

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

MEETING SUMMARY

April 23, 2014 | 9:00am – 12:30pm

Liberty Lake Sewer & Water District Office | 22510 E. Mission Ave. | Liberty Lake, WA 99019

Attendees

Voting Members and Alternates

Tom Agnew*, Bijay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District

Galen Buterbaugh* – Lake Spokane Association

Bud Leber*, Roger Crawford – Kaiser Aluminum

Doug Krapas* – Inland Empire

David Moss*, Rob Lindsay – Spokane County

Mike Petersen* – Lands Council

Sandy Phillips* – Spokane Regional Health District

Dale Arnold*, Lynn Schmidt, Elizabeth Schoedel, Rick Romero – City of Spokane

**Denotes Voting Member*

Advisors

Adriane Borgias, Jim Bellatty, Brandee Era-Miller (*on phone*), Karin Fedderson (*on phone*), Ted Hamlin, Keith Seiders (*on phone*), Grant Pfeifer – WA Dept. of Ecology

Tom Eaton – EPA

Dan Redline – Idaho DEQ

Bryce Robberts – Avista

Public

John Beacham – Post Falls

Lisa Dally Wilson – Dally Environmental

David Dilks (*on phone*), Cathy Whiting (*on phone*) – LimnoTech

Ken Windram – Hayden Area Sewer & Water

Don Keil, Kris Holm (*on phone*) – City of Coeur d'Alene

Greg Moller – University of Idaho

Robin Nimmer – Terra Graphics

Shannon Brattebo – TetraTech

Introductions: Get Started & Review Agenda

Facilitator Chris Page (Ruckelshaus Center) welcomed everyone to the meeting. No changes were made to the agenda.

City of Spokane Integrated Plan

Rick Romero, City of Spokane, gave a presentation to the Task Force on the City of Spokane's Draft Integrated Clean Water Plan. Slides are posted on the srrttf.org website. The Task Force wondered if this plan would qualify for Model Toxics Control Act funding, a funding source the Task Force is considering.

To accompany its Integrated Plan, the City of Spokane drafted a letter to Washington State Department of Ecology Director Maia Bellon and Governor Inslee urging their support. The City requested the Task Force consider signing the letter as a group. It was brought up that other key legislators and local policymakers would also benefit from seeing the letter. Members of the Task Force would like to receive federal funding. There have been a couple recent attempts to get a federally-funded program in place for the Spokane River Watershed similarly to the Puget Sound Partnership and the Columbia River Basin.

Members of the Task Force would like the Spokane River to receive state or federal funding for implementation of its Integrated Clean Water plan. There have been a couple attempts over the past couple years to encourage Congress to provide federal funding in the Columbia River Basin similar to the Puget Sound Partnership.

ACTION ITEM: Elizabeth Schoedel will send Chris Page and Aubri Denevan a copy of the letter to distribute to the Task Force for consideration of signing/sending as a group.

Spokane River Fish Tissue Monitoring 2012 Results Summary Presentation

Keith Seiders (Ecology) presented information on the freshwater fish contaminant monitoring program. Ecology has been doing exploratory toxics monitoring since 2001 and long-term monitoring since 2009. These charts will be in a report issued next month. Some conclusions of the monitoring:

- PCBs and PBDEs in Spokane River fish remain elevated compared to other areas in Washington. PCBs are often more than 10 times Washington's water quality standard of 5.3 ug/kg.
- The high variability associated with sampling and measuring organic contaminants in fish makes it difficult to discern spatial and temporal differences.
- Spatial differences were seen for PCBs and PBDEs in 48% of the pairings tested (22 of 42 site-species cases). There were few consistent patterns about overall differences among sites. Exceptions include:
 - PCBs were higher in all species from Mission Park and Upper Lake Spokane compared to other sites.
 - Samples from Little Falls pool and the Spokane Arm of Lake Roosevelt consistently had some of the lowest levels of PCBs and PBDEs.
 - PBDEs in the Mountain Whitefish samples from Nine-mile dam were about 4-10 times higher than in fish from other sites, and are the highest levels seen in Washington.
 - PBDEs in all species from the Nine-mile and Upper Lake Spokane sites were higher than PBDEs in fish from other sites.
- In most cases, contaminant levels in fish between 2005 and 2012 have not changed.

