

Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

September 28, 2022, Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srrttf.org/?p=12812>

Attendees:

Voting Members and Alternates

Tom Agnew, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District
Rob Lindsay – Spokane County
Elena Wolf – Kaiser Aluminum
Sarah Gilbert – Inland Empire Paper
Craig Borrenpohl, Alyssa Gersdorf – City of Post Falls
Jeff Donovan – City of Spokane
Vikki Barthels, Bruce Williams – Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD)
Mike Anderson – City of Coeur d’Alene
Holly Davies – WA State Department of Health
Amanda Parrish – Lands Council

Advisors

Adriane Borgias, Annie Simpson, Cheryl Niemi, Diana Washington, Jeremy Schmidt, Suman Paudel – 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

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

Meeting Summary Action: The Task Force (TF) approved the August meeting summary and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website after some minor edits.

ACE – Rob said he has been working with Dave to put together scopes for upcoming work. They are on track with contracts. They will be having an ACE board meeting within the next month. Jeff said there are no major changes – \$800,000 in uncommitted funds and got a grant reimbursement back so they have funds available. With the river sampling they have quite a few invoices to pay so they will need to do another reimbursement soon.

Education and Outreach: Vikki said in October and November they will continue to run social media posts that got the most hits from the recent campaign. The next work group meeting will be November 8 from 11 am to 12 pm and they will be discussing new content for January – June social media.

Tech Track: – Lisa shared the following:

- They had a work group meeting and topics included next level historical review and prioritization methodology. The draft tech memo will be available for review on October 12 and will have a presentation to the full TF in October.
- Fish trend assessment – changes in scope for reach 6 agreed upon – QAPP ready for signature
- Groundwater and surface water fingerprinting of PCB data at GE site (approve budget and scope in concept with formal approval in October)
- Compilation of groundwater monitoring well data (to be discussed further at October meeting)
- Additional SRRTTF projects -bring project ideas to the table before November
- Propose changing meeting to third Tuesday from 10 am - 12 pm and Lara will send out an updated meeting appointment.
- Upcoming TF recommendations:
 - Today – PCB fingerprinting Analysis of GE site groundwater concept (formal approval in October)

October TF meeting:

- LimnoTech Task Order for Project Development to conserve discretionary funding
- Possible project approval – Compilation of monitoring well data to assess connectivity to SR
- 2022 Possible project approval – Additional Canine Detection Work
- 2022 Possible project approval – Next steps for high scoring sites from historical review

Dave Dilks shared project updates from the field:

- Expanded Synoptic Survey/Artesian Well/Stormwater Catch Basin
 - Synoptic survey conducted August 28 - September 2
 - Storm basin sampling conducted September 7
- Sediment/Biofilm Monitoring, Completed September 3 - 7
- Water Column/Trend Assessment
 - SPMDs deployed August 30, Due for retrieval September 2

Comments:

- Lisa said people are having a hard time getting sample results back from SGS AXYS in a timely manner and they are looking at other labs. Dave said it should be 45 days so hopefully they have data by the next TTWG meeting.
- Didn't the county put in data loggers on the Hamilton Street bridge? Is that related? Dave said it is one of those, but this is the entire spectrum of wells. Lisa said we had discussed waiting and getting info from the county on results of the data loggers near the end of this year. It would be good to coordinate.
- Rob gave an update and said they did not check it, but the County can pull it out for someone to download the data. It's a toxics clean-up site and sometimes it's a gaining or losing reach and they aren't able to get on site and get the real information.
- Lisa said they will discuss and maybe LimnoTech can do an assessment? It would be good to have a full year of data.

- Jeremy said a lot of negotiation went into putting in the data loggers and a written agreement was done, and it may not be straightforward. Review what the agreement says. Jeremy will ask Bill.
- Monica said she will send it to Rob and cc Lisa. She said it is pretty specific who is allowed on property and who does what. Avista needs to be notified of any desired changes. Rob said they were installed last spring and Lisa mentioned pulling them in time to review data before the end of biennium.

iPCB/TSCA: Ben shared the following on Doug's behalf:

- iPCB National Outreach Campaign project by TLC: (Website: www.ipcbfree.org)
- Lower Procurement Limits Campaign (Braided River): Final report to iPCB/TSCA Workgroup and SRRTTF for approval at October meetings
- Develop Industry List of Chlorinated Pigments (ChemForward): Database nearing completion, demonstration at October iPCB/TSCA Meeting
- Safer Products WA – SRRTTF Actions TBD @ October iPCB/TSCA Meeting
- Working on 2022 Project Proposals:
 - Petition EPA to evaluate impacts of iPCB TSCA allowance (cost/benefit, risk & rule congruity)
 - Opportunity to work with EPA on testing of TiO2

