not enough to pressure the vendors to lower PCB. WDFW is working to reduce PCBs; PCBs are still low enough that the fish can be consumed.

- The QAPP is going through internal review at Ecology, Michael may now add another section to sample fish from the lake. He will have to talk to management.
- **Q.** Where do we draw the boundary?

ACTION ITEM: Chris Donley (WDFW) to follow up with Michael Friese to explain why additional samples from the lake would be appropriate and discuss adding in additional testing (fish planted, creel study). –Chirs has followed up with Michael and provided comments on the study.

(COMPLETE)

ACTION ITEM: Michael to revise the QAPP based on the feedback. Michael to provide the QAPP in 2-3 weeks for Task Force review. (COMPLETE)

ACTION ITEM: Chris Donley to be added to the Task Force List Serve. (COMPLETE)

Presentation: “Sources and Pathways of PCBs in the Spokane River Watershed”

Dave Dilks reviewed a memo sent for Task Force review prior to the meeting. Developing an inventory of known PCB sources and pathways is the first step of the Comprehensive Plan. Once the inventory is complete, then LimnoTech can assess the magnitude of loading from each source and pathway. Sources are mechanisms by which PCBs go into the Spokane River (watershed) and pathways are the mechanisms by which they are transported to the river. Sources are divided in to three categories: legacy, ongoing, and non-local environmental transport. Pathway identification provides opportunity to implement BMPs. Dave will revise the memo based on Task Force input, for consideration at the SRRTTF meeting in February or March.

Q&A/Comments on Sources & Pathways Memo

- **Q.** Groundwater: what about on-site septic systems? **A.** Included but not explicitly called out.
- **C.** Municipal Waste includes personal care products, etc. (change text to not only say printed materials and fabrics).
- **C.** MS4 side: It is incomplete to only include surface soils; there are more direct routes from PCB containing products to an MS4 (deicer, traffic paint, etc) from impervious surfaces.
- **C.** What about agriculture as a source/pathway—do we have numbers from Hangman Creek?
- **C.** Need to capture submerged pumps for private drinking water wells.
- **C.** Sources versus sinks. Some are not true sources, they may be just accumulating. (Discuss at the next TTWG meeting.)

ACTION ITEM: Task Force to send comments on the draft memo to Dave Dilks by February 8th, 2016.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to email Task Force to send comments on draft by February 8th. (COMPLETE)

Events and Outreach:

- Senate bill 6570: (prioritization of funds of MTCA) 310,000 for Task Force in the budget as a line item
- Ecology: grants - the Spokane area received 16 million in funds
- EPA environmental Justice grant (due 2/12)
- Lands council received MTCA funding for outreach (tied to price of gasoline) – Riverton and Union Basin, along the river, currently re-evaluating. Working with City of Spokane on project using fungi to deal with toxics. They will be looking at their impact on breaking down PCBs (Ash Street Training Facility)

Updates and Announcements:

- Six Task Force members have appealed the Ecology General Hatchery Permit (to the Pollution Control Hearings Board). They hope to see a couple of requirements on PCB testing added to the permit and would like to see a requirement for WDFW to participate in the SRRTTF. It is an equity issues for the other

dischargers. Chris Donley explained that WDFW would like to clear this up quickly, and be involved in the Task Force Comprehensive Planning process.

- The City of Seattle has joined the lawsuit against Monsanto.
- Request: more input on the Kaiser groundwater input, and what data was used for the calculations.
- Edgar Scott: Had Greater Spokane Initiative (GSI) meeting with legislators. Senator Erickson pointed out the Task Force as a positive contribution.
- TTWG Meeting: February 3, 2016. Chris Page is unavailable to facilitate. Kara Whitman will facilitate.
- Ruckelshaus contract goes through June 30th, 2016. Time to think about facilitation beyond 6/30/16

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to send out announcement to the Task Force on the call for data and comment on Ecology's Water Quality policy. (COMPLETE)

No Public Comment

The next meeting of the Task Force is February 24, 2016 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
The next meeting of the Technical Track Work Group is February 3, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Department of Ecology