

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

January 26, 2022, Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srtrtf.org/?p=12365>

Attendees:

Voting Members and Alternates

Tom Agnew, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
Doug Krapas – Inland Empire Paper
Brent Downey – Kaiser Aluminum
Craig Borrenpohl, Alyssa Gersdorf – City of Post Falls
Rob Lindsay, Ben Brattebo – Spokane County
Jeff Donovan, Cadie Olsen, Mike Cannon – City of Spokane
Vikki Barthels, Bruce Williams – Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD)
Ken Windram – Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board
Amanda Parrish – Lands Council
Mike Anderson, Ben Martin – City of Coeur d’Alene
Chris Donley – WA State Department of Fish & Wildlife
Holly Davies – WA State Department of Health
Galen Buterbaugh – Lake Spokane Association

Advisors

Karl Rains, Adriane Borgias, Jeremy Schmidt, Cheryl Niemi, Bill Fees, Brandee Era-Miller, Sandy Treccani, Diana Washington, Brook Beeler – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)
Brian Nickel, Miranda Magdangal, Cami Grandinetti, Cyndi Grafe, Lisa Kusnierz and Jennifer Bryne – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
Robert Steed, Kristen Lowell – Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Interested Parties

Dave Dilks – LimnoTech
Ben and Lara Floyd – White Bluffs Consulting (WBC)
Lisa Dally Wilson – Dally Environmental and SRSP
Monica Ott - Avista
Dan Shay and Hanna Faught – North Central high school
James Tupper – TMW Law
Doug Austin – Chesapeake Bay Program
Kris Holm

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

Meeting Summary Action: The Task Force (TF) approved the December 15 meeting summary and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website after some minor changes. Karl gave an update on the legislative language regarding toxics as discussed at the last meeting. The legislative notes weren’t finalized until December and the notes were changed to say the funding is only specific to reducing PCBs and it does not include other toxics.

Ben shared that both Chelsea Updegrove and Mike Hermanson have taken other jobs. Any follow up on PMF work will be under the Tech Track work group now, so the PMF group will be sunsetted. A path forward for the Environmental Justice work group is unknown.

ACE Update – Rob said they sent contracts to Lisa and Dave for the mini Data Synthesis Workshop (DSW). They still need to get a contract to Spokane River Forum for the spring media campaign. Jeff said 1099s went out this week and they are working with Karl on the reimbursement request. The ending balance should be \$14,000 less than what is listed on the top of the report and the real amount is \$125,000. ACE has 1.2 million left of state funds that can be used by 2023.

Education and Outreach – Vikki said the digital media campaign will start next week and will be ads that were already done for previous campaigns. February will be on printer ink and toner cartridges and March ads will be geared towards automotive. The next meeting will be March 8 and there will be a discussion of other messaging regarding stormwater. They are meeting every other month now and will have some email correspondence. Once they agree on messaging, they hope to have a plan at the March TF meeting for approval.

Funding/MOA – No new information but things are still paused since there is plenty of funding available. No update on revised MOA. If any entities are pursuing the Columbia River restoration section 123 grant opportunity the applications are due February 8. Karl will review the reimbursement request from ACE by the end of the week.

- Who else on the east side of the state is applying for the Columbia River funding? *Karl said he was not aware of anyone with an Ecology tie. Ecology will partner with Yakama Nation on one part and possibly the Chelan DNR may be supported by EAP, and TCP may be partnering with the Spokane Tribe, but he was not certain.*

Tech Track – Lisa said they have budget requests that will be addressed later. They have received all results for MR field work (artesian well, water column and sediment samples) and Dave has them all included for the DSW. The EDR LightBox Sanborn post 1953 maps would be good to have and will be discussed later. Brandee's Biofilm report and Dr. Rodenburg's Holistic report are available for TF review. The DSW is coming up next week and the draft agenda is out. Appointments have been sent out but anyone else interested can contact WBC for the link. They want to schedule TTWG meetings the 3rd Wednesday of each month from 9-11 am going forward.

