

Spokane River Regional toxics Task Force –TTWG Meeting

DRAFT Meeting Summary

August 5, 2015

Department of Ecology | 4601 N. Monroe St. | Spokane, Washington

Attendees:

Kevin Booth – Avista

Galen Buterbaugh – Lake Spokane Association

Lisa Dally-Wilson (phone) – Dally Environmental

Dave Dilks (phone) – LimnoTech

Brandee Era-Miller (phone) – WA Dept. of Ecology (Ecology)

Michael Friese (phone) – Ecology

Kris Holm (phone) – City of Coeur d’Alene

Bud Leber – Kaiser Aluminum

Rob Lindsay – Spokane County

Sandy Phillips – Spokane Regional Health District

Greg Lahti – Department of Transportation

Bryce Robbert (phone) – Avista

Chris Page (Video) – Ruckelshaus Center

Dave Moss – Spokane County

Kara Whitman – Ruckelshaus Center

Introductions and Agenda Review

After a round of introductions, Chris Page went over the agenda. No changes were made to the agenda.

2015 Dry Weather Sampling (Barker to Spokane)

Dave Dilks explained that the Task Force will conduct dry weather monitoring in August to confirm/refine results of 2014 synoptic survey. This will require a new Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), done as an addendum to the Task Force-approved 2014 QAPP. Key changes in the addendum include: shorter spatial and temporal scale, new rainfall rules, refined blank correction language, and a standard operating procedure for stream flow measurement.

- Spatial extent: Greenacres to Spokane Gage (added in Mirabeau Park Station)
- Temporal extent: Five days, river sampling every day and discharge sampling on day 1, 3 and 5.
- Rainfall Rules: wet weather event = Average of 0.2” of rain at eight reporting stations throughout Spokane. If wet weather event occurs then they will postpone initiation if rainfall likelihood is greater than 50% for the any of the first three days of sampling. If an event occurs on days 1-4, then they will delay 2 days and then continue. If the event occurs after day 4, then they will terminate.
- Blank correction: The “3x blank correction procedure” used in Task Force sampling efforts is a “placeholder” or “method used at this time” but calculated values may be adjusted in the future using other blank correction methods deemed appropriate.
- Sampling will most likely commence on August 17th.
- Standard procedures for flow monitoring added, including manual measurements at multiple stations.
- Bud Leber: all contracts are in place. Gravity has been in contact with SVL in Idaho, making arrangements for bottle pickup. AXYS has shipped all of their stuff. All the pieces are in place to do the sampling event. Just now need to get the QAPP in place and ready to go.
- Rob Lindsay: the community college has indicated the Green Street gage equipment as of 8.4.15. All indications are that by the end of this week we can start collecting real time flow.
- Need to be very clear with the sampling team how important the flow measurements are. Back up measurement of stage, if gage is not properly functioning.

Q&A/Comments:

- **Q.** Can the sampling team accommodate a two-day delay? **A.** undesirable, but they can make it work. Rob said concerns over the protocol have been addressed given the broader geographic area.
- Adriane will review the QAPP Addendum and return to Dave Dilks today (8.5.15). Dave explained there is one change in the Blank Correction discussion. Just adding on a task to an existing QAPP.
- Kris Holm asked for clarification on the QAPP approval process: is it full Task Force approval? Since the Task Force approved using the same QAPP as 2014 with a small addendum, the meeting planning group (Chris/Bud/Lisa/Adriane) believed it would only need Ecology review. Kris noted that as we go forward we need to be clear on the protocol with Task Force approval. Adriane explained that since some funding comes from Ecology, they are required to review and approve the QAPP.
- Blank correction and data management will continue to be issues.
- A manual sample of flow at Green Street can be done if there is a calibration delay at the gage. Brandee Era-Miller explained that a tape down measurement could correlate back to the flow. There is an extensive data history at this location. However with the old equipment; over the summer the unit would overwrite data.

ACTION ITEM: Kevin Booth to find out how to access the Spokane gage during the sampling event.