Q: is there congener-specific data?

A: There is a spreadsheet available on Ecology's Environmental Information Management (EIM) database.

Results from Ecology Water Column Testing

Brandee Era-Miller gave a presentation focused on Spokane River monitoring done in the fall of 2012 and 2013.

Objectives:

- Preliminary Surface Water Monitoring Study.
- Test the efficacy of several different collection methods for PCBs and other toxics in the Spokane River.
- Test different analytical methods in conjunction with collection methods.
- Inform and make recommendations to aide in the design of a long-term monitoring program for toxics in the Spokane River.

Technical memo for this monitoring effort will be completed by the end of May. Surface water testing results could not distinguish PCB concentrations from the noise of the analysis. Continuous Low-level Aquatic Monitor (CLAM) results were reproducible but there was concern about bias in the results. Ecology is currently entering the data to its Environmental Information Management database; this will be final at the end of June and a third party will analyze the data.

Kris Holm commented that after reading the report and looking over the results, it seems that the Method 1668c is not successful on water samples. Brandee feels it is successful, but not at the one-liter sample size. She would like to talk more about this at the next meeting.

Technical Track Work Group (TTWG) Report & Technical Topics

Recommendation for a Lab Service Provider (Decision) – Bud talked about the lab comparison sheet he put together based on the Request for Qualifications and Quote responses. Quantification limits were the same. ALS lab has not worked with CLAMs, while AXYS Analytical and Pacific Rim labs have. Bud provided some general observations:

- ALS would not guarantee results down to the standard, only five times above it.
- Pacific Rim would guarantee 3-5 times below the standard.
- Vista can't get their analytical results down to the levels the Task Force needs.

There was a question about how the sample bottles are shipped out. They are typically purchased in lots. AXYS currently tests for contamination in a bottle from each lot. Other labs will do this for an additional charge. Both Pacific Rim and AXYS have been doing work for groups in Spokane or work in similar situations in the water.

To some extent, pricing reflects the instrumentation limits. Karin Feddersen recommended the Task Force first decide the sampling method and then choose the lab. Her recommendation was the CLAM method. There was a discussion about the concerns with the CLAM, which did not work well on tests of discharge water at Kaiser.

After the Task Force discussed the bids, they decided to go with AXYS. They also wanted to continue exploring the CLAM sampling option.

Action Item: Continue exploring the CLAM volume issue at the next TTWG meeting (a key question was whether or not the volume issue can be addressed). (Complete)

DECISION – Continue exploring the utility of CLAM sampling (*decide later*)

DECISION – The Task Force decided to use AXYS as their lab and authorized ACE to enter into a contract with AXYS.

Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)/Sampling & Analysis Plan (SAP) – Adriane Borgias passed out a summary of comments on the QAPP/SAP. Before the data is collected, the QAPP must go through an internal Ecology review and approval. Ecology will approve the QAPP if it meets the Ecology checklist. This includes incorporating comments from EPA (Dan Brown) and Ecology (Dale Norton). The SRRTTF was asked to give permission to the TTWG to finalize the QAPP. The document needs tighter the language, clear with organizational responsibilities, and alignment with the contract documents.

Adriane Borgias, Bud Leber, Dan Brown, Dale Norton, Dave Dilks/Cathy Whiting, and Arianne Fernandez have been working to get this ready for final approval by the Task Force. This group will meet again to finalize these two documents so we can stay on our timeline.

The QAPP will be finalized after the contractors (laboratories and sampling contractors) are selected since those contractors might suggest logical revisions. The SRRTTF asked if Ecology will approve the QAPP quickly, once it is finalized. A: yes, it is expected to be a quick process. Ecology is the only group that needs to approve the QAPP at this time, because funding comes from the State via the \$350K legislative proviso. Adriane has been working with the staff at Ecology too.

