

# Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

February 23, 2022, Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srrttf.org/?p=12482>

## Attendees:

### *Voting Members and Alternates*

Tom Agnew, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District  
Doug Krapas – Inland Empire Paper  
Brent Downey, Elena Wolfe – Kaiser Aluminum  
Craig Borrenpohl, Alyssa Gersdorf – City of Post Falls  
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  
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, Jeremy Schmidt, Cheryl Niemi, Bill Fees, Brandee Era-Miller, Sandy Treccani, Diana Washington, Cathrene Glick – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)  
Brian Nickel – Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)  
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  
Dr. Lisa Rodenburg – Rutgers University  
Monica Ott - Avista  
Mike Petersen  
Gary Jones – United Printing Alliance  
Kris Holm

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

**Meeting Summary Action:** The Task Force (TF) approved the January 26 meeting summary and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website.

**ACE Update** – Jeff said ACE spent about \$26,000 in January and are currently sitting at \$1.1 million in uncommitted funds in the state appropriation fund. Rob finalized the Chem Forward contract and Data Synthesis Workshop (DSW) contracts recently. A couple of contracts such as Spokane River Forum spring media campaign and North Central High School projects are on hold waiting for some further information. They got some guidance on purchasing the Sanborn maps where LimnoTech will purchase them and be reimbursed. ACE currently has about \$70,000 in

the bank and had \$98,000 at end of January. Karl submitted the reimbursement request to Ecology and waiting to get it sometime soon.

**Education and Outreach** – Vikki said their next meeting will be March 8 at 11 am, focusing on upcoming media for the campaign which will have a stormwater focus.

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

- DSW was held and intent was to identify candidate projects for TF work plan, and they were prioritized into tiers.
- Held another TTWG meeting recently and walked through the prioritization and added details and will now have a small group try to do scopes and budgeting tomorrow. They hope to have scopes and budgets for the projects that will go to work group and/or TF.
- Reports for approval today – fish biofilm PMF and Dave’s SPMD report
- Upcoming TF recommendations for action were shared
- The TF approved North Central High School (NCHS) project on bioremediation proposed but a lot of outstanding questions about needing a QAPP, the best contracting entity, etc.
- Next meeting is March 16 at 9 am

What would you recommend doing to get NCHS set up? *Lisa said knowing whether they need a QAPP to scope and need to know who the contracting entity will be on their side. Can their summer intern be funded through this project? Karl said he has been trying to get answers from their contracting department and he will ask again. He said they need to develop a QAPP, and Brandee is willing to help provide guidance. Lisa said a point person is needed to coordinate with Dan Shay and Karl will email Dan back about the QAPP but tell him there is a wait on the other items.*

**iPCB/TSCA** - Doug shared the following:

- iPCB National Outreach Campaign – The Lands Council hired Naghmana Sherazi to further the campaign effort, revised website to be completed by end of February, most of outreach to be completed by May 2022, draft final report for TF by June/July 2022. Ben said when LC does their edits to website Ben will review it to make sure the updates are done that were addressed by the TF and other interested parties.
- Lower Procurement Limits Campaign - Braided River Consulting have identified different agencies they are going to conduct interviews of and in early April they will have a draft report for the work group to review.
- Develop industry list of Pigments project – just starting the process and will get update at March work group meeting.
- Sources and pathways of PCB 11 was turned over to TTWG. Dave identified unknown source of PCB 11 but after conferring with Dr. Rodenburg it made be due to blank issue. Dave will repeat assessment during 2022 synoptic survey and will keep eye on PCB 11.
- Doug went over 2022 project proposals
- Next meeting is March 2 at 10 am
- Continue to develop list of potential 2022 projects
- Karl is getting information to them from EPA of the benefit of cost/benefit analysis to TSCA.
- Most of the projects have to do with TiO<sub>2</sub>. Working with EPA and Ecology to see if there are programs they can collaborate with to do the product testing.

**Fingerprinting of PCBs in Spokane River fish, biofilm, and SPMDs:** Dr. Rodenburg gave a presentation first on fish and biofilm. There were three fingerprints found but there were not enough samples done in certain years, so it was difficult to do comparisons.