Groundwater Survey Proposal

Adriane explained that Spokane County has a set of wells that can be used for sampling; Ecology has some funds via the Urban Waters Program. Ecology (Adriane and Ted Hamlin) met with Spokane County (Rob Lindsay, Ben Brattebo, Mike Hermanson) to discuss what would a groundwater survey look like:

- Collect three sets of data over different flow regimes.
- Have opportunity to do something concurrently with the dry weather sampling this summer.
- This is an Ecology project to be completed with coordination between Ecology and Spokane County.
- There is a QAPP that can be amended for this project, though it will need a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- Proposed locations for sampling: Sullivan Park and a location near the community college.

Rob Lindsay added some clarifications. The well at the National Guard location is down-gradient, but not from City Steel. Waikiki Springs is more from the north section in the Hillyard Trough area. The Sullivan Park well is on north side of the river in Sullivan Park.

Adriane explained that they want to make sure the TTWG is informed. The budget is in process, but not final yet. They have \$10,000 allocated to begin sampling; if the cost is under \$10,000, then the project does not have to go out to bid (AXYS could do lab work). This will cover the 7-8 samples.

The study will be a "Collaborative survey of groundwater wells in Spokane Aquifer funded by Ecology using selected Spokane County resource wells." The project is pending budget approval by Ecology and the scope is subject to change based on budget and coordination with other Ecology studies.

Q&A/Comments

- Gary Stevens (IDEQ) is interested in this project, may have some funding to help with monitoring.
- Galen Buterbaugh added some context to the Lake Spokane groundwater area. The boundaries do include Lake Spokane. There is a lot of anecdotal evidence of groundwater coming into the lake.

ACTION ITEM: Rob Lindsay to contact Gary Stevens about the groundwater sampling project.

Rob explained that Spokane County is interested in data collected by Ecology (Urban Waters) in 2013, including some sediment and seep information downstream of Upriver Dam. **Q.** Where is this information, as it could be included in the mass balance and could inform work we are doing right now? **A.** Adriane explained that these data are not available yet, as Ecology has not reviewed the data yet. This data is next in the queue to put into Ecology's Environmental Information Management (EIM) system, slated for October.

ACTION ITEM: Adriane Borgias to post the background/ QAPP for these data to the Task Force website.

Trout Lodge/Avista Fish for Testing:

Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) project to sample fish (for the Little Spokane hatchery and Avista stocking) from Trout Lodge has been approved and moving forward. The project is listed as a "will do" in their scoping process. Michael Friese is now looking at data for the PCB verification for the Little Spokane River. He will write the QAPP for the Trout Lodge project in October. He will sit down and talk with Adriane and other Task Force members prior to writing the QAPP.

Q&A/Comments:

- Michael Friese suggests looking at PCB congeners. They can sample for all congeners while also measuring total PCBs (food, water column, fish etc.).
- **Q.** Whole fish or fillet? **A.** Michael: If the objective is to look at PCB loading, then do whole fish, if objective is to look at EPA criteria for 303d listing then use fillet. There is value in both. Adriane explained that the original proposal was a mass balance on the fish hatchery; if we only do fillet we lose this ability.
- Little Spokane PCB verification-sample collection complete (water filtered with clam disks, sediment and fish caught from Spokane River, looking as fillet as this is a 303d listing verification study).
- It may be valuable to look at fillet as well as whole fish. Nothing stops trout from going into Little Spokane River. Would be valuable to see this as well, though how much can be done depends on money.
- Screening study. Look at levels of PCBs in fish first, then if there is a problem identified, then look at water in and water out. \$650 for a fish tissue analysis.
- Lisa Dally-Wilson added that Avista uses these fish to stock Lake Spokane. If they are stocking the lake with fish that contain PCBs, then we need some congener analysis. The Task Force needs to take a look at what kind of loading there is into the system from fish, as well as compare different hatchery fish. Thus whole fish should be used for this study, particularly if we are budget limited.
- (30 fish total, 15 from each). Fish composites, about \$8000, is half of the allocated budget so there is enough money to do the congener analysis.
- The Task Force could support EAP, if more analysis is needed.
- Galen noted that fish feed is a constantly changing picture. The fish have six different diets throughout their growth, and the protein source for any given feed changes constantly depending on the market. To gauge PCBs in feed, food would need to be collected throughout the growing season of the fish.
- Fish were stocked may early June (15 from each batch). After analysis, get fish from 2016 stocking as well.

