

# Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

March 23, 2022, Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srrttf.org/?p=12536>

## Attendees:

### *Voting Members and Alternates*

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 – Spokane County  
Jeff Donovan, Mike Cannon – City of Spokane  
Vikki Barthels, Bruce Williams – Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD)  
Ken Windram – Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board  
Mike Anderson – City of Coeur d’Alene  
Holly Davies – WA State Department of Health  
Galen Buterbaugh – Lake Spokane Association  
Amanda Parrish – Lands Council  
Rebekkah Stevens – Coeur d’Alene Tribe

### *Advisors*

Karl Rains, Adriane Borgias, Brook Beeler, Jeremy Schmidt, Cheryl Niemi, Bill Fees, Brandee Era-Miller, Sandy Treccani, Diana Washington – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)  
Brian Nickel – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

### *Interested Parties*

Dave Dilks – LimnoTech  
Ben and Lara Floyd – White Bluffs Consulting (WBC)  
Lisa Dally Wilson – Dally Environmental and SRSP  
Monica Ott - Avista  
Mike Petersen  
Kris Holm

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

**Meeting Summary Action:** The Task Force (TF) approved the February 23 meeting summary and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website.

**ACE Update** – Rob said they have issued a couple more contracts but still not sure how to contract with NCHS. They have a small contract with the Spokane River Atlas group with some questions still. Jeff said the Ecology reimbursement came through in February. Taxes were filed and they are working on getting a contract amendment together in April since Karl is leaving soon. He shared the ACE summary and commitment report.

Ben asked about the grant that could be given to NCHS and Karl said their contracting department said a lump sum grant could be given by the TF to NCHS. Using the funds for a

stipend for the high school students to work over the summer is fine also. A QAPP is needed, and Brandee is available to help them. Brandee said she and Dan spoke last week. Mike P. said Dan is hoping to have a draft of the QAPP by Friday, with the student and Les Stephens helping. Brandee will check to see if Ecology needs to approve the QAPP. Karl said he thinks they would need to approve it and Jeff agreed.

**Education and Outreach** – Vikki shared they are working on getting the next set of videos ready for the media campaign. Andy Dunau from Spokane River Forum has been working on some ad scripts and they will have a meeting April 12 at 11 am to discuss and approve the ad scripts to bring to the TF meeting in April.

**Tech Track** – Lisa shared the following:

- Since last meeting had a small working group of TTWG meet to get more detail around scopes of work, schedule, etc.
- TTWG met on March 16 to further develop and approve the object detection survey for recommendation to TF today.
- The final draft holistic PMF report is up for approval today
- The initial historic assessment and MR source assessment monitoring report will be presented today by Dave. All comments need to be received by March 30 for approval at next TF meeting in April.
- Next meeting will be April 20 at 9 am
- In order to get the projects in next biennial funding request developing short scopes and budget rationale for all projects that will be implemented during low flow or this calendar year and into next calendar year. They hope to get in front of the TTWG in April and request approval by TF at end of April meeting and there will be about 8 projects.
- Lisa will be on vacation during part of April but can contact Lara at WBC with any questions.

**iPCB/TSCA** - Ben shared the following in Doug's behalf:

- iPCB Website is ready to go and have addressed comments so it can go live soon
- The Braided River report should be coming in April to TSCA WG
- Chem Forward is continuing their work
- Three project proposals being worked on, and scopes being developed
- Next meeting is April 6

Lisa asked who is working on the cost benefit analysis and Ben wasn't sure. Karl said over the years this has come up and Ecology has provided what the request to EPA may look like. Lisa said EPA has just released new guidance for providing cost benefit analysis and it is in a public comment period. Ben said after looking back at the TSCA notes it is a project, but it looks like it was in Karl's court during the last meeting.

#### **Fingerprinting of PCBs in Spokane River fish, biofilm, and SPMDs and PMF Holistic Analysis**

**Reports:** Dr. Rodenburg presented the two reports at the last TF meeting and additional time was needed for comments. She provided the final reports after comments were addressed and looking for approval today.

**ACTION: The TF approved both the Fingerprinting of PCBS and PMF Holistic Analysis reports.**

**Spokane River Biofilm Study:** Brandee said she did not receive any comments and it is ready to put up on their website as a published document by the end of the week if the TF approves it.

What prompted the need for TF approval? Brandee said the TF helped pay for some of the analysis as they added extra sites in 2019. It was a joint effort from the beginning and there was a subgroup of the TTWG and most of the sites were picked by them.

**ACTION: The TF approved the Spokane River Biofilm Study.**

**Object Detection Justification Scope:** Dave said to address this in 2021 the TF had Gravity go out but only for about two thirds of the original area. They are getting valuable information from first part of study and want to get rest of survey area covered quickly to use results for monitoring later in the year. The budget is \$9,099 and don't need a new QAPP since it's similar work to what Gravity did before. He showed a map where the red area hotspots are located. They weren't able to go further downstream past Trent Bridge due to construction and would like to continue the work. Lisa pointed out the TTWG has voted to approve it for recommendation to the TF today.

**ACTION: The TF approved the scope of work for up to \$10,000 for the Object Detection.**

**Initial Historical Review Memo:** Dave shared a presentation. At next month's meeting will have it up for approval. They identified two areas that haven't been studied by the TF – Spokane Industrial Park and an area adjacent to the old Inland Metals site. Comments are needed by March 30.

