

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Wednesday, March 28, 2018 | 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Spokane County Water Resource Center | 1004 N. Freya Street | Spokane WA
Facilitated by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center (Chris Page and Kara Whitman)

Meeting Documents: <http://srrttf.org/?p=9409>

Attendees:

Voting Members and Alternatives (*Denotes Voting Members)

Tom Agnew* –Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
Mike Anderson* –City of Coeur d'Alene
Sharon Bosley (Phone) –Kootenai Environmental Alliance
Galen Buterbaugh* (Phone) –Lake Spokane Association
Chris Donley –Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW)
Mike LaScuola*, Vikki Barthels –Spokane Regional Health District
Bud Leber*, Brent Downey–Kaiser Aluminum
Rob Lindsay*, Ben Brattebo, Dave Moss –Spokane County
Monica Ott –City of Post Falls
Cadie Olsen*, Mike Coster, Jeff Donovan, Art Jenkins, Adriane Pearson, Angela Tagnani –City of Spokane
David Newton* –Inland Empire Paper
Mike Petersen* –Lands Council
Jerry White*, Lee First –Riverkeeper

Advisors

Brooke Beeler, Adriane Borgias, Karin Baldwin, Heather Bartlett, Grant Pfeifer, Diana Washington, Pat Hallinan – Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology)
Kevin Booth –Avista
Chris Hladick, Lucy Edmondson, Brian Nickel (Phone) –U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Interested Parties

Lisa Dally Wilson –Dally Environmental
Dave Dilks (Phone) –LimnoTech
Andy Dunau, Tonilee Hansen – Spokane River Forum
David Luders –Fairchild Airforce Base 92 Civil Engineering Squad

Introductions and Agenda Review:

After a round of introductions, Chris Page went over the agenda. No changes were made to the agenda. The Task Force then reviewed the February 28, 2018 meeting notes and approved them (no edits made).

DECISION: The Task Force approved the February 28, 2018 meeting summary.

ACTION ITEM: Kara Whitman to add 2/28/18 meeting summary to the Task Force website.

Introduction to New Regional Administrator for EPA

Chris Hladick, the new EPA administrator for Region 10, introduced himself as new to the job and gave some background (worked in Alaska previously, with the City of Unalaska then for the Alaska governor as the commissioner of commerce). Currently meeting folks in the region, he has heard high praise for the work of the Spokane River Regional Task Force.

Heather Bartlett said she wants to reinforce Ecology's commitment to find solutions that will work for everyone in the Spokane River Basin, that will ultimately lead to cleaner water. Fundamentally, they want to maintain the integrity of the Task Force and hope to use the tension in this group to find solutions. Though Spokane is first, they must find solutions for all the other rivers in the State, so the solutions need to be transferrable.

Q&A/COMMENTS:

- **C.** Rob Lindsay explained the process the dischargers are going through upgrading facilities to the next level of treatment (state of the art). He described the great challenge of PCBs coming into the system via allowances under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The County has identified factors and types of PCBs entering from residential areas and has difficulty treating them to the levels now required. The Task Force has asked EPA to reconsider the TSCA allowance (of 50ppm for PCBs in products) but is getting pushback from EPA. As a municipal wastewater treatment provider, they need help to meet these standards from EPA. **Q.** Where are the PCBs coming from in the influent (lighter PCBs associated with inks and dyes)?
A. Clothing, toothpaste, some legacy materials from older homes.
- **C.** (WDFW) Fish feed has PCBs; TSCA does not require that they don't. TSCA compliance will not cut it for this basin. **A.** Chris H. has met with multiple organizations (pulp, Boeing etc.) about this issue. He welcomes continuing the conversation, so they can carry this message back to Washington D.C. (DC) and find solutions.
- **C.** Riverkeeper: SRRTTF is working hard to stay maintain collaboration, even with entities not always agreeing. TSCA changes really need to be addressed to meet the standard. This desire for TSCA reform is coming from across the spectrum of interests. **A.** Chris H. requested an issues letter outlining the things the Task Force would like him to know and understand.
- **C.** We are dealing with legacy issues. They encourage dialogue early on. We need to keep our heads together and march through this as a coordinated effort.
- **Q.** There is a challenge in how to inform the public when dealing with such small levels of PCBs. How can we clearly convey the message about TSCA and products, to raise awareness it gets public action? We need public support so financial resources can help address these low levels. Could EPA assist with outreach?
- **Q.** With PCBs, municipal dischargers can get state funding to address environmental rules; however, the hatchery as a state agency discharger cannot get matching state funds. Is there any way that EPA could assist in getting capital budgets for a state hatchery in this position? They need about 15 million to make the changes at the hatchery but have not succeeded in getting funds from the State budget. **A.** Chris H. said he will investigate this, but they need to check on ability to lobby for funding.
- **C.** City of Spokane has made great gains by creatively un-siloing themselves but bumps up against agencies who do not. EPA staffing for PCBs would also help since the one Region 10 PCB person is stretched very thin.
- **C.** Liberty Lake (special purpose) Sewer and Water District (3000 connections) finishing \$57 million in treatment upgrades. Our community did not exist prior to the ban on PCBs (the District went online in 1991). In early PCB discussion, Ecology chose Liberty Lake as a background indicator for PCBs in the system. Most PCBs come from legacy sources, so ratepayers are paying premiums for problems caused by non-governmental predecessors. Now they must explain to citizens that the new \$57 million-dollar facility will not meet standards—and the major source is allowed by TSCA under the same agency holding the water quality standard to a much more stringent level. How can we explain this to ratepayers whose monthly rates will double? **A.** Chris H. has elevated this issue to Washington DC, advocating for smaller communities who cannot afford to pay for this. DC is going to hear a lot more about this issue. This is just beginning, because most older infrastructure needs upgrading.
- **C.** Need EPA to step up and address the TSCA allowance and inadvertent PCBs is critical at this point.

- **C.** (City of Spokane) We are well into the upper 90% range (PCB removal) on treatment. Collectively we have put over half a billion dollars into treatment. This is not a wealthy community, so we ask: how much more expense can be absorbed versus the gains that will be achieved?
- **C.** Grant Pfeiffer (Ecology) extended an open invitation to Chris Hladick and Heather Bartlett to continue these conversations, as a lot of barriers to achieving the water quality standard remain. This group has wrestled with technology barriers and does not appear as daunted by those as by the regulatory barriers. They ask EPA to listen about tightening [TSCA] regulations or using creative strategies to harmonize TSCA and water quality standards, providing options for moving forward at the local level (variances etc.).
- **Q.** Can Ecology give a timeline for the permits? **A.** We envision a few years for the process. We want to retain the progress the group has made. Ecology is committed to keeping dialogue going with the Task Force and the community. If you have a sense that Ecology is not communicating, please call!

ACTION ITEM: TSCA workgroup to draft an issues paper for the Task Force to (potentially) send to Chris Hadlick.

Comp Plan Implementation Review Addendum:

DECISION: After brief dialogue, the Task Force approved the Addendum to the Comprehensive Plan 2017 Annual Implementation Review Summary, for its record of accomplishments on Implementation.

ACTION ITEM: Kara Whitman to add this addendum to the 2017 Annual Implementation Review. (COMPLETE)

Technical Track Work Group (TTWG), Technical Topics, Project Management, and Work Group Reports:

ACE Commitment Report: ACE has \$242,599 in the bank (end of February 2018), with \$228,234 committed funds and \$14,366 uncommitted funds.

ACE Ecology Amendment: ACE is working with Ecology on amending its contract with Ecology. After writing the original contract with the group's "best guess" at projects and timelines, Bud and Karin went updated the contract according to the projects, deliverables, timelines, and budgets as they are now. The Task Force will spend the \$155,000 allocated for this fiscal year. They are currently awaiting approval from Ecology. All approved projects have contracts in place, or almost in place.

Outreach: Does the Task Force want to do collective PCB messaging, or have individual entities coordinating? If the Task Force uses collective messaging, what does this look like?

