

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

Technical Track Work Group Meeting

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

September 7, 2016

Meeting Documents: <http://srtrtf.org/?p=6937>

Attendees:

BiJay Adams –Liberty Lake Sewer & Water District
Adriane Borgias –Department of Ecology
Galen Buterbaugh –Lake Spokane Association
Lisa Dally Wilson (phone) –Dally Environmental
Dave Dilks (phone) –LimnoTech
Jeff Donovan –City of Spokane
Brandee Era Miller (phone) –Dept of Ecology
Ted Hamlin –Dept of Ecology (Ecology)
Mike Hermanson –Spokane County

Kris Holm (phone) –City of Coeur d’Alene
Jim Kimball –JUB Engineering
Doug Krapas –Inland Empire Paper
Dave McBride (phone) –WA Dept of Health
Dave Moss –Spokane County
Brian Nickel (phone) –U.S. Environmental
Protection Agency (EPA)
Bryce Robbert –Avista
Natalie Rodgers (phone) –Lathum and Watkins
Kara Whitman –Ruckelshaus Center

Introductions and Agenda Review:

After a round of introductions, Kara Whitman went over the agenda. No changes were made.

Groundwater Data Validation: Dave Dilks has the AXYS lab sheets, but needs some more information.

ACTION ITEM: Mike Hermanson to provide necessary info to Dave Dilks.

Monthly Monitoring:

Dave Dilks described the status of monthly PCB monitoring in the River and gave recommendations on when to do the next two rounds of sampling to finish out the 2016 sampling year. The monthly monitoring is done to determine seasonal variability of concentrations of PCBs in the river. An informal objective of the sampling is also to opportunistically assess the concentrations during wet weather.

Gravity conducted monitoring in the spring of 2016. LimnoTech assessed data over the summer to decide if fall monitoring would be worthwhile. Dave recommends the Task Force conduct fall monitoring occur and asked for feedback on which months to sample. The highest likelihood of unique flow ranges occurs in November and December. The Task Force could sample over three months, but it would require a change in scope. Dave gave a tentative recommendation for October and November.

Findings thus far:

- Low PCB concentrations coming out of Lake Coeur d’Alene.
- Concentration near Spokane are somewhat lower than for synoptic surveys (higher flows = greater dilution).
- The levels for all but one sample at Nine Mile in May complied with the state water quality standard.
- Concentrations low at Latah Creek, even given a wet weather event during the March sampling.

Q&A/Comments:

- **Q.** Why are 2016 lower? **A.** The river flows are different – 10,000 CFS for 2016 means lots more dilution.
- **C.** Express in the graph that 30 pg/l showed PCB levels in the “noise” of the detection limits.
- **C.** Legend should specify the months/years that data is from more clearly.
- **C.** Plot flow with the concentrations or convert to mass, to account for the flow and concentration.

- **Q.** Why does the flow increase in October, November, and December? **A.** The Post Falls dam is key: Bryce Robbert explained that Avista does control work in these months, and is starting the weather-related drawdown now. The last couple of years have been unusual (historically, rainfall increases in the latter part of October). October has the first significant rain events, as opposed to later in November and December.
- **Q.** Cost per sampling event? **A.** \$30,000 per event. All inclusive.
- **Q.** Should the Task Force plan in a different way to prepare for opportunistic sampling in wet weather?
- **C.** Adriane said there are five different river conditions over the year (shown in an Avista presentation).
- **C.** When the “First Flush” of stormwater hits (when fall rains first come), can we collect a grab sample to help see aerial deposition? **A.** This would require a new scope and local field crews.
- **C.** Graph the correlation between concentration and flow.

DECISION: The Technical Track Work group will tentatively recommend late October/early November and Early December for monthly sampling pending a decision by the full Task Force.

