

# Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

January 27, 2021 Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srtrtf.org/?p=11677>

## **Attendees:**

### ***Voting Members and Alternates***

Tom Agnew, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District  
Mike Anderson – City of Coeur d' Alene  
Brent Downey – Kaiser Aluminum  
Craig Borrenpohl, Alyssa Gersdorf – City of Post Falls  
Rob Lindsay, Mike Hermanson – Spokane County  
Cadie Olsen, Jeff Donovan, Mike Coster – City of Spokane  
Mike LaScoula, Vikki Barthels – Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD)  
Mike Peterson – Lands Council  
Chris Donley – Washington State Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

### ***Advisors***

Karl Rains, Adriane Borgias, Jeremy Schmidt, Cheryl Niemi, Brandee Era- Miller, Cathrene Glick, Bill Fees, Sandy Treccani, Brook Beeler, Curtis Johnson – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)  
Monica Ott – Avista  
Brian Nickel, Lucy Edmondson – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

### ***Interested Parties***

Dave Dilks – LimnoTech  
Ben and Lara Floyd – White Bluffs Consulting (WBC)  
Brian Owen – Inland Empire Paper  
Bruce Williams – SRHD  
Elsa Pond – Washington State Dept. of Transportation  
Chelsea Updegrove – Lands Council  
Melissa Gombosky – IEP lobbyist  
Robert Mott – Mott Consulting  
Gary Jones – Printing United Alliance  
David Darling – American Coatings Association  
Kris Holm  
Caroline Hammett - student

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

**Meeting Summary Action:** The Task Force (TF) approved the December 17 meeting summary and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website.

**ACE Update** – Jeff gave an update where the TF stands financially. Balance is \$220,000 in account, with committed funds being \$47,000 in the negative but that can be covered with an upcoming state funding reimbursement request. More details on ACE budget will be shared

later in meeting. The TF should be able to recoup another \$50,000 for what has been spent since October with Ecology.

**Data Management** – Mike H. said they had a work group meeting in January when they discussed and reviewed a web interface that provides TF data. They plan to present it to the Education and Outreach work group at their next meeting and then present the interface at the February TF meeting. Once it is approved, they will take it live. The interface is based on the Tableau software platform which is very user friendly and provides a map where you can click on locations to see various combinations of data. Some of the water column and fish tissue data collected by Ecology are on the test site. It will be a good way for public to look at data.

**PMF** – Mike H. shared that Dr. Lisa Rodenburg is finalizing a draft report summarizing discharger data. Once they have a draft it will be shared with the work group. They are on hold on the next phase of holistic analysis of all data, which will be talked about later in the meeting. The work group will hold a meeting to review current work she is completing, once it becomes available.

**Education and Outreach** – Vikki said they will share later in the meeting information about the spring media campaign and iPCB outreach proposals.

**Fish Sampling** – Chris D. said the sampling took place this fall but they had a difficult time sampling fish in the upper-most reach as there were no juvenile fish that fit the size spectrum, but the other reaches went well, and samples were delivered. Dave D. said SGS AXYS has the samples.

**Funding/MOA** – Karl said the MOA has been sent out and five members have signed the revised MOA with several others moving the MOA through their organizations.

**Tech Track** – Dave D. said they do not have results from the lab for the SPMD sampling. Gravity has the canisters, and they are preparing for the second round of sampling in February. They will do another sampling in the spring and the first one was done earlier.

With the artificial fill sampling they were directed to prepare a supplemental QAPP for Gravity to get out and do samples on artificial bottom fill. Thanks to Ecology for supporting a supplemental QAPP and the biggest thing now to address is a change in the budget. The Tech Track work group wants to use method 1668 for analysis. They added two duplicated samples and the budget has moved to \$31,000 instead of \$22,000, which can be discussed later. They can trim back the number of stations to get to a lower amount if needed. If the \$31,000 is authorized, the QAPP is ready for review. He would like comments on it within a week if the \$31,000 is approved, otherwise he will revise the QAPP. There are other projects on slate they want to consider in the next biennium.

