

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Meeting and Technical Track

Work Group Meeting (TTWG)

November 4, 2015 | 10:00am-12:00pm

Department of Ecology | N. 4601 Monroe St. | Spokane WA, 99205

Attendees:

Bijay Adams—Liberty Lake Sewer & Water District
John Beacham—City of Post Falls
Ben Brattebo—Spokane County
Jeff Donovan—City of Spokane
Adriane Borgias—WA Department of Ecology
Galen Buterbaugh—Lake Spokane Association
Ben Brattebo—Spokane County
Lisa Dally-Wilson (video)—Dally Environmental
Dave Dilks (phone)—Limnotech
Brandee Era-Miller (phone)—WA Dept of Ecology
Ted Hamlin—WA Dept of Ecology (Ecology)
Mike Hermanson (phone)—Spokane County
Kris Holm—City of Coeur d'Alene

Doug Krapas—Inland Empire Paper
Greg Lahti—WA Dept of Transportation (WSDOT)
Bud Leber—Kaiser Aluminum
Dave McBride (phone)—WA Dept of Health
Dave Moss—Spokane County
Brian Nickel (phone)—US Environmental Protection Agency
Chris Page (video)—Ruckelshaus Center
Sandy Phillips—Spokane Regional Health District
Bryce Robbert—Avista
Jeremy Ryf—Ecology
Kara Whitman—Ruckelshaus Center
Ken Windram—Hayden Area Regional Sewer and Water Board

Introductions and Agenda Review:

Agenda item: Ben Brattebo discussed the three memos (quality assurance (QA) review of 2014 August sampling, data usability assessment, field evaluation) prepared by LimnoTech for the 2014 sampling. These QA documents were contract obligations and posted to the Task Force website (at http://srrttf.org/?page_id=3189). There was concern these documents did not have a formal Task Force review process. The County reviewed the documents and would like their comments and the documents sent out for full Task Force review to inform the preparation of the 2015 study results. This needs to be discussed at the Task Force level (level of review, data release management).

Dave Moss said Andy Dunau is planning the 2015 Spokane River Forum scheduled for March 23rd-24th. The planning committee would like to have a 1.5 hour session on the Task Force activities including: summary of data analysis, sources of PCBs, development of Comprehensive Plan, and inadvertent PCBs production. Andy is also hoping that Lisa Rodenburg could present at the forum.

ACTION ITEM: Dave Moss to send County comments to the Ruckelshaus Center, to post comments and LimnoTech memos for full Task Force review. (COMPLETE)

2015 Sampling Report

Most of the Data have arrived. There was a lab issue with one sample from Green Street; they could not get a value. Bud Leber has sent over an archive sample. Early results:

- There was some lab blank contamination.
- Results show similar trends to the 2014 sampling (the data show a gradual increase from upstream to downstream).
- Limnotech will work on the data over the next few weeks.
- It was thought that PCBs in dust from wildfires could show up in the trip blanks, but those were not considerably higher than lab blanks, so there is likely not an atmospheric contamination component for the 2015 sampling.

Q&A/Comments (C)/Discussion

- **Q.** Why is lab blank concentration higher? **A.** Don't know at this point. Will have to look at the congeners and where they are located. **C.** Lab blanks over 100 (pico-grams/liter) are not rare for Post Falls, City of Spokane, or Liberty Lake. **C.** Concentrations may be higher because of lower water.
- **C.** Please post results as soon as possible, so data can be reviewed by all parties. Some Task Force members requested to access to data before it is blank-corrected. Other Task Force members would prefer data get fully QA/QC'd before public release so it is not misinterpreted. The County requested and received 2015 data already. **Q:** Should data go through QA/QC before it is made public?
 - The data management work group will discuss when and how data get shared and what level of QA/QC makes sense. The group should get accurate descriptions of data, used appropriately, and establish a protocol for how to handle the data in the future.
 - Request that Task Force members see data at the same time as other Task Force members. This should occur with data after QA/QC; raw data are available by request for those who want it before LimnoTech finishes QA/QC (data may still include errors).
 - The data received from AXYS cannot be altered. LimnoTech cannot alter this through a QA/QC process. LimnoTech will review for errors, submit to AXYS
- Adriane Borgias: Ecology and the County received raw data for the springs and groundwater wells. All are less than laboratory blanks (all in 45 to 70 range); the highest was a rinsate on the equipment. Ecology to send this data to LimnoTech. Highest congener was PCB 11.

ACTION ITEM: Data Management work group to consider the protocol for making data available.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to note on the Task Force website that the data posted with the 2014 Spokane River Study (http://srrtf.org/?page_id=3189) is not blank-corrected. (COMPLETE)

Comprehensive Plan

Lisa Dally Wilson reviewed edits and comments on the Comprehensive Plan and Scope of Work and Budget. Areas needing to be addressed: estimation of PCBs in stormwater and sediment; other sampling; including sources of concern without being able to quantify them; alternatives to include and period of time to come to consensus (on BMPs and responsible parties, etc.). Adriane also discussed a suggested edit on Page 3 (nine elements EPA outlines for inclusion in a Watershed Plan).