ACTION ITEM: Dave to look at the info from Avista (Bryce Robbert and Steve Esch) and from Adriane Borgias and make a final recommendation on future monthly sampling at the Task Force Meeting. (COMPLETE)

Potential Groundwater PCB Source Up-gradient of Kaiser: (up to 55 mg/day) – The Comp Plan will recommend identifying up-gradient sources; is this a Task Force activity, or is another entity doing it (Kaiser is not doing any identification up-gradient (only their site)? A TTWG member suggested looking at the data to better refine where an upgradient source might be coming from. The Task Force could propose it for an Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) project. The homolog analysis suggests a source near Greene Street, up-gradient of Kaiser. To identify it, more data mining and coordination with Ecology’s Toxics Cleanup Program (TCP) is needed. Once TCP has determined an up-gradient concentration Kaiser is not responsible for, the Task Force can try to identify the source.

Questions:

- **Q.** Will TCP look at congener fingerprint on the Kaiser site?
- **Q.** Groundwater study being done – how does this relate to river contamination? **A.** Need to know how far the background contamination extends. LimnoTech doing this work for Ecology – report out soon.
- **Q.** What regulatory mechanism can help explore the up-gradient source? **A.** Coordinate with TCP/MTCA. Need clarity on how this would happen. Task Force can encourage that investigations continue.

ACTION ITEM: Dave Dilks to put a description of how TCP does their investigations in the comprehensive plan.

ACTION ITEM: Task Force send comments on Gravity 2015 sampling report to Dave Dilks by September 21st. (COMPLETE)

Comp Plan Update:

- Information and Education activities. Education and Outreach work group to address this -October.
- Draft Comp plan will come out next Thursday, September 15th, 2016.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to send out the Draft Comprehensive Plan on September 15th for full Task Force Review. (COMPLETE)

Move October 5th TTWG Meeting?

Susan Braley is in charge of Ecology’s Policy 1-11 revision. She will visit Spokane to hold a 1-day workshop on Policy 1-11. This is the process used to categorize waters (fish advisories are different). This meeting will be an opportunity to understand how these policies work together.

DECISION: The group agreed to move the October TTWG Meeting from the 5th to the 12th of October.

ACTION ITEM: The Ruckelshaus Center to send out a meeting change for the October 12th TTWG. Adriane Borgias to schedule the room at Ecology. (COMPLETE, update, the Policy 1-11 meeting was postponed until November, the TTWG will remain on the 12th)

Workshop Scheduling

The Group discussed the potential for a two-day workshop in late 2016 or 2017. The Task Force could hold a workshop concurrently with the Spokane River Forum in November of 2017. Dave suggested a full day meeting to do a full Task Force review of the Draft Comprehensive Plan in early December.

That daylong meeting of the Task Force would be separate from a workshop involving several guest experts. Planning of a workshop with such experts would need to start well in advance. Bud Leber thinks we should wait to plan the workshop until early 2017 and plan it to coincide with the River Forum (Nov. 2017). A workshop will be essential next year to determine the path forward. Date and time will depend on a number of other factors.

2017-2019 Task Force Projects/Workplan

ACE met to discuss funding and projects of the Task Force, concluding the Task Force needs a scope/plan/project forecast on how available moneys will be used once the Comp Plan is completed. Lots of studies have been done, the comprehensive plan will be complete, and the Task Force will begin implementation. The legislature is not as interested in funding studies, they want to see real, on-the-ground reduction efforts.

Work Plan – Potentially in Four Major “Buckets” of Implementation Measures (*Note: buckets proposed by ACE/Doug Krapas – not agreed on by Task Force. The full Task Force needs to discuss a work plan.*):

1. **Implementation measures:** What the Task Force can do, apply resources and funding to PCB reductions in the watershed.
2. **Water Column:** Need an ongoing water quality monitoring program and a plan on what the Task Force will be continuously monitored.
 - o **Q.** Should the goal be to get off Category 5 of the 303(d) List, to 4a & 4b (some feel these more closely align with the Task Force work)? What is the state process for how to get off the Category 5 list?
3. **Fish tissue:** The Spokane River is on the 303(d) List based on fish tissue, with sampling from fish not necessarily indicative of the water column they live in (due to the advanced age of the fish, which means they would have years to accumulate PCBs via the food chain and their diet). The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) has ideas on how to design a fish tissue study that would provide this information (potential EAP study?). Develop a QAPP to sample fish tissue or a study looking specifically at the PCB uptake by native fish as seen in their tissues.
4. **Regulatory and Public Relations.** Toxic Substances Control Act reform, outreach and education etc.
5. **Other Studies (minor bucket):** Work these into other buckets? To appeal to funders, Task Force should minimize the focus on more studies.