**iPCB/TSCA** – Ben Floyd gave an update for Doug Krapas:

Living Ink Presentation – They had a presentation by the CEO of Living Ink alternative to carbon black recently and want to consider continuing working with Living Ink, perhaps assisting promotion of their products during the National Education & Outreach Campaign and performing collaborative EPA Method 1668 testing as part of the Green Chemistry efforts.

Green Chemistry - The iPCB/TSCA workgroup members agreed that any future “Green Chemistry” related work will be integrated into the scope of the iPCB/TSCA workgroup efforts since the evolution of the iPCB/TSCA work group has become synergistic with green chemistry objectives.

EPA Method 1668 study of TiO<sub>2</sub> Pigments - All samples have been collected and submitted to the laboratory, and laboratory testing of all samples is taking place concurrently. Preliminary data may be available for the February SRRTTF Meeting.

2021 TSCA/iPCB Proposed Projects – Top 5:

1. Develop Industry List of Pigments (Chlorinated vs. Non-Chlorinated) – possible 3<sup>rd</sup> Party project
2. Newsprint/Graphic Printing Trials w/Non-Chlorinated Inks/Pigments – based on results of the project above
3. Sources & Pathways of PCB-11 to Spokane River, Phase 1 – possible 3<sup>rd</sup> Party research effort
4. Petition EPA to enforce PCBs in products under TSCA
5. Petition EPA to perform Cost/Benefit Analysis and reevaluate TSCA

The iPCB/TSCA work group will now develop detailed scopes for these projects and determine any future funding needs for SRRTTF consideration.

**WA State Legislature 2021 Session Strategy Update** – Ben reviewed the process for the ten-year and two-year work plan submittal shared with legislators. It was discussed at the early January Tech Track meeting, reviewed the TF and then submitted to area legislators/House and Senate leaders, along with the Governor and others.

Melissa said they have made individual appointments with various legislative leaders and all of the response has been positive. A potential barrier is the condition of the state budget but given the Monsanto settlement money it may be possible to still be successfully funded. They are hearing there is some opposition to the TF proposal. The TF needs to continue to make a case for the request. If organizations can send an email or make other contact regarding the request that would help. Communications should focus on majority party members first such as Representatives Ricelli and Ormsby and Senator Billig, and meeting with their assistants would be helpful also.

**Comments/Questions:**

- Is there something the TF can do to address the opposition? Melissa said TF members such as Lands Council would be good ones to speak up. Maybe the opposition is based around a desire to develop a TMDL?
- What can we do to reengage those who used to be on the TF? When there has been a TMDL in past it seems there wasn't as much progress made and the TF collaborative effort has yielded more outcomes without lawyers involved. Trying to reengage other environmental groups and Spokane Tribe of Indians would be a good idea and can be discussed at a future Education and Outreach meeting.

- Prior experience with TMDL's would suggest that the best outcome is to go directly to implementation, which is the pathway we are already doing right now as a TF.
- Ben suggested developing a few talking points regarding the TMDL discussion as follow up. He and Lara will follow up on this.

**State Funding Reallocation Opportunities Approval** – Jeff D. gave an update on the funding summary he developed along with Ben. The initial Ecology/ACE contract identified \$298,000 of work and an additional \$200,000 was added later for long term monitoring and fish tissue monitoring. The TF has approved \$530,000 in work and expects to bill another \$223,000 through the end of June. Only \$450,000 is expected to be spent right now so it leaves potentially \$50,000 for other tasks. About \$20,000 in other work will spill over into the new biennium (starting July 2021). Between \$110,000 and \$140,000 will need to be spent from July through the end of year, including LimnoTech and WBC fees. We can keep the TF solvent through end of year without reaching out to SRSP or state. The \$50,000 does include the \$22,000 for sampling already approved.