Request For Qualifications/Proposals (RFQ/P) for Sampling Draft (Chris asked that all firms that will be bidding on this to please step outside the room until this is discussion is done.) Rob Lindsay has been developing the Sampling RFQ/P and has kept the language as simple as possible, referring interested parties to the QAPP/SAP. The first page will be the transmittal letter. The most substantive aspect of the RFP is that it is broken down into four tasks—mobilization and, preparation, training, sample collection, and completion report. It was suggested we also consider the range of skills that a sampling contractor needs to have, including the ability to do CLAM sampling, and to ask that contractors consider how to use Ecology assistance in the sampling effort.

DECISION: Once the QAPP/SAP is approved by the workgroup and assuming that LimnoTech is okay with it, the bidding process for the laboratories and sampling contractors should begin.

Ecology Confidence Limit Testing – LimnoTech gave an overview of the memo. The main change was the locations for sampling: the Lake Coeur d'Alene and Marabou sites are accessible by wading. The purpose of this testing is to determine if the larger sample size (2.36-liter vs. 1-liter) and the laboratory will give

useful results. It's a dry run to see if sampling methods are useful for the ultra-low levels of PCBs expected in the river. An understanding of this is needed before the August sampling.

Update from Administrative & Contracting Entity (ACE) on Project Manager for Sampling Effort – Chris Page asked the group to think about how the technical leadership will be structured as more tasks and components are added. Project Manager for the Sampling would be LimnoTech, who will have someone in the field to oversee it. That would go into LimnoTech's Phase Two budget.

Timeline for Technical Work – The submittal date for the sampling bids will be May 30, 2014.

Updates & Announcements

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) – The SRRTTF MOA was posted for comments. Several organizations submitted their comments to the Ruckelshaus Center by phone and email. Chris Page asked that any comments submitted by phone should also be submitted to him in writing. The MOA won't be finalized until the Idaho NPDES permits are issued. Adriane Borgias that the comments received to date be posted to ensure transparency of process.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to post SRRTTF MOA and comments received to date. (Complete)

City of Spokane Product Sampling: List of Products – Lynn Schmidt provided a list of the products that are to be tested as a result of the \$50,000 grant that was received from Ecology. She wanted to know if the Task Force wanted to add any other products to be tested by the City of Spokane. She's currently narrowing down the list. This is a collaborative project and the list has been sent to the lower Duwamish, Pullman/Asotin County, and others involved with the grant.

Thermoplastic tape and gasoline were suggested additions to the list.

ACTION ITEM: Task Force members, send any additional items to Lynn Schmidt at the City of Spokane (or Ruckelshaus Center) by May 7. (Complete)

SRRTTF "Research Wish List" for the Center for Environmental Research, Education, and Outreach (CEREO) – The Task Force recommended that we restart conversations with CEREO after the new director has settled into her role. The SRRTTF would like their needs to be matched up with CEREO research opportunities. The Ruckelshaus Center may send out a reminder and ask for additional topics to be submitted at a later date.

Ruckelshaus/Facilitation Contract – Chris reported that the Ruckelshaus Center contract will run out at the end of July. The Center has drafted a scope and budget for next year based on the current budget, with some proposed scope changes. A Pullman or Spokane-based intern is included to take over the in-person tasks Aubri Denevan has been providing. This will save on salary and travel costs. The Ruckelshaus Center contract discussion will be added to the agenda for the May Task Force meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Add the Ruckelshaus/Facilitation Contract discussion to the May 28 Task Force meeting agenda. (Complete)

Gonzaga Student Seminar – Several members of the Task Force attended the student seminar at Gonzaga. They were very impressed.

Arianne Fernandez commented that she has received several letters from high school kids interested in the Spokane River.

WSU Competition: Saving the Spokane – Dave Moss and Adriane Borgias attended the competition in Pullman, called “Saving the Spokane.” Dave served as a judge. He was impressed by how things evolved from draft to final. The students are interested in being involved in implementation of their ideas. The organizer is calling Adriane next week to talk about how the students can help this effort.

ACTION ITEM: Adriane Borgias will post links to the final projects on the srттf.org website.

Public Comment

No comments.

The next SRRTTF Task Force meeting is May 28, 2014 at Spokane County Water Resource Center
The next Tech Track Work Group meeting is May 7, 2014 from 10am – 12pm at the Department of Ecology