Q&A/COMMENTS

- **C.** The draft Comp Plan will be out soon; this should inform the buckets for project scoping. The work plan is part of the implementation phase of the Comprehensive Plan.
- **Q.** How does this look in the Comp Plan? **A.** The Comp Plan includes nine committed Actions, including a timeline. These will be spelled out in detail. The potential actions section will require further study; it includes 10 or 15 activities the Task Force may pursue, but these are not spelled out in detail.
- **Q.** Could Ecology and EPA advise the Task Force as to how a change in a listing from Category 5 of the 303(d) list to Category 4b would happen? Could it happen in parallel with the Comprehensive Plan? **A.** Ecology has people familiar with this process and can have someone available in January of 2017 to address this

question. All the data that Ecology needs for this assessment has been collected (no data needed for the next round). Does the Task Force want to make sure they have the elements in the Comp Plan for potentially getting to 4b status? Ecology makes a recommendation that goes to EPA for approval. Related to this, Ecology's policy 1-11 is revision and Susan Braley will visit with the Task Force in October. Can she come talk to the Task Force in January of 2017?

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus to continue to keep on this agenda item on future agendas as the Task Force moves through the completion of the Comp Plan.

EAP Projects for Next Fiscal Year

Adriane Borgias gave an overview of the EAP project submission process and timeline, encouraging the TTWG to support the Task Force submitting projects to EAP, given that many projects from the Task Force submitted in the past have been funded. Projects should ask a specific question and provide details on the purpose/benefit of the project. Adriane will send out the form used previously for project submission. The Task Force should plan on having submissions for EAP in early December; once the call for projects comes out, the group will have about a month to submit proposals. EAP looks at them early in the year.

The Task Force compiled project ideas at its last meeting, and requested the TTWG take a closer look at them to prepare and prioritize project proposals. The group discussed the list, and a few individuals volunteered to draft project descriptions for those projects where they have interest. This agenda item should remain on the TTWG agenda, to ensure project proposals get completed by December. The following projects were tentatively "adopted" (for writing up descriptions) by one or more individuals at the meeting (this needs further discussion at the next TTWG meeting):

- Bioaccumulation trends in fish: how are they an example of what is happening in the water and sediment? Ecology is currently studying how paraphytin bio-accumulates up through mountain white fish (in Wenatchee River). Could also tie this in with revisiting the Spokane River fish advisory (include WDFW?).
- Collect data needed to support a Category 4b classification by Ecology (*Doug Krapas*)
- Evaluate impact of sediment on PCBs in fish in the Spokane River (possible locations: Ninemile, Mission, Division, Lake Spokane, "hot spots" where PCBs have been found in fish). Can we replicate what was done in San Francisco Bay? Tributaries? Sediment-poor vs. sediment-rich areas? (*Ken Windram? Lisa Dally Wilson*)
- Investigate impact of PCBs in groundwater on the Spokane River, going into more depth on the previous EAP memo regarding groundwater. (*Lisa Dally Wilson*)
- Other projects on list, to be discussed:
 - 2017 or 2018 freshwater fish contaminant monitoring for Spokane River (potential SRRTTF funding)? Review past fish studies to see if PCB concentrations can be associated with specific age fish; look at age-related effects with respect to fish PCB concentrations (specifically for suckers) to see if PCB trends can be tracked by age of fish.
 - Do a food web analysis to identify how fish are affected by PCBs.
- Group did not think the project proposal to Study Dissolved Oxygen in Lake Spokane (correction factor for when phosphorus enters the system) was appropriate for the Task Force. Adriane Borgias will forward this project idea on to Karen Baldwin.

Next full Task Force meeting is **September 28, 2016**, 9:00am-12:30 pm, at **Spokane County Water Resource Center**

Next scheduled TTWG meeting is Wednesday October 12, 2016 from 10:00am-12:00 pm at Dept. of Ecology