**Project requests for consideration:**

**Bottom fill sampling** - \$5,000-\$9,000 additional budget

**Spring media campaign proposal** - \$17,000 (similar campaign as last year involving radio, social media and pre-role video)

**Existing bottom sediment samples analysis** - \$3,000 (Ecology grabbed 3 samples already and it would be analyzing these samples for PCB content) but would like to see additional budget for bottom fill sampling approved first. Karl said the Trent Bridge replacement is scheduled to pick back up in spring and pilings will be replaced and Ecology TCP is coordinating with WSDOT and Ecology may be able to grab additional samples, so price may go up if TF chooses to do this samples analysis. Is there a shelf life holding time until future when the TF receives more biennium budget? Dave thought one year is the holding time.

**Holistic PMF 2B analysis** - \$30,000 (Mike H. said it involves taking all data sets analyzed with PMF for Dr. Rodenburg work with TF and putting it all together in one document that gives a holistic analysis and how sources move through system and where they are coming from. It does involve doing analysis on fish tissue sampling already done. It needs to be done all together and it leverages a lot of work that has already been done.)

- Is the intent that Dr. Rodenburg has ability to finish this work by end of June? Yes
- Will all of the samples be ready for her to include in the analysis such as fish tissue samples? That is a function of how quickly the lab turns samples around and Dave thought the first round of fish tissue data would be available and Mike thought the 2019 biofilm samples will be also.
- There is \$6,000 left in her budget. Does the \$30,000 include that? Mike said no, her previous work is separate.

**National outreach proposal** - \$26,600. Mike P. said Inland Empire Paper is unable to meet water quality standards due to inadvertent PCBs in their newsprint (ink). They want to talk with other entities and help them understand what the inadvertent PCB issue is and what the

potential solutions are. Mike has gone back and forth with American Coatings Association (ACA) and United Printing Alliance (UPA) on comments, and he has tried to address their concerns. The project would involve putting a toolkit together, a website, and moving forward with addressing TSCA regulations with water quality standards.

**Comments/Questions: (answers in italics by Mike Peterson)**

- Could this work be phased? *Need to get a good start but there will be follow up so it could be phased.*
- Dave Darling (ACA) – Were our comments sent out to the TF? *Yes*
- Why are you only picking pigments, ink and paint and not motor oils and other products? Our concern is that other consumer products also contain these PCBs. *This all links back to PCBs getting in river and there is direct pathway with ink from IEP getting into river and PCBs getting in from stormwater. We know for a fact iPCBs are getting in the river through these two methods.*
- What about motor oil? *If we can find studies showing where the PCBs are getting in the oil, but we do know how it got there for pigments and inks.*
- We know Ecology has added pigments and inks in the safer products program and will be working on this. Won't it be more efficient to look at other products also? *This project will focus on trying to reduce the amount of inadvertent PCBs at the national level with products that we know are getting into the river.*
- Wouldn't it be beneficial to hear how the state Department of Enterprise Services procurement policy works but I do not see a mention of it? *Our WA Department of Transportation has found a suitable substitute for yellow paint and there is interest nationally to change the TSCA limits.*
- Why not find out if the state has other products that contain PCBs?
- Jeff asked how much of the money may be spent by end of June. Chelsea U. said the initial time would be in outreach but could postpone the website and toolkit part of it until later in the year. The outreach would take 60-70% of budget upfront out of the \$26,600.

**Overall comments:**

- There is some excellent remedial investigation work being proposed but have concerns that we really aren't implementing anything. When we spoke with legislators, we spoke directly about it being a statewide problem, but it is a national problem. I feel like we are alone here. Other areas of state do not really want to engage, and I support this national outreach to find out what other areas are doing. If we want to really reduce PCBs, we need to start with what we know. We need help from the EPA and state in a more comprehensive way.
- Gary Jones (UPA) – This has significant implications to the printing and coatings industry. There is going to be an assumption that the issue is understood, and it is not. This is a local issue in Spokane. The iPCBs represent .19 percent of loading to the River and it will implicate printed goods and coatings. What is going to be said is concerning also because the data does not say pigments and coatings are a significant source. We do not feel this is warranted and there are errors with the assumptions being made. *It is accurate information*