Q&A/DISCUSSION

- **C.** Each entity has developed their own information dissemination strategies. If it seems suitable for the group to adopt something as a "Task Force" endorsed message, then okay. It is easier to work within own agency/entity; but this is a collaborative effort. It gets difficult to do joint efforts when entities have different missions and approaches.
- **C.** Funding allotment is where it gets "sticky". Some organizations have funding to do outreach, while others need funding to do this work.
- **C.** Multiple messages from different organizations carry greater credibility. We recognize that individual groups will spread their own message whether the Task Force does collaborative outreach or not.
- **C.** The Comp Plan has to have things the group can come to a collaborative decision on. Are there things that could be a standardized message, that the Task Force could buy into? These could provide a foundation.
- **C.** The Lands Council and other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have used public participation grants.
- **C.** We could use the "Puget Sound Starts Here" campaign as a model. It uses prepared media, already branded, that individual organizations can use. Many actions to control PCBs also address other toxics.
- **C.** The Task Force could do collective messaging on the areas where it has collaborative agreement, especially around the Task Force focus on eliminating sources.

- **C.** Riverkeeper encourages grounding the outreach efforts in the Comp Plan and likes the idea of contracting out work on these areas (agreed-upon messages and media) to be functional.
- **C.** Bud noted that they need to consider contracts and funding. As of today, we don't have the core messages but still need to fulfill the contract.
- **Q.** Can we give the outreach group the guidance to come back with the "messages"?
- **C.** We still need to make a big-picture decision about outreach. Many organizations are doing outreach, some of which the Task Force would use, but not necessarily all.

ACTION ITEM: Outreach workgroup "develop" 3-6 key messages based on the Comp Plan and previously-approved outreach materials for Task Force consideration. Ruckelshaus Center to survey the Task Force.

Spokane River Forum: Presentation from Tonilee Hansen and Andy Dunau

Presentation: <http://srrttf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/2018.3.28-SRRTTF-Presentation-v2.pdf>

Tonilee Hansen reviewed River Forum outreach work, with an overview of the impact of the campaign on the use of the waste directory. They communicate practical things individuals can do to address toxics. The County may need to rehabilitate referring, since when the County website changed the numbers dropped. Chris Major (City of Spokane) needs to be included to make this connection since the City's system currently makes it hard to track the referrals from their sites. Facebook allows you to pay them money to "boost" the reach of posts. (\$25-\$50 to do this) can focus on folks with specific parameters that they choose.

Q&A/COMMENTS

- **C.** If PCBs go under a larger "umbrella" of Toxics outreach, would the fall campaign say "toxics" too? We need consistency in messaging and interdisciplinary thinking when building the materials.
- **Q.** Are you linking this campaign to other entities who have social media folks? WDFW could use referrals.
- **Q.** The public is really interested in pharmaceuticals right now. We need to talk to the public about what they care about to get them to listen to the other messages.
- **C.** Would like to see a plan to get at all the social media of each Task Force entity.

ACTION ITEM: Andy Dunau to propose a draft plan and budget for PCB outreach via Task Force social media.

DECISION: The Task Force approved the \$3000 for outreach by the River Forum in the Spring Campaign.

Outreach (continued): Changes to Riverkeeper Low Impact Development (LID) Presentation

Lee First incorporated all Task Force feedback, including removing or amending images and slides as requested.

Q&A/COMMENTS

- **C.** The Task Force could fund the LID presentation without the SRRTTF logo on the opening slide. At the end of the slide deck, Riverkeeper could thank the Task Force for funding the presentations.
- **C.** This raises the question of Task Force funding going to individual entity messaging.
- **C.** As a group we support the education of our community in a comprehensive way. Supporting this messaging is not different than supporting the River Forum messaging. This is an opportunity to collaborate on educating our base.
- **C.** Task Force support of Riverkeeper shows collaboration. Logos from the significant stormwater utilities would also give it more credibility. For collective impact, sometimes a looser reign is needed.
- **C.** For Measurable Progress: can Riverkeeper track the impact (number of meetings, people attending, number of LID projects that come from this outreach etc.)? Consider a survey after the presentations to measure the impact. We could consider this a pilot, to see what results it gets.

DECISION: The Task Force approved funding for the LID presentation: \$4500, with removal of Task Force logo, acknowledgment of Task Force at end, and a survey to assess the impact.

Work Group Reports (continued)

Building and Demolition Work Group: Mike LaScuola provide an overview of where this work is at. Mike is pulling together information from multiple sources to put into a pamphlet/billing inserts/etc. The work group will have something more concrete (a draft) at a future Task Force meeting.