TF recommendations for action:

- Approval of TLC E & O report and webpage as “working documents”

Next meeting: Wednesday, October 5th @ 10:00 AM via ZOOM

iPCB National Outreach Campaign Report – Amanda Parrish shared the information after an introduction on the process of the campaign. She said that locally there is confusion around the TMDL process and request for EPA reform around TSCA limits and people were hesitant to sign on. She went over the report.

Comments:

- Adriane said it's not uncommon to be so far ahead of the issue and they may not understand. There may be education that needs to happen as a result. It takes a certain understanding for people to buy in but just the act of having a survey raises awareness. *Amanda said this group is way ahead of investigating this issue and inadvertent PCBs may be low on priority list of things that need to be addressed.*
- Lisa mentioned Doug Austin saying that they are trying to get a number of EPA leaders together to discuss inadvertents. Letting EPA know there is a disconnect with what people are understanding regarding numerous roles of PCBs is an idea. Also, who is going to host and maintain this site after your contract is done and after the TF changes next year? *Amanda said if they could invoice someone annually, they could continue to host it which would cost the TF \$250 per year. Lindsay, their communications director could make the updates.*
- Brian said one of the issues is that among other environmental groups, I have sensed a TMDL is how you fix water quality problems. They may think why do we need to do anything else? That is part of the hesitancy.

The TF approved the iPCB National Outreach Campaign report as a working product and the Lands Council contract is complete.

Groundwater and Surface Water Fingerprinting of PCB Data at GE site: Dave gave the presentation he gave at the TTWG meeting. He shared the costs for the various options. The TTWG recommended the TF approve the project concept today and the formal scope will be available one week prior to the next TF meeting. They will prepare a formal scope of work for congener mass balance plus fingerprinting with a \$45,000 budget.

Comments:

- Adriane – The QAPP needs to specify the purpose of the work and how analysis will further the work.
- Rob – As a TF member the County is happy to support this ongoing work and see it as work in the realm of the Toxics clean-up program and not in the realm of NPDES permit holders.

The TF approved the concept, and a scope and budget will be presented next month.

Ecology Staffing Update: Adriane gave an update about staffing and the resources they have available. She shared Ecology’s vision and mission statements plus their strategic priorities. They have the watershed unit and permit unit, and she went over the key duties involved. The watershed unit is organized by 5 major watershed regions.

She introduced Suman Paudel who is their new industrial stormwater and urban waters manger. They have also hired Annie Simpson recently. She is a regional planner focusing on three watersheds (Spokane, Walla Walla and Pend Oreille) and is involved with public involvement and outreach.

She went over the individual permits which they manage also, the duties involved and staffing. With Spokane river permits it has taken up to 25% of their staffing. They are understaffed and they have legislative proposals in to increase their staffing.

Comments:

- When will Ecology start working on the transition? *They will report back in October with a schedule and path forward.*
- What is happening with the TMDL? *Data collection is wrapping up.*
- Rob said he has been able to look at water quality on a state-wide basis, 18 permits per FTE is consistent with other areas of the state. It is a problem. He appreciated outreach regarding the TF path forward.
- Ben asked about when to have an ad hoc meeting and Adriane said it can reconvene after the TF meeting in October.

Information Update:

Permitting: Annie said all the permits are in appeal right now and going through the legal process. Jeff said their hearing isn’t until September of 2023. It will be taken off the TF agenda for now.

PCB TMDL: Brian said they met with staff from ID DEQ recently to listen to their concerns and they are interested in making sure there is a stakeholder process where people can keep up to date with the TMDL and EPA wants to do that. Adriane said they have not met with EPA regarding the TMDL. Many members mentioned requesting a formal presentation at the October or November TF meeting and how it would be helpful. Brian will pass it on, and the project lead right now is Gunnar Johnson. He will ask if Gunnar can present at an upcoming meeting.

Future meeting topics:

- Dave will be presenting results from the tech memo on next level historical review in October
- Fingerprinting of PCBs @ GE site
- LimnoTech task order for project development
- Monitoring well data to assess connectivity
- Possible project approvals – canine detection and scoping sites for historical review
- Discussion on website and other general things regarding TF transition
- Hoping