- Is this fingerprinting for recently collected fish samples collected by the TF? *Dr. Rodenburg said they are included with some older data. The next slide showed pre-2020 data along with 2020 data.*

Dr. Rodenburg said the biofilm vs SPMDs were sampling two different things. The addition of SPMD samples didn't really change the picture. They got six factors. The biofilm does have PCB 11 in it which tells there are blank contamination issues and there is PCB 11 in the water. Due to a non aroclor fingerprint, she guesses it's due to stormwater, etc. The biofilm is spitting out a fingerprint which is a match to 1268 which they saw coming into treatment plants. The MR 2018 biofilm were off scale and in 2019 biofilm study saw both 1260 and 1254 between the two.

- Brandee said with the MR samples, looking at homolog patterns and using PC analysis there is definitely 1254 and 1260 sources in MR and on right bank see more of 1254 and left bank more 1260. It is worth following up on.

Regarding the SPMDs, Dr. Rodenburg said it is dominated by 1254 pattern but there is also presence of high molecular weight things. They reflect the water column more. There were eight samples and as time goes by will be able to analyze separately and use them to see time trends. Don't have a lot of data for them now.

- Doug said he hasn't had enough time to look at the report. Lisa said this report has been out for a while and Ben said we need comments by mid-March to approve at March TF meeting. Cadie said this shows the overwhelming amount of things to be reviewed, and having time is an issue. Doug said all the dischargers have a NPDES permit renewal right now and it is high priority. Ben recommended approval at the next meeting with more time for review.

**PMF Holistic Analysis Report Presentation:** Dr. Rodenburg gave the presentation. She reviewed the aroclor vs. non-aroclor sources with the water column being 90% aroclor vs 10% non-aroclor. She went over surface water – special variations and there is an uptick in MR area of 1260 and 1254. 1248 was not a huge percentage of aroclors produced. She went through 2014, 2015, and 2018 mass balance (MB) results. Her results were consistent with Dave Dilks PMF based MB. The Kaiser GW source is significant. Some additional meaningful sources of 1260 above SR8a and possibly SR4.

- Gary Jones said he was confused on PCB 11 discussion. Doug had reported that a lot may be because of blank contamination but you said it's not? Where are you with it and sources of? *Dr. Rodenburg said there is PCB 11 in blanks and have done the best we can of blank correction. Plus, we have biofilm and there is PCB 11 in water column and in IEP influent/effluent. Dave said the uncertainty was regarding the mass balance assessment to look at unknown sources of PCB 11. There certainly is PCB 11 in water column well above what we see in the blanks. Lisa Rodenburg said it volatilizes readily out of water column and can be in air, so it is hard to pinpoint. PCB 11 from Doug's operation doesn't account for all*

of the PCB 11 in system. *Lisa and Dave said correct and there is PCB 11 above that point also. It is definitely in wastewater also and a lot of diffuse sources.*

Brandee said she would be interested in hearing a conversation about volatilization processes of PCBs in the Spokane River. Lisa suggested discussing this at the next TTWG meeting in March. Ben suggested having comments by March 15 on both of Dr. Rodenburg's reports with approval at the March 23 TF meeting.

**2020-2021 Evaluation of PCBs in the Spokane River via SPMDs:** Dave Dilks said he gave the presentation back in December at the TF meeting. Additional time was requested with comments submitted and addressed. Dave made some minor changes and hoping to approve today.

- Karl asked when the revised language was distributed? *On February 16 with the TF meeting materials. Karl said he may need to discuss with other Ecology people to make sure some of the language changes regarding regulatory things are ok first. He suggested approving pending Ecology's confirmation of wording regarding this. Doug clarified one sentence regarding test method 1668c as fact. Karl said there may need to be some slight changes to some of the wording and he will check with Ecology. Brian Nickel said he has similar concerns. Regardless of how data was collected there are always going to be limitations to the usefulness of that data. Doug said if there are comments to modify all can work together. Ben suggested the conversation take place to revise by March 7 to get revised version out to TF for approval at the next meeting.*

**Tech Track Data Synthesis Workshop Follow Up Presentation:** Lisa said they developed a list of candidate studies from the workshop and then prioritized the list. The TF has been doing MB to identify unknown sources but need to be large to identify them. The TTWG is honing in on smaller sources and so the projects are changing as well. Sources where other sampling has occurred indicated hot spots. Dave Dilks walked through the studies identified that aren't scoped yet. There are 3 tiers of importance. He walked through why they were identified as priority. A smaller group will meet to do scopes and budgets and will bring back to the TF.

