

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

DRAFT Summary Notes | Wednesday December 16, 2015 | 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District | 22510 E. Mission Ave. Liberty Lake, WA

Attendees

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

Tom Agnew *, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
Dale Arnold* – City of Spokane
Galen Buterbaugh* (phone) – Lake Spokane Association
Adrienne Cronebaugh* – Kootenai Environmental Alliance
Doug Krapas* – Inland Empire Paper
Bud Leber* – Kaiser Aluminum
Mike LaScuola*, Ray Byrne, Sandy Phillips – Spokane Regional Health District
Don Keil* (phone) – City of Coeur d’Alene
Dave McBride* (phone) – Washington Department of Health
Dave Moss*, Ben Brattebo, Mike Hermanson – Spokane County
Mike Petersen* – Lands Council
Jerry White* (phone) – RiverKeeper

Advisors

Jim Bellatty, Adriane Borgias, Brandee Era-Miller (phone), Michael Friese (phone), Ted Hamlin, Jeremy Ryf, Diana Washington – WA Dept. of Ecology (Ecology)
Brian Nickel (phone) – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Bryce Robbert – Avista
Rebecca Stevens – Coeur d’Alene Tribe

Public/Interested Parties

John Beacham – City of Post Falls
Lisa Dally-Wilson – Dally Environmental
Andy Dunau – Spokane River Forum
Dave Dilks (phone) – LimnoTech
Greg Lahti – Washington Department of Transportation (DOT)
Eric Williams – Gallatin
Ken Windram – Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board

Introductions, Agenda Review, and Acceptance of Two Meeting Summaries:

Meeting summaries: Comments and Revisions

- 10/21/15 Notes, amend completed action items.
- 11/18/15 notes: remove “of the great” pg 5 bullet 4. Amend completed action items. Add header “Facilitated by Ruckelshaus center, Chris Page and Kara Whitman”,

ACTION ITEM: Kara Whitman to make the indicated revisions to the October and November Task Force meeting summaries and post as Final to the Task Force website. (COMPLETE)

DECISION: Summary notes for October and November accepted with the indicated edits.

The Task Force asked Brian Nickel if he had any information on the update of the draft federal hatchery permit. Brian explained that it has not been released for public comment yet. The Draft should be out this month; he will send word to Ruckelshaus Center when it is available.

ACTION ITEM: Brian to inform Ruckelshaus Center when the permit is ready for review and Ruckelshaus Center to send Task Force a link to the draft permit for Task Force review. (COMPLETE)

Technical Track Work Group (TTWG) Report and Technical Topics

Dave Dilks briefed the Task Force on topics discussed at the December TTWG meeting: elevated lab blanks for some 2015 synoptic survey results, Spokane County comments on “final” technical documents for 2014, and wet weather sampling recommendations. For a full summary of the discussion see 12/2/15 TTWG meeting summary on the Task Force website.

Elevated lab blanks received for some 2015 synoptic survey

Dave reported there were higher-than-acceptable PCB concentrations in lab blanks that affected data from samples taken on 8/18/15 and (some) 8/19/15. The TTWG recommended LimnoTech use a hybrid approach with AXYS re-analyzing the samples (expedited), conducting a draft analysis using existing data (removing affected data), and updating the analysis when AXYS results are back. Dave explained that the interim results confirm a groundwater PCB source between Barker and Trent. There is also potentially a smaller load entering between Greene Street and the Spokane Gage – still waiting on one lab sample.

Q&A/Comments

- **Q.** Confirmation of source between Mirabeau and Trent? What can we do to refine future studies to identify the original source? **A.** This study confirms the need for more investigation because there is a signal; it may be worthwhile looking up-gradient.
- **C.** Look at the results of cleanup activities in the Hamilton Street area—an Ecology Model Substances Control Act (MTCA) site historically used to power gas lights. Cleanup is still occurring. Mike LaScuola has information on this site. The Site Hazard Assessment (SHA) did not contain PCB data for scoring. There are a number of locations along this same reach where if a groundwater source can be confirmed, this would be something to look at. Need to refer to Martha Maggi’s work on locations of cleanup sites.
 - Studies of interest: Mike can make these available on disk if requested.
 - Department of Ecology 1993-94 Investigation of PCB’s in the Spokane River (publication 95-310)
 - the Spokane River PCB Source Monitoring Follow-up Study November and December 1995 (publication 96-331)
- Moving forward, use 1668 to test MTCA sites at the same time as water column, look at congeners.
- Dave does not think there was a lot of 1668 data; let the mass balance guide focus of analysis on sites that might contribute to this.