Upcoming recommendations for action:

- All MR analysis will be included in report in March for approval
- Final Biofilm report out for review in early February
- Holistic PMF Analysis report out for review in February
- Initial Historical assessment for MR – available Feb. 2022, approve March 2022
- Project recommendations from DSW (Feb-April)

Ben said there were a good amount of EPA people involved in the last TTWG meeting also which was good for them to understand what's happening in the basin. Lisa said they are glad to have Doug Austin who is a program assistant at Chesapeake Bay institute involved also.

iPCB/TSCA - Doug said the iPCB/Lands Council work and website is in a holding pattern until they know who will be taking over the work. Any suggestions for TiO₂ studies or 2022 projects would be appreciated. Their next meeting is Wednesday, February 2.

The work group consolidated questions from the TF about the TDSC (Titanium Dioxide Stewardship Council) study and they came back with answers. The work group would have liked to see a final report, but TDSC said they won't provide one.

Doug went over the potential TiO₂ projects and 2022 project proposals and asked people to share other ideas if they have them.

Comments/Questions:

- Claiming CBI (or proprietary) something that can readily be otherwise readily determined is a very weak position for an Association or other legal entity to claim. *Doug agreed but said obviously they don't want to release any more information.*
- The Department of Health and Ecology are working on PCBs and ink under Safer Products of WA, but could they also work on TiO₂? They just did the testing on inks.

2020-2021 Evaluation of PCBs in the Spokane River via SPMDs: Dave Dilks said he presented it for approval at the last TF meeting, but some wanted more time and he received comments last week. He will get a new draft out one week before next month's meeting for approval.

Tech Track Work Group Funding Recommendations: Lisa introduced Dan Shay who works for North Central high school and students have been working on bioremediation concepts regarding PCBs. The TTWG did vote to recommend approval of this project, which is \$10, 045.

North Central High School PCB Bioremediation Study Proposal Budget Request: Dan Shay (director and teacher of science and technology) and student Hanna Faught shared the information on the proposal. Students in their Jr. and Sr. year can choose to do a biotech research project. They are good at analyzing DNA. Five years ago, they had students interested in fungal bioremediation and did a project which connected them to Les Stephens and Mike Petersen from Lands Council.

Hanna has data from 2020 where they did a pan study. Their focus was to speed up bioremediation of PCBs by adding things to soil and ended up with nondetectable levels. In 2021 they didn't see change with inoculant to study. This year they added 15 gallons of soil and they are seeing bioremediation and looking at bacteria and fungi species. They are looking for PCB enzymes that contribute. They want to improve understating of these methods by:

A – moving to a larger scale study

B – they used an 8082 method to determine PCBs and if they can detect at lower levels using a 1668 method to see what congener degradation is happening. The funding would fund tests, a medium scale study to see what things are inhibiting bioremediation plus the congener degradation.

Comments/Questions:

- Karl said he needs to look at Ecology contracting to make sure there are no issues for using some of the money for a summer internship as Dan mentioned earlier at the TTWG meeting.

- Dan asked if the organization they would contract with be the public schools foundation? If it is a check, there is an account at the school it could be put into. *Rob said he is ok with a lump sum grant if Ecology is.* In the past, the Lands Council refunded their expenses.
- Is there a QAPP that has been prepared for this work? *Dan Shay said no, and Lisa said there was not discussion about this. If it is required, it could be a good learning experience.*
- Karl to look at the contract and have some discussion with Ecology's contract department to get advice on the best path forward regarding the funds and a possible QAPP requirement. Brandee is available to help if a QAPP is needed.

ACTION: The TF approved the proposal of \$10,045 for the North Central high school bioremediation proposal

EDR-LightBox Sanborn Maps Proposal Budget Request: Dave said they have identified contamination in MR and there is an unknown source increasing PCB concentrations. They are requesting to purchase Sanborn maps. Some are public domain through the 1950s. EDR LightBox sells them after the mid-50s, and they would like to purchase some. They are \$80 per map, and it will cost \$6,000 to purchase 65 of them to look at the PCB contamination.