- Lisa said the County has installed data loggers near Hamilton St. bridge regarding groundwater flow but won't have results until next year. Dave said there was one well looked at before and the County is doing more wells and will see groundwater flow into MR.
- Tom said considering your knowledge of hydrology, Springfield outflow is a street name because there was a field and a stream.
- Ben B. said regarding the oxidation pond of WWTP – he thinks Avista participated in the PCB cleanup in the river at Donkey Island and Upriver Dam because of ownership that served industrial park and it seemed it was contributing and they cleaned up the two sites.
- Dave asked how much cleanup did it entail? Did they put a historic load into groundwater that is still contributing?
- Monica said she has been talking to environmental compliance team, found some interesting documents from 2015 from TF on site prioritization put together by EAP and it is interesting information relevant to task. The cleanup up effort is complete by Avista and they still own the property.

- Dave said it showed there were PCB users somewhere in the park and high hits in the past. Where are they coming from?
- Monica sent a link to the Tech Memo completed by EAP in 2015 that she was referring to. <http://srrttf.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Tech-Memo-PCBs-in-Spokane-Valley-GW-Marti-9-16-15-FINAL-21.pdf>

Lisa said they are going to try and get the scopes and budgets developed by the next TF meeting and there is urgency in getting them approved because the work has to be done by June 2023 and there are things that need to happen at certain times of the year. Ben mentioned TF members needing more time and it may move to April TF meeting. Dave suggested prioritizing them and get most urgent scopes done first. The low flow sampling needs to be done in the summer.

**Physical Scope of Study Area – Extend Downstream of Nine Mile Dam?:** Ben said this question was raised at the DSW and needs to be considered by TF. Now that the TMDL process is going forward, do we consider these broader studies? Historically the TF has stopped at Nine Mile Dam. Do we extend the geographic scope of the study area?

**Comments/Questions:**

- Lisa said prior to the data workshop there was a request to look at management questions at the workshop. Karl added two additional scope pieces including this one.
- Cadie said it originated from Ecology and she said it's not a TF decision but an Ecology decision.
- Karl said given some of the improvements we've seen in this section of the river there are some from Ecology seeing benefits of expanding the scope. There may be some benefit and reasonable justification to expand the geographic scope. There is \$2 million dollars and still have \$1 million of unallocated funds.
- Brian said the impaired segments that the TMDL will address, are independent of the Task Force's study area.
- Doug said the TF opted to focus on urban area early on in this process due to limited funding. My concern with this TMDL being imminent is we don't know future of TF. I don't want to expand to other contaminants or beyond its current limits yet until we see what the TMDL will do.
- Karl said it's not Ecology's decision on where we focus our study, it's up to the TF.
- Cadie said the administrative burden on ACE is already coming to a breaking point with just the County and City holding that burden and it may be a capacity issue. If we stick with current organization structure, we lack the capacity to administer more work.
- Galen said he thinks lake Spokane would support studies in Lake Spokane. I believe samples used by the state Department of Health are taken from Lake Spokane.
- Karl said there is an option to hire someone to manage the ACE contract through the TF funds, especially with more funds now.
- Ben said this will be discussed further and would like to talk to Dave about which studies may have a broader geographic scope.

- Dave said routine grab sampling at the mouth of Little Spokane would be the next place to look and we don't know the load coming in there. Ben, Lisa and Dave will identify specific areas and timing.

**Alternative Organizational Structures for the Task Force:** Ben shared how the County and City have mentioned how the ACE administration is a big burden. There are two approaches suggested if the TF chooses to look at an alternative organization structure: Watershed Planning Organizational Approach and an example of the Truckee River Basin Watershed Group.

- Ben B. said the County submitted written comments on our entity review permit and included this. The TF was formed to be in lieu of a TMDL and a voluntary effort. The voluntary piece has gone away now. We recommend Ecology bring a different structure with this effort. We will continue to participate regardless.

**Information Update:** Karl said the public review and comment period on proposed NPDES permits for Kaiser and City of Spokane closes on February 28. Ecology will do response to comments. He anticipates the other three draft permits to be out for public comment in March.

- Are you planning to issue all of them at the same time or will they be staggered? *Karl said their plan is to move through the permit completion process and they won't hold onto ones already issued until the others are done. IEP draft permit is a little ahead of other two municipals. IEP may be early March and other two may be mid or later March.*

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

- SPMD report approval
- Fish biofilm PMF report approval
- MR hotspot report for review in March

Doug said there was an article in the Spokesman-Review regarding the TMDL process and IEP had a few sentences in there since he was interviewed.

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