Things to consider as the Task Force moves through the comprehensive plan process:

- Additional data? What is highest priority given funds and time available?
- Sources not quantified: how will this be addressed without further data collection?
- Sediments: Legacy and ongoing sources will get addressed via stormwater source control, not sediment cleanup. Would these assumptions apply to sediment behind Nine Mile Dam? **A.** Will look at available data and look at the exchange rate to make estimates of the diffusive exchange, then multiply that by what we know about concentration. We can work with available sediment data.
- This must be an adaptive plan that incorporates new information as it is gathered.
- Work groups to help reach consensus (BMPs and responsible parties):
- The Plan will defer to BMPs in Permits, but include BMPs associated with non-point sources.
- July-August, when many take vacation, is a difficult time to ask the Task Force to do a lot of work.
- BMPs and Implementation of Comprehensive Plan
 - BMP focus group can help streamline the decision-making process. Group has been meeting but needs a permittee in the focus group. Dave Dilks is participating in this group.
 - BMP implementation: who will do it without funding or regulatory backing?

- Monitoring: Tracking reductions is difficult with non-point sources, and monitoring is not in the scope for LimnoTech. Could this be implemented at the BMP level? Ecology has existing programs for collecting monitoring data. If the addition of this monitoring goes into a high level of detail, LimnoTech will have to expand its scope and budget.
- Question about “Load reductions” – can we phrase this differently (estimated, not targeted)?
 - Adriane: Targets are important for moving a group like this forward. The lack of benchmarks was a Sierra Club criticism of how this group operates.
 - Proposed language “and the expected load reductions” ... “We estimate these BMPs together will bring ... grams of reduced loading”.

ACTION ITEM: John and Adriane will send in the edited text to Dave Dilks and Ruckelshaus to post one week from today for Task Force review and decision at the next TF meeting (COMPLETE).

SRRTTF 2016 Workshop

The Workshop Planning group (Brandee Era-Miller, Dave Dilks, John Beacham, Joanne Swarski, Adriane Borgias, Lisa Dally Wilson, Bijay Adams, and Kara Whitman) recently met. Lisa gave an overview of the proposed workshop, to be held in late January or early February. The work group is scheduling more meetings for November and December and would like input from Technical Track Work Group.

Workshop Concepts:

Day 1:

- Session 1: LimnoTech present on 2014 and 2015 sampling and what has been learned to date.
- Session 2: Fish tissue, water quality standards and listings, bio-concentration, lag time etc.)

Day 2:

- Session 3: Comprehensive Plan and BMPs
- Session 4: Discussion, data gaps, scope of work

Day 3: Data Management (optional attendance)

Q&A/Discussion

- Large volume of material to keep manageable for a 2.5 day workshop. Need to make sure it is all high-value.
- Data management, storage, and using data to make management decisions.
- Start at a high level. As we gain more information, future workshops and sessions can get more specific.
- Chris Donley invited to the Fish section (plans to attend the next Task Force meeting).

ACTION ITEM: Kara Whitman to check on availability of CenterPlace and other options and bring options to the Task Force meeting (COMPLETE).

Qs to Guide Rob Lindsay & Gary Stevens Presenting on aquifer/river interchange at Nov. TF meeting:

Questions/topics:

- A, B Cs of groundwater. Understand the language. (SVRP Aquifer atlas)
- Flow direction varies over time. Understanding the nature of groundwater would be good, for understanding whether groundwater is entering or leaving the river—how does this dynamic impact sampling and analysis?
- Sources and ages of aquifer water (travel time)?
- Sources: rainfall or snowmelt directly in the Spokane Area.

Sampling: Data gaps

- Dave Dilks: analyzing previously-collected data to determine 1) good annual estimate of stormwater contribution to the river and 2) extent of groundwater sources (if data shows it is not significant, may not need to do this). Dave does not think we can develop a monitoring plan that can collect and analyze data in time for incorporation into the plan by next year.
- A retrospective analysis could be done to better understand stormwater loads. The method Bud proposed (for \$7,500) would give Dave what he needs to improve understanding of stormwater loads (calculate estimated annual loading specific to municipal stormwater). Can get annual volume of runoff and apply a PCB concentration, and then calculate the incremental load of each stormwater event (use increase in flow and assumed concentration of PCBs in stormwater runoff). All combined = stormwater load. Greg Lahti and Jeff Donovan noted you cannot see the stormwater events in gauges. A better approach would be to look at city data and do a regional regression of runoff. This could be a recommendation for future studies.
- Jeff Donovan and the City of Spokane are working on an estimate for the Cochran basin (using a regression technique).

ACTION ITEM: Jeff Donovan to connect with the group working on the estimate for the Cochran Basin and an estimate of stormwater load (COMPLETE).

Other data:

- Groundwater sampling results are a bit perplexing. There is a discrepancy between the data and information from the synoptic sampling.
- Need to do a data mining exercise to take a close look at some of the sites that Martha Maggi pointed out in her memo. Either do sampling (may not have time), or figure out how to address this for a future study in the comp plan.
- The Task Force has a seasonal understanding of concentrations coming out of Lake Coeur d'Alene, with samples from two occasions (May and August). Is this enough information? Presentation on this data from the County?

ACTION ITEM: Adriane Borgias, with the County, to put out a technical memo with what they learned and recommendations.

ACTION ITEM: Idaho dischargers sample two times a year in the river. This data will be made available to LimnoTech.

Next full Task Force meeting is November 18, 2015, 9:00am-12:30pm, at the Spokane County Water Resource Center

Next scheduled Tech Work Group meeting is December 2, 2015 from 10am-12pm at Dept. of Ecology