Discussion Conclusion: *The group agreed that since the Trout Lodge/Avista sampling is NOT a 303d listing exercise, but rather to gauge loading of PCBs into the river, EAP should look at whole fish, not fillets—and do total congeners and total PCBs, since that is what the water quality standard measures (not toxic equivalents).*

ACTION ITEM: Adriane to verify when fish were collected and send to Michael Friese of EAP.

Comprehensive Plan (five bullets from EPA response to judge): to be completed by Dec. 31st 2016

- A. A summary of the available data for PCBs in Spokane River water, fish tissue, and sediments.
 - a. Compile all available, known data.

- b. LimnoTech has already done much of this work. Assigned to technical consultant, some reports are already completed.
- B. A list of the identified sources of PCBs in the Spokane River with estimates of current loadings.
 - a. Include stormwater component.
- C. A range of BMPs expected to reduce or eliminate PCBs for each source or category of sources.
- D. Recommendations for BMP implementation.
 - a. Rudimentary list has been started, with a work group assigned to work on this.
- E. Recommendations for future studies to address remaining data gaps
 - a. What is it we still think we need to know?

Bud said EPA told the judge this (A-E above) is what the Comprehensive Plan must have in it. The Task Force will need to complete the plan by 12/31/16, when EPA will decide whether it meets requirements (if not, TMDL begins). We must start thinking about what the Task Force believes each of these five things mean, and ask for EPA guidance. The Task force does not want to find out January 1st of 2017 that the plan was not enough.

The question is: What can we put in motion now? (Bullets A, B and E) Can start outlining what the Task Force thinks this ought to be and confer with Laurie Mann and/or Brian Nickel. LimnoTech is already putting together a PCB comprehensive plan for Chicago. Dave has a good idea how to compile this type of work. Dave can put together the framework under their current coordination scope.

Q&A/Comments

- Kris Holm asked if the Task Force can expect more guidance from EPA. The position of the City of Coeur d'Alene depends on how this affects waters in Idaho and 303d listing. Also need feedback from Ecology.
- Greg Lahti suggested the Task Force put together an outline, and ask EPA if it's going in the right direction.
- Adriane suggested communication with EPA should be with Christine Psyk (Associate Director, EOA Region 10), looping in Laurie and Brian. Also Dan Opalski (Director, EPA Region 10 Office of Water & Watersheds). Schedule a conference call, or have one or both attend a Task Force meeting.

ACTION ITEM: Dave Dilks and LimnoTech to provide a general outline of the Comprehensive Plan by August 27th.

ACTION ITEM: Bud to draft letter to EPA on the direction of the comprehensive plan, to be discussed (for decision) at September 3rd Task Force meeting. (TTWG meets the day before). The cover letter to be posted on August 27th. Tech Track work group to weigh in on the cover letter to EPA and Dave Dilks outline.

Kris Holm requested it be noted in the summary notes: Need to better understand the Ecology role in this determination—who makes the decisions at EPA, and who are the decision makers at Ecology?

Adriane Borgias said this is EPA's plan (submitted to Judge). Ecology already has the Measurable Progress determination, which will inform any changes to permits over the next year. At this point Ecology will not be making any changes to their regulatory structure, or how they operate in regards to the Task Force.

Deliverables for Ecology \$375,000 Contract

The final invoice for the biennium requires certain deliverables. ACE received the list of deliverables, most of which have been completed. The electronic deliverables from studies need to be transmitted to Ecology. Also documentation on side projects (hydroseed, Vactor waste etc) all need to be sent to Ecology.

The next SRRTTF meeting is Thursday, September 3, 2015 at the Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District Office.
The next Technical Track Work Group meeting is September 2, 2015 at the Washington Department of Ecology.