

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

April 28, 2021 Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srrttf.org/?p=11833>

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

Jeff Donovan, Mike Coster – City of Spokane

Vikki Barthels – Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD)

Ken Windram – Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board

Advisors

Karl Rains, Adriane Borgias, Jeremy Schmidt, Cheryl Niemi, Brandee Era- Miller, Bill Fees, Diana Washington, Sandy Treccani, Brook Beeler, Lauren Tamboer, Cathrene Glick, Curtis Johnson – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)

Monica Ott – Avista

Brian Nickel – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Interested Parties

Dave Dilks – LimnoTech

Lisa Dally Wilson – SRSP and Dally Environmental

Ben and Lara Floyd – White Bluffs Consulting (WBC)

Bruce Williams – SRHD

Ben Martin – City of Coeur D’ Alene

Chelsea Updegrove – Lands Council

Robert Mott – Mott Consulting

Gary Jones – Printing United Alliance

Dave Darling – American Coatings Association

Kris Holm

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

Meeting Summary Action: The Task Force (TF) approved the February 24 meeting summary and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website.

ACE Update – Jeff shared that currently most things are under contract. The contract amendment of \$500,000 with Ecology for the biennium has been completed. In April another reimbursement request was completed for \$60,000 and have \$215,000 left to get reimbursed. It looks like the budget and contracts will be covered well. ACE finalized the LimnoTech contract to cover the sampling work.

Data Management – Mike H. said they have been getting data from fish and SPMD sampling. The data portal will be live on Spokane river PCB website in the next day or two. Mike was asked to send out a notification with a link when it goes live and get it to WBC for posting.

PMF – Mike H. said they have completed an evaluation of influent and effluent discharger data and have draft report to get out to TF in next few days for review. The work group has reviewed it already. Lisa Rodenburg is working on holistic analysis work and they have provided fish tissue and SMPD data to her. She is seeing how much she can get done with the partial funding the TF approved. Ben asked for the schedule and Mike said he will check in on her progress and budget. She will have an interim deliverable in case all the work cannot be done within the first \$15,000 budget.

Education and Outreach – Ben said the spring media campaign is getting ready to start with different radio ads, social media, and videos suggesting people go to the Waste Directory site. The Spokane River Forum will give an update on how the campaign goes at the August TF meeting. The Education and Outreach work group reviewed the slides that will be going out on Facebook and it looks like it will be a great campaign.

Fish Sampling – Presentation later in meeting.

Funding/MOA – Karl said he is waiting on input from Funding work group members on boilerplate language that was distributed then will give an update to the full TF. A few more entities have signed the revised MOA since last meeting but still have a handful that need to turn them in. Karl will remind members about getting in comments about the boilerplate language. Lara will send out an email to those we have not heard from on the MOA to see what the status is.

Tech Track – Lisa said the work group met end of March and have been reviewing scopes of work of projects that have been developed. They participated in a straw poll to rank the projects. One of the projects is to put a data logger on an existing well on Hamilton street clean-up site to get a better sense of groundwater flow direction in Mission Reach area. Originally Bill Fees was the contact and have an email from Avista also regarding it. Avista is suggesting the TF provide a written request including the property owner and developer to ask for permission to put the logger in the well and collect data. Bill thought a letter wasn't necessary and Monica Ott said she will take it back to their group and be in contact with the TF. She will connect with Bill, Lisa and WBC regarding it. Lisa said Spokane County already does some monitoring in the area and they said they can install and monitor the logger, but the TF just needs to purchase it.

iPCB/TSCA – Coming later in meeting.

Safer Products for WA presentation – Lauren Tamboer from Ecology Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program gave the presentation. It is an implementation program aiming to reduce toxic chemicals in consumer products. She provided an email where people can sign up to help: [subscribe to the Safer Products for WA email list](#)

Karl said they know there is interest in this at the iPCB/TSCA work group level and Cheryl Niemi has shared a lot of this information already but thought the TF would like to hear more about it. Any TF members or others who would like to get involved Lauren is happy to give other

presentations about it. It is about addressing contaminants at the source. Lauren will share upcoming information about the workshops coming up with Lara to distribute.

Comments/Questions:

- Has Ecology looked at EPA's safer choice products certification program and don't think it may help with inadvertent PCBs but it may help with other things like thalates. *Lauren said they relied on a lot of existing certification and EPA's list was one they looked at among others.*

Fish Tissue Data Sampling Report presentation – Dave Dilks gave a report of the results of fish and water column PCBs sampling from fall 2020 which he focused more on the fish since he already gave an update of the water column SPMD data at the last meeting. They started the first year of the long-term monitoring program this year. WDFW did the monitoring. They found the highest concentrations in the Mission Reach (MR) area and they tend to be twice as high as other areas. Spokane Valley fish are significantly lower than all other reaches. The data has not been validated yet. The second round of SPMD deployment was completed and third round of SPMD's was installed yesterday. Artificial fill samples were collected at same time of second round of SPMD and will be analyzed soon by Gravity.