**Comments/Questions:**

- Lisa said they are hoping to get comments from everyone by March 30 and members can ask Lara for a word version if they would like to comment.
- Are there any recommendations to come out of this summary? *Dave said yes, making recommendations based on what they found. Karl said there may be value as how this pyramid would look like based on what we know now over a decade later if it were recreated. If we had side by side pyramids of loads and concentrations it could be interesting also to see and help guide where the TF moves forward. Dave said all synoptic surveys were at low flow and will have SPMD data to recreate this and tell what the unknown sources are and would like to get a second year of data first.*
- Lisa said one concern is the in-river concentrations were measured with SPMD and inputs from different sources were based on grab sampling. *Dave said we don't know they are different and there may be uncertainty in SPMDs but worth doing the analysis. Brandee said as we have found there is not a perfect way to characterize surface water but have the same elements as the old data with SPMDs and grab samples on known impacts and we could recreate this.*
- What was the blank censoring or correction scheme that was used in the 2003-2007 source assessment and wonder if that is a factor that could skew the data? *Dave said he doesn't know exactly, and blanks were not that big of an issue with recent SPMDs. Brian said the thought there was a more recent effort Ecology did on how the SPMDs were*

*constructed and the SPMDs themselves could cause some issues. Brandee said they have had some blank contamination issues but in Spokane River the dissolved concentrations was high enough to not cause issues. Brandee will look to see what the censoring was for the surface water samples. Dave believed the effluents were grab and he can check. Dave said it is worth verifying.*

- Is there a timeline on when you are going to make a recommendation for follow up? *Dave said right now the PCB monitoring at higher flow didn't rise to the top with TTWG and it may be a next year item.*
- Lisa said this is part one of the historic assessment but when we come back next month will have scope rationales and budgets for additional projects. This second phase of historic source assessment will be and will ask for approval of it next month.

**Mission Reach Source Assessment Monitoring Report:** Dave gave a presentation and comments are due by March 30 for approval at TTWG and next TF meeting.

#### **Questions/Comments:**

- Mike A. asked with the object detection exploring further downriver, are they going to resurvey from bridge downriver near the two red spots? *The scope is to go where they left off and downstream, but I don't see harm in them doing duplicates and see if they are still there.*
- Lisa said can you go back to the picture that shows inland metal site? I wonder if whether or not the drainage area at low flow would be exposed and is it possible to add some sediment samples from that area? *Dave said yes, it can be considered. Lisa said it's possible it's contaminated but at high flow it would be hard to measure. Dave said it's worth including for sampling this summer. When Gravity is doing the magnetometer study it would be good for them to focus on this area. Jeff said those two sites are close to where the artesian well is also and there is an old railroad tunnel that goes under the area.*
- Karl said on the piezometer study you said we are waiting for additional detail from Hamilton Street investigation. Can we still get additional piezometer work done in current biennium? *Dave said it's a two-year study and there will be a mid-point update so don't have to wait the full two years. Probably wouldn't be deployed until next year. Karl said if there is any way to accelerate this if there is investment with piezometers with current budget, we will want to consider this. Also, one conclusion said water data did not seem to indicate there was an unknown source in MR which seems inconsistent. As far as synoptic sampling, if we were to do more with greater level of detail, is that what is needed? Dave said there are two theories – there is a groundwater source that is coming in that is strong enough to contaminate biofilm but not big enough to show up in water column as a whole. The other is back from SPMD study we did see during summer low flow a high hit at Trent Ave SPMD location and some kind of intermittent source going on that is infrequent. Dave said more grab sampling won't necessarily tell us more. Karl asked if piezometers may tell? Dave said it may tell more water is flowing in and getting the estimate of quality of water.*
- Jeremy said what we are going to learn from Hamilton is small in area looking at entire MR and other well networks that already show us at least on south side groundwater

flows towards the river. Waiting for Hamilton Street which is a small portion of study area and there is a lot that can be done now. *Dave said we are doing follow up with you and other local experts and there may be enough data to indicate groundwater flow that we don't have to wait on Hamilton Street data.*

- Brandee said with the GE site further upstream, the biofilm did seem to show there was aroclor 1260 coming in but it's hard to tell how much of a load. If we did larger piezometer study, we may be able to put some in upstream and downstream of where groundwater is coming in it may tell what the loading may be. It may tell if it is worth pursuing these types of sites.
- Rob said Amy Sumner did go out and collect initial data from wells at Hamilton Street site and they will be able to present information to this group within the next couple of months. They are not able to collect water samples from the monitoring wells on Hamilton St. site and that is why they are talking about using piezometers. *Bill said they are sampled on semi-annual basis and have data back 20 years with water level and quality data is available to anyone. If look back at old reports based on river and groundwater elevations, there are certain times of year, and it does discharge in this area. They will have better detail of it with the work Amy and others are doing. Bill said PCBs are not on the list though.*
- Who would we ask to sample those wells from 1668 during same time as groundwater levels exceed river levels? *Bill said would need to ask Avista, Burlington Northern Santa Fe and the new landowner. Monica said as part of agreement with the County, they use those sites for compliance and there is hesitation to have as little of activity as possible. Avista would need to talk about it.*

**Information Update:** Karl said the permit process for the five WA dischargers continues to move forward. The draft permit for IEP went out March 4 and closing is April 18. There will be two public workshops on April 5 and April 7. The Spokane County and Liberty Lake Water and Sewer District draft NPDES permits just went out for review last Friday and May 3 will end the comment period with public workshops being April 19 and April 26. Our permit managers are working on City and Kaiser permits and anticipate issuance in early April.

Brian said he doesn't have a lot to report from EPA but they continue to compile data and trying to make sure they nail down basic parts of the document.

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

- Presenting multiple broad scopes and budgets for approval from the TTWG

Sandy Treccani gave an update on Kaiser. They had a deadline to complete UV-AOP pilot testing at site on February 28 but have granted a 6 month extension to August 31 due to some complications, but all phase one work is complete.

**The next SRRTTF meeting will be held on April 27, 2022, at 8:30 am at the Spokane County Water Resource Center**