ACTION ITEM: Mike LaScuola to follow up on the MTCA for this location to Dave Dilks – (SHAs publically available). (COMPLETE, Mike has all the information on this MTCA and can provide on disc to the Task Force if requested)

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to send Martha Maggi study to Task Force again. (COMPLETE)

ACTION ITEM: Dave Dilks to revisit MTCA information after all data is in (Dry weather and wet weather).

Comments on “Final” 2014 Technical Documents

Certain documents related to the Task Force 2015 QAPP (Quality Assurance Project Plan) and synoptic survey were posted as “final” on the Task Force web site without formal Task Force review. Spokane County reviewed the documents and provided comments. The TTWG discussed these and agreed that Limnotech should incorporate them into “Revised Final” documents

Wet Weather Monitoring

Dave Dilks explained that at the 2015 Workshop the group recommended wet weather monitoring to support a mass balance assessment. LimnoTech determined that wet weather sampling would not produce conclusive results for a mass balance; however, several Task Force members (at the November 2015 meeting) expressed support for wet weather monitoring.

Wet weather sampling could:

- Give a snapshot of wet weather PCB concentrations,
- Verify that existing loads don't cause a major increase in river concentration,
- Rule out (or, potentially, discover) a "smoking gun", and
- Give additional information on the Hangman Creek load.

Dave distributed a survey to gain input on objectives for a wet weather study: responses due 12/30.

Q&A/Comments

- **Q.** What is the time consuming piece? **C.** Perhaps do a single event first (runoff and storm event in spring) then evaluate possible sampling in fall. **A.** It will take a month or two to get samples analyzed. High spring flows could make concentrations low and make it difficult to see a signal.
- **Q.** Could the results point to higher concentrations in higher flow? **A.** Perhaps higher, but still around background noise. It may be inconclusive. Need to look at spatial and temporal variability.
- **C.** John Beacham explained that the Cities of Coeur d'Alene (CDA) and Post Falls, along with the Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board, partnered to test the outlet of Lake CDA. The results were not in the "noise" of blank contamination, but above the noise. However, it was only one sample.
- **Q.** This study deals with total PCBs, but what about congeners and homologs? We could potentially see some really interesting things at this analysis level.

ACTION ITEM: Spokane County to put together an overview of their analysis of preliminary data including homologs and congeners.

ACTION ITEM: Task Force to send survey responses to Dave Dilks by Dec. 30th. Survey results will be discussed at the January 6th TTWG meeting. LimnoTech to put scope and budget together for approval at the January 27th Task Force meeting. (COMPLETE)

SRRTF 2016 Technical Workshop Update:

Lisa Dally-Wilson updated the Task Force on workshop planning. Brandee Era-Miller and BiJay Adams discussed the Fish session (day one, afternoon). They have lined up most of the speakers and are finishing up the last few planning tasks.

Q&A/Comments

- **C.** Tom Agnew requested the fish session focus on the fish tissue situation. Fish tissue is driving the Task Force effort, but fish tissue has not been the focus. Formula for the fish tissue is devised by a person. **Q.** Can such a person attend who can speak to the applicability of the formula to issues today? **A.** Yes, there will be some experts that can discuss this formula at the workshop.
- **Q.** Can we have an overview of food web modeling at the workshop?

Letter requesting guidance from EPA/Ecology: should focus be on PCBs in fish tissue or water quality?

Chris Page reminded the Task Force about this previous topic that the Task Force had tabled. Chris asked the Task Force if they would like to move forward with such a letter.

Q&A/Comments:

- **Q.** How many states are using fish tissue as the metric for water quality standards?
- **Q.** What if it turns out the PCBs in the fish tissue are not the same as the PCBs in the water? Need to take a closer look at the assumptions used in calculating this water quality standard.
- **Q.** Can we map congeners, absorption/movement? Is it different among different PCBs?
- **C.** Jim Bellatty said this is a legitimate question for EPA and Ecology; however, timing on the letter could be important. Ecology is working with the Task Force on this, and it may be good to wait until after the workshop, when the group will be better informed.
- **C.** Depending on blank correction, then water quality standards are already met—but there is a fish tissue time lag response.
- **C.** Adriane Borgias emphasized the goal of the Task Force in its Memorandum of Agreement (MOA): reducing sources of PCBs. **Q.** Should Task Force resources be spent looking into the fish tissue issue?
- **C.** The PCB bioaccumulation factor currently used dates back to a 1980 document. **Q.** What were the concentrations during the time this was developed?
- **C.** Diana Washington explained that Ecology looks at a reasonable potential analysis and at water concentration. But the assessment (of whether standards are being met) is based on fish consumption and fish tissue. Point source permits are based on water quality concentration. There is a need for more information to put together a well thought-out question to ask.
- **Q.** Are EPA and others looking at revising this standards?
- **C.** Cheryl Niemi will speak at the workshop and can shed light on these questions. Ecology is going through a rulemaking on toxics (fish tissue may not be changing - 5.3 ppb). Though the state is unique in how it assesses water quality, PCBs in fish tissue in the Spokane River are still among the highest in the state.
- **C.** Dave Dilks explained that both water quality and fish tissue are used in other TMDLs he has been involved in. The standards in Washington are out of sync. Caution: If they were balanced, then water quality standards would be even lower.
- **C.** In the Potomac, bio-concentration for sediment and water. In the San Francisco Estuary, sediment is the driving factor. For the Duwamish, sediment is the driving factor.
- **C.** Have this be an outcome for the workshop (discuss at March Task Force meeting)
- **C.** Tribal standard: smaller pool of resources therefore the EPA takes a more active role. Water column numbers are used in the EPA response to the court (July of 2015). Should the Task Force engage EPA on this? This is an issue of validity of how the standard is set.