Comments/Questions: (answers in italics by Dave Dilks, LimnoTech)

- Were there five tissue samples combined and then analyzed? *Five analyses in each reach so 25 fish total and got five data points.*
- Generally speaking, how much fish movement occurs between different reaches? *That's a question for DFW but certainly dams will be a barrier to fish and Dave will get an answer from them and include in report. In the Mission Reach where we saw highest concentrations, we can see quite a bit of variability. Two samples were higher than others with certain homolog. We see a difference in homolog distributions between the fish so may be living in different areas and being exposed to different sources.*
- All fish in MR were collected same day and time? *They were sampled in one pass and all were done on same day except reach five which were spread over two days.*
- Brandee said they saw the same spread of variability with the 2012 fish sampling Ecology did.
- One thing that strikes me is most of the reaches are continuous except reaches four and five where there is a gap. Given highest concentrations are in reach four and second in reach five, why aren't we looking at fish or water column that is representative of that area in between? *The Falls prevent some access but that is one question I need to ask DFW.*
- This information and once we get data on SPMD really starts to point to specific sources and given our funding it makes sense to evaluate whether clean up and removal efforts are implementable. Can we actually remove them? *As we get more data and know exact source that will help determine what can be done.*
- (chat message) Di-CBs are less bioaccumulative than higher-chlorinated homologs. Per EPA's Co mptox Chemicals Dashboard, the predicted bioconcentration factor for PCB-11 is 6,410. For PCB -153 (a hexachlorobiphenyl) has an experimental average of 811,000 and a predicted average of 183,000. So, it's not surprising that di-CB concentrations are low in fish.

Here is PCB-11: <https://comptox.epa.gov/dashboard/dsstoxdb/results?search=DTXSID70872817#env-fate-transport>.

- (chat message) Is there any macroinvertebrate data on these reaches? Brandee said invert data was taken at 2 sites in 2018: Spokane Gage and GE Mission Right bank. We took invert data there in 2018 with the biofilm.
- Brandee said fish tend to represent that time of accumulation so time of day shouldn't matter. Sometimes seasonality may matter but only when there are older fish. If fish are schooling and eat at same places and get caught together don't know how much of that type of study has been done.
- Please speak to the apparent trend of reducing PCB concentrations. *The goal of the Long-Term monitoring program is to look at trends of reducing PCB concentrations. Future samples when done will be compared to this year going forward.*

Tech Track Future Projects Planning – Lisa walked through the projects the Tech Track work group have identified. Each one has a short scope. They gave the work group scopes of work and they ranked them based on importance. Thirteen people responded. The highest-ranking project is the long-term effectiveness monitoring for water column and fish. The next project is groundwater evaluation monitoring in the MR and putting in the data logger discussed earlier in the meeting. Additional water column monitoring in MR ranked third. Dave mentioned they don't have a lot of water column sampling in the MR area. The two other projects in the first tier were monitoring artesian well in MR area and selective low flow synoptic sampling from USGS Gage – Nine-mile reach for mass balance.

Lisa said we need to be thoughtful about what is important and adds value. The tier one and tier two projects should be considered first. Maybe identification of removal of things in MR area is possible. Dave said seeing the table with the price tags of each project is important also. Lisa said the top item on third tier of sub bottom detection survey could also be included in tier two. There is clearly material in MR that could be removed. Dave reviewed the schedule for the projects. Lisa mentioned alternative treatment options for PCB removal is not on the list yet and may also add pilot testing for PCB removal. Kaiser is doing a little of this work now.

Comments/Questions:

- This should be viewed as a tracking tool as we prioritize projects depending on funding. The long-term effectiveness monitoring doesn't reflect it received 100% of the votes for top ranked project. Ecology has expressed some concern over it but will support it along with other projects that help reduce PCBs.
- This table gives us an idea of timeline and funding requirements and is very helpful towards building the work plan. This work that is being recommended will be combined with the projects that other work groups have identified.

iPCB/TSCA Future Projects Planning – Ben gave an update. This work group went through a similar process as Tech Track to identify projects which were ranked. Two initial projects were identified. One is developing an industry list of pigments and the other is evaluating the success of different procurement policies. TSCA work group would develop an RFP and Doug hopes to solicit TF input on the scopes by May 7. We learned from the presentation from Alex Kenneson

(WA Dept. of Enterprise Services) that they have procurement provisions but may or may not be responded to or receive the desired outcome. We may try to reschedule the presentation by Alex and when we get a confirmation from him, we will send out a new appointment for it.

Someone mentioned in the chat that the Apple policy only applies to electronic components, it has nothing to do with pigments or products derived from them.

The TiO₂ study update is tentatively planned for the May TF meeting. Lisa said the \$2 million for the biennium is MTCA funding and it really needs to be spent within the biennium.

