

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

December 17, 2020 Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srtrtf.org/?p=11620>

Attendees:

Voting Members and Alternates

Tom Agnew – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
Mike Anderson – City of Coeur d’ Alene
Brent Downey – Kaiser Aluminum
Rob Lindsay, Mike Hermanson – Spokane County
Jeff Donovan – City of Spokane
Vikki Barthels – Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD)
Doug Krapas – Inland Empire Paper (IEP)
Mike Peterson – Lands Council
Galen Buterbaugh – Lake Spokane Association

Advisors

Karl Rains, Jeremy Schmidt, Cheryl Niemi, Cathrene Glick, Bill Fees, Sandy Treccani, Kimberly Goetz – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)
Joel Breems, Monica Ott – Avista

Interested Parties

Lisa Dally Wilson – Dally Environmental and Spokane River Stewardship Partners (SRSP)
Dave Dilks – LimnoTech
Ben and Lara Floyd – White Bluffs Consulting (WBC)
Ken Windram – Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board
Elsa Pond – Washington State Dept. of Transportation
Melissa Gombosky – IEP lobbyist
Robert Mott – Mott Consulting
Gary Jones – Printing United Alliance

Introductions and Agenda Review: After introductions, Ben Floyd reviewed the agenda.

Meeting Summary Action: The Task Force (TF) approved the December 2 meeting summary with proposed edits to the Tech Track Work group report, and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website. Lisa will provide the edits to Lara.

Monsanto Settlement Funds Draft State Legislative Proposal – Ten area legislators were identified to contact, and representatives of the Task Force have met with eight of them so far. The purposes of these meetings was to request the Monsanto PCB settlement funds be dedicated for PCB reduction efforts.

Melissa Gombosky said two things she heard were bipartisan encouragement to have a more refined ask and they encouraged a more detailed plan for what the money will be used for. Ten million dollars could be a worthwhile ask. Another thought was running a bill again to codify the Task Force and putting it into statute. Going into the 2021 session she doesn’t think it would be

feasible to pass a bill due to COVID-19 impacts and other reasons, but this could be an opportunity in 2022 or beyond.

Comments/Questions:

- It was suggested to save codification for the future. We could put together a project list of what a \$10 million request for the SRRRTF would support.
- Would it be for biennium? *It could be for the next couple of years. They can't commit for beyond that, but Melissa will verify.*
- Since Representative Ormsby is the budget chair, we would need to check in with him before we make any final decision.
- Part of our message was the PCB problem is not just unique to Spokane and this is a long-term state problem that will take years to fix. Ecology hasn't even begun to address this problem in all the other watersheds in the state. This ask shouldn't just be for Spokane but needs to be part of a long-term funding strategy for the state.
- All of the legislators we spoke to are supportive of this effort and appreciated getting additional information on it.
- Because the settlement went into the general fund, a long-term trust or funding mechanism may be difficult. Ecology supports the TF efforts but is not able to take a position on the funding request unless it is in the Governor's budget. Regarding codification, whatever language is proposed needs to be consistent with the MOA and until that is developed Ecology would not be able to take a position on that either.
- Maybe next year we can approach OFM and try to be considered in the Governor's budget?
- Request needs to be defined as what can be accomplished over both 10-year and two-year periods and what the budget request will support.
- Longer term option could be codification and feel the bigger state issue we shouldn't touch.
- Feel we should encourage all the Monsanto funds be used for the harm they did.
- Ben said he sees four items for the Task Force to consider for action:
 1. Ask the state leaders to establish a long-term funding source for state-wide PCB removal with the Monsanto funds
 2. Come up with specific projects for the Spokane basin that could be supported by a portion of the Monsanto money (\$10 million request over 10 years and two-year request), in the form of a request
 3. Advocate this request in the upcoming session
 4. Work on legislation in 2021 that could be introduced in the 2022 session, to codify the Task Force for a period of time (10 years) and provide an accompanying base budget.

Ben shared a draft 10-year Funding request that he and Dave Dilks compiled that equals around \$10 million. It could be attached with a letter to the Legislators. The plan is to have a letter go out the first week in January, with opportunity for TF review and comment between now and then.

- Is there a way to put a bucket in here for a reserve clean-up fund? Yes, that could be included.
- When we have identified sources we can take it as far as we can but the clean-up then shifts to someone else. We may not want to earmark money for that but can talk to others in

Ecology to get their opinions. I do like the idea of putting together this plan with ballpark budgets to hash out later. It will increase our chances of two-year funding and maybe even further than that.

- We can be used as an example to the rest of the state since we are on the front edge of this problem and maybe what we do can be applied elsewhere.
- In listening to legislators, their concern was that we don't have specific projects identified but sometimes we don't know until we get in and start doing other work.
- Once this goes to the Legislators with a letter, how final is the project list? Can it change over time? *Yes, and it can be updated. We are just trying to get a basis for a funding request.*
- Keep in mind, if you suggest a trust fund in the future, when the money disappears that means you weren't in the general budget.
- Will we have a chance to see final details of letter and budget? *Yes, we are seeking general approval today and will provide a follow up email with the updated draft letter and 2 year and 10-year work plans. Hope to get feedback by Jan. 4 and send it by the end of that week (Jan. 8). WBC will also put the draft on the TF website and send via email after the meeting.*
- The Task Force discussed and approved a proposal request to the State Legislature that would establish a long-term funding source using the Monsanto settlement funds, and along with this request to include both a two year and ten-year work plan. The Task Force approved this proposal, with the caveat that they would like the opportunity to review comment on the updated proposal - letter and work plans - before it is sent to the legislators. Codification with associated legislation will be looked at in the future.

Next Steps:

WBC will email out two year and 10-year plan along with the proposal letter for comments by January 4, and the TTWG will also schedule a meeting to discuss the work plans. The final letter proposal with work plans is expected to be sent by the end of the first week in January to Legislators.