Fish Sampling Work Group: Chris Donley reviewed this group's last meeting. The first step in deciding a fish sampling approach would be an overall modeling effort. They plan on leveraging work that Brandee Era-Miller (Ecology) is doing on biofilm; helping her expand the design of the biofilm study to get a greater number and type of samples. Many in the work group expressed interest in the reach upstream of Monroe. A smaller work group will help Brandee refine the quality assurance project plan (QAPP), which will then be brought to the Task Force. The models have a lot of assumptions but should help answer the broad question of where the fish get most of the PCBs from (water column or sediment). The group is still tackling how to establish a baseline to measure progress on removing PCBs. Key upcoming questions include:

- What increments of time for monitoring, and
- What species is/are appropriate for monitoring?

Chris D. will set up another work group meeting. Dave Dilks clarified that we do not have certainty to say water column concentrations are so low that they do not impact fish. We can rule out water as a bioconcentration source but not as a bioaccumulation source. We need to dial in on finding and reducing sources.

Mass Balance Work Group

The draft QAPP is almost ready for review. **Q.** Who should the QAPP go through at Ecology? **A.** Adriane Borgias.

Collaboration/Communication/Transparency: Adriane was very moved by how eloquently Task Force members expressed the depth and breadth of the challenges facing the community earlier in the meeting, while communicating to EPA about their efforts to deal with PCBs collaboratively.

Ecology Staffing Update: Eastern Regional Water Quality (Ecology Staffing): Adriane reviewed staffing changes at Ecology; they face a 34% turnover of staff this fiscal year. **Q.** Who should folks contact for Task Force business, with Karin Baldwin leaving her position? **A.** For SRRTF and the dissolved oxygen total maximum daily load (DOTMDL) contact Diana Washington until the position is filled. For permit questions, contact the permit managers, Adriane Borgias, and Heather Bartlett. **Q.** What is the timeline for that? **A.** Ecology hopes to start interviewing in the next few weeks or month and will post three positions very soon.

Frequency and number of email blasts that go to the full Task Force? Table this discussion for now.

Task Force Support Services: Lisa Dally Wilson and Bud Leber reviewed the draft request for qualifications and quotes (RFQQ). Lisa noted some assumptions in the draft, such as the Task Force meeting less often (quarterly/four times a year). The Task Force now needs someone to oversee projects, contracts, and coordinating the communication between the work groups and the Task Force. They also need someone to facilitate Task Force meetings. The Technical Track Work Group (TTWG) will meet on an ad hoc basis as needed, but several other work groups would be the primary place where work gets done. The essential tasks fall into administration and communications support along with executive coordination, program management, and facilitation. How do we get this out to the community? Any essential tasks missing?

DISCUSSION:

- **C.** Most Task Force members do not have additional capacity for tasks such as note taking or other administrative support services.
- **C.** Chris Page can serve as a point person for fielding questions about the RFQQ.
- **C.** Put out our desired qualifications, with an informational package explaining what the Task Force is and does, and details of what is needed. The entities/individual who have interest in the position can provide a quasi-proposal on the estimated cost (a bid package).
- **C.** Authorize ACE to draft RFQQ, ask for an estimated cost for one year. Clarify: 4-6 half to full day meetings.

DECISION: The Task Force authorized ACE to draft the RFQQ including the additional delineation of cost estimate for 1 year of service and defined that 4-6 half to full day meetings.

ACTION ITEM: ACE to draft the RFQQ package to be sent out for bids. Ruckelshaus Center can answer questions. Send out to Task Force email list so entities can disseminate. (COMPLETE)

Updates, Announcements, "Housekeeping" Items:

- Unidentified caller during TTWG: Chris Page mentioned an unidentified caller on the conference call line for the last TTWG meeting. Chris tracked down the caller: a law firm, Latham and Watkins, who represent Monsanto. All callers are asked to identify themselves for the interest of transparency.
- Hangman Creek Watershed PCB QAPP is out for review. Please provide feedback to Jim Ross by April 6th.
- Chris Page provided an overview of a list of topics available for future agendas.
- **Q.** For work groups, how do we track formation, rosters, meetings happening, notes, etc.

ACTION ITEM: Ruckelshaus Center to put together rosters and draft ground rules or protocols for workgroups for Task Force review at next meeting. (COMPLETE and ready)

No public comment.

Next Task Force meeting: April 25, 2018 at Liberty Lake Sewer & Water District, 8:30am – 12:00pm