WA State Legislature Funding Update and Reminder on TF Communication Protocols – Ben said the Senate and House have approved \$2 million from the operating budget for the TF work. He thanked all of those who helped with the communications with the different Legislators to secure the funding.

Comments/Questions:

- One of the messages we sent was more than for just the Spokane River but the larger state-wide issues regarding PCBs. The legislature also allocated funding for a statewide database to look at PCBs on a broader scope in the state. Our message was heard.
- Clearly the TF has the level of awareness in the House and the Senate that we are doing good work.

Ben said during the session and when we received opposition of the request by one of our former members, we were asked to counter act some of that opposition to get a response in to the Governor's office. We apologize for that and we do need to stay consistent with the MOA and provide plenty of opportunity for notice. We canceled that action. Also, there was a presentation that was scheduled for the iPCB/TSCA work group where the appointment was not sent out and it was held anyway with little notice. We apologize and plan to give enough notice going forward.

SRRTTF 2021 – 2023 Work Planning – Ben said this presents an opportunity and challenge for the TF. We will receive this funding starting July 1 and we will have some activities already lined up. He invited the work group leads to think about more work that can be done in finding and reducing PCBs. This is an opportunity to change the TF trajectory even more.

Comments/Questions:

- I would like to see focus on research and development and something other than site assessment. Pilot testing of other technologies working with a variety of groups. Nothing specific in mind but give the municipalities some time to look at other technologies would be worthwhile.
- I second that from the industrial side. There is a lot of opportunity for this and things to pursue.
- Rather than just having small projects, finding a couple of larger scale projects could be nice and easier to manage.
- Environmental justice and the impact on human health I would like to see and there are plenty of experts and community members we could engage.
- Brandee suggested getting a PCB sniffing dog in the chat.

Chelsea Updegrave gave an update about Mike Peterson leaving the Lands Council. The iPCB national outreach campaign will be largely unaffected. She said they have a list of over 200 contacts and will be working with different people, have a pretty solid website and have talked with ACE. The Lands Council will be hiring someone new for his position and hope they will be as engaged as Mike was with the TF. They need to start talking to people and will bring updates going forward. Ben emphasized keeping the iPCB/TSCA and Education and Outreach work groups involved since this is a joint project.

Questions/Comments:

- If there is any way to provide updates sooner rather than later, we will appreciate it. Chelsea said there can be updates at work group meetings and whenever desired at the TF level too.
- Karl said he requested to see if Mike had any personal forwarding contact information and received an email, so if any TF members are interested in having it to let him know. As the Ecology contract manager want to reinforce that with this MTCA funding there is no work that can be funded beyond June of that year. Wonder if there was any wording with a long-term funding mechanism with the Monsanto funds? Wonder if this is our one shot to use this funding or if we will keep receiving it going forward. We need to work on identifying projects sooner rather than later, so we are not scrambling near end of biennium. I agree that looking at ways to remediate any identified sources in MR could be a great use of some of the money.
- The R and D has not been considered right now but maybe a subgroup could be set up.
- Remediation projects take a long time to get implemented. Maybe we get some general scopes together and go out with RFP's and we get consultants to help hone the scopes since we are noy experts.
- We do noy really have many water quality samples in MR area so in terms of additional data collection this could be a task to consider. We may want to wait until SPMD 2 and 3 data are ready. Also, it would be good to have more information on the gap between reaches four and five.

Ben proposed WBC invite the work group chairs (or other work group members) to coordinate on this process between now and into July along with Karl. WBC will set up a doodle poll for a recurring meeting every two weeks.

Given the additional burden of the contracting and accounting it may make sense to hire someone to help but not sure if MTCA could cover this or not.

Upcoming Task Force Meeting Topics to add –

- Report for fish tissue sampling and artificial fill for June meeting.
- Provide information at May meeting for WBC and LimnoTech contracts

Karl mentioned the video that went through the Spokane public schools regarding students that are doing work investigating bioremediation as a solution to PCB problem in the Spokane River. See link: <https://youtu.be/i3iw1BQARD4>

Public Comment: Kris Holm – I want to make sure everyone is aware of the Ecology proposal to list Spokane River in our study area based on PBDEs based solely on the WDOH fish advisory for PBD content in fish. There are no water quality criteria for PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers), regardless Ecology is listing entire river for PBDE which is category five and requires a TMDL. I know the MOA says the TF is supposed to be addressing PCBs and other toxics listed. I suggest looking at this since comments are due June 4 and this may have a major impact on scoping and work efforts. PBDEs are a big issue and Spokane River is only water body proposed for listing by Ecology and is solely based on WDOH fish advisory. It was requested by two or three environmental groups. You may consider asking for an extension on this and talking about it at the May TF meeting.

The next SRRTTF meeting will be held on May 26, 2021 at 8:30 AM