ACTION ITEM: The Task Force to revisit this question after the February 2016 Technical Workshop.

Outreach:

- Adrienne Cronebaugh urged the Task Force to accelerate its outreach on PCBs.
- Permittees have to do outreach. Adriane has compiled what permittees have done. There is some merit in synergy, with a wealth of resources out there already.
- Comments/Suggestions:
 - Messages from each entity, analysis of needs, be systematic/strategic to get behavior change.
 - Web site: house links to all outreach that others are doing.
 - BMPs, once compiled and agreed on, will inform what messages will be.
 - Regional water quality education work group meets locally. Should we coordinate with this group? WSU students work with Idaho-Washington Aquifer Collaborative.
 - Article on PCBs in deicer printed in the Sunday *Spokesman Review*, classified section.
 - We have a lot of information on PCBs in products; what outreach can we do with it? Suggestion to coordinate with the Product Stewardship Institute.
 - Idea: Fish measuring ruler with information on them.

ACTION ITEM: Adriane to send list of outreach materials and links she discovered during the process of determining Measurable Progress.

ACTION ITEM: Kara Whitman to set up Task Force web page for links to all Task Force entity PCB outreach. Task Force members to send outreach material to Ruckelshaus for posting.

Andy Dunau: Spokane River Forum: March 23-24 CDA resort. "Our Gem" Lake Symposium: March 22

Andy Dunau gave an overview of the draft format/schedule of the Spokane River Forum in March of 2016. The schedule will be completed by beginning of January 2016, with registration to follow.

The Task Force is scheduled for a 1.5 hour breakout session on March 24th at 1:15 pm. Dave Dilks has agreed to summarize Task Force sampling/findings and give an update on where the Task Force is on the development of its Comprehensive Plan. Andy would also like Lisa Rodenburg to present during this session about her work, and hopes to have a point person discuss the issue of inadvertent PCBs.

Andy and the Spokane River Forum asked the Task Force to fund Lisa Rodenburg's travel in the amount of \$900.

Q. How integrated will Dave and Lisa's presentations be? If analysis is needed, how much funding would this take? How much will Lisa look at the river data, without additional compensation?

- Interest in having Lisa doing some analysis of river data
- After the presentation and coordination with Lisa and Dave, may develop future studies on fish and water in the congener/fingerprinting (much bigger study).

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to send out Lisa Rodenburg's article on Hanford Reach published in the journal: Environmental Science and Technology. (COMPLETE)

DECISION: The Task Force approved providing the funding of nominally \$900 for travel of Dr. Lisa Rodenburg to attend the Spokane River Forum.

- March 23 Spokane River Forum Topics: green solutions, permeable pavement, BioChar, RCCP grant – nonpoint reduction. River keeper-lawsuit, IDEQ- metals TMDL, Portland State University CQAL.
- March 24th Topics: Maia Bellon keynote, stormwater session: city of Spokane updates, Riverstone Project, Lands council research on Oyster mushroom mycelium, SRRTTF session, fish consumption rate/water quality criteria in Idaho and WA. Connecting community to the watershed (could put in task force piece?)

ACTION ITEM: Dave, Lisa Rodenburg, and Mike Hermanson to have a phone call about the Spokane River Forum, notes form meeting to be sent to Kara Whitman for Task Force dissemination.

ACTION ITEM: Workshop planning group to contact Lisa Rodenburg about potentially coming to the workshop. (Note: Ask if the work she did on the Columbia River would be pertinent for Spokane River). (COMPLETE)

ACTION ITEM: Invite Andy Dunau to a future education and outreach workgroup meeting.

Seating Protocol:

After discussion, the group agreed that the current protocol (informal) should remain in place.

No Public Comment

The next SRRTTF meeting is Wednesday January 27, 2016 at the Spokane County Water Resource Center
The next Technical Track Work Group meeting is January 6, 2016 at the Washington Department of Ecology.