*and the .19 number is speculative and we see higher numbers coming out of wastewater streams.*

- The PMF analysis – is there a reason we could not back burner this until later? *Mike H. said It is possible although we will lose some continuity and it informs future sampling decisions. It could be pushed back but it is not ideal.*
- Jeff said if we were to approve everything, there are funds from previous SRSP contributions that could cover some of the work.
- It seems like the analytical work could be shelved and looked at after next samples are collected in the fall. If national outreach campaign only did the initial outreach using 70% of budget and it could help with scope development and addressing some concerns voiced today. Maybe we do not fund all of the PMF work now but give some money for Dr. Rodenburg to move forward and reevaluate once we get closer to biennium?
- We could fund 70% of national outreach now (\$18,620), spring media campaign (\$17,000), additional (\$9,000) more for bottom fill sampling work which we already had approved \$22,000 for at the last meeting, and a certain percentage of PMF work now (at least \$15,000 and potentially the full \$30,000 if ACE determines funding is available to cover it). Many TF members agreed. Total would be between \$60,000-\$75,000.
- Could we do sampling now but not have analysis until later to save some funds? Dave said yes, it would save using the other \$9,000 now plus some additional funds. Jeff mentioned it may not be necessary to worry about this smaller amount of money.
- Dave said comments on the QAPP are due within the next week by February 3.

**ACTION: The TF approved the above recommendations of funding:**

\$18,620 for National iPCB Outreach

\$17,000 for spring media campaign

\$9,000 additional for bottom fill sampling

\$15,000 - \$30,000 for all or a portion of PMF work, based upon ACE funding availability determination.

**Mycoremediation of PCB's presentation** – Les Stephens gave the presentation, and he is a Lands Council volunteer. They are trying to avoid PCB laden soil getting into the river system. Once it gets into water you cannot remediate the PCBs. They are working with the Lands Council and City of Spokane. The bacteria and fungi in soils have become acclimated and some are starting to use PCBs and other contaminants as a carbon source. Multiple North Central high school students helped with the research. We know we can do good bioremediation and the bacteria and fungi can work together. Next steps are we would like to talk to the city about doing a pilot study out in the open environment. We will have results over the next month and a report we can share.

**Review of Spokane Riverkeeper Website Information** – Karl said some of the effort was funded by a past Ecology grant and the contract indicated Riverkeeper would coordinate with the TF Education and Outreach work group. Riverkeeper had a public participation grant with Ecology in 2017-2019 biennium and a task was to produce a mailer focused on contaminants and toxics in Spokane watershed. The content was not finalized or published until this past December 2020 and once released there were members of the TF that identified some inaccuracies in the

content. There were conversations between Riverkeeper, Ecology and some members of the TF and they are open to making corrections to the website. The TF has an opportunity to review the content and let Riverkeeper know comments for revision. The TF has a month to provide comments (comments due Friday, February 26 to Karl Rains and cc Vikki Barthels).

**Comments:**

- It seems rushed to publish this so quickly and there are multiple obvious inaccuracies.
- It will take a lot of time to comment on so many errors and so I am reluctant to spend all of the time to do so.
- Ecology is not in a position to ask them to take it down. We are going to require that Ecology's name is removed from the website.

**SRRTTF 2020 Draft Accomplishments Summary Approval** – Ben provided an overview of the draft accomplishments.

**Action: The TF approved the 2020 draft accomplishments summary, and it will be posted on the TF website.**

**Upcoming Task Force Meeting Topics to add –**

- First round of SPMD sampling report in February and Fish tissue sampling report in March

What would people think of having a voluntary float trip along the River in July like was done before? Mike P. said he likes the idea and has some extra boats he can loan for it. Many agreed with the idea if it is possible to do with COVID-19 restrictions.

**The next SRRTTF meeting will be held on February 24, 2021 at 8:30 am**