Comments/Questions:

- Karl said the \$80 per map is a premium price since they include georeferencing which would be valuable to the TF. In a report we can highlight the map or area and reference the maps and it should meet EDR's proprietary nature. We will want to identify who will retain the maps that are purchased, and I would think the full map collection would reside with Ecology.
- What is the extent of the map coverage? *Dave said it's pretty broad and you get the entire coverage by year and is the urbanized areas of City of Spokane.*
- The maps that are pre-1953 are they in the same format with being able to use GIS locations? Brandee did not think so.
- Is LimnoTech going to buy the maps? *Rob said they are proposing ACE does or LimnoTech could and then bill ACE. Since LimnoTech already has an account with them it could be simpler for LimnoTech to purchase and get reimbursed.*
- Rob said they will need an authorization to write a change order for cost of the maps and any markup that LimnoTech would apply.
- Cadie wondered about bringing proprietary items such as these maps in and will it affect anything if LimnoTech or ACE buys them? Who releases it for public records request and who holds them?
- Sandy said this cannot be a new problem and I would think EDR will have an answer to these questions.
- Brian (chat) - For the federal Freedom of Information Act, copyrighted material is an exemption from disclosure.
- Adriane said the Ecology library could manage it somehow.

ACTION: The TF approved the \$6,000 for purchasing the Sandborn maps pending additional discussion about where they are held and who purchases them.

2021 SRRTF Draft Accomplishments: Ben shared the draft accomplishments of the TF for 2021.

- Bill Fees said regarding the GE site edit, it will be completed in 2022. Lara will make the update before posting the accomplishments to the website.

ACTION: The TF approved the draft accomplishments after the one edit is made.

Information Update: Karl said an announcement went out this am that the public review and comment period for city of Spokane and Kaiser permits have been extended an additional 15 days and February 28 is the new closure date. They have two public workshops and hearings scheduled for next Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening which are identical presentations from permit managers which will include question and answer at the end for comments.

Brian gave an update from EPA on the TMDL process – not a lot of new information but they are in process of gathering data from EIM, TF database and anything else relevant and also refining the schedule. The next 2-3 months will be prep work and will reach out to stakeholders after that about schedule going forward.

Karl said someone did reach out for an update on Ecology WQ assessment and it is still with EPA for review. If and when there is a listserve for updates on TMDL, he asked Brian about sharing it and he will relay the message to have an outreach tool.

Lisa mentioned at the last TF meeting when EPA was talking about schedule, they mentioned pulling together a stakeholder group. Will the group form once the TMDL is completed or during the process? *Brian said they know there are a lot of people interested and he will check.*

Upcoming Task Force Meeting Topics to add:

SPMD report approval – February

Alternative organizational structures for the TF – February

- Rob said as the ACE president involved with a lot of administrative burden regarding this project, 10 years ago the dischargers voluntarily agreed to an alternative process rather than a TMDL, but we are at the point where the TMDL is apparent. From a discharger point of view, things have changed. Our permits say that this process is proposed to be a compulsory activity. We support the work the TF is doing, and we see value in it. We are willing to continue participating but it is no longer a voluntary watershed process for us. We would like this talked about at future meetings. As an organization that has managed a number of different grant programs, to be more inclusive and efficient going forward we would like to reduce the administrative burden on the county and city. We would like to see a discussion of alternative organization structures that recognizes it's no longer a voluntary watershed process. Having a lead agency like other processes is an idea and it would be good to invite other members back like Tribes. Cadie confirmed the city agrees.
- We have a situation in our permit that we have to test construction materials and our PCB tester AXYS is saying no. Are there other labs that are willing to do this that others know of please email Ken Windram.

Ground Rules: Ben went over the suggested ground rules that were developed and they will be available for reference when needed for TF meetings and work group meetings.

The next SRRTTF meeting will be held on February 23, 2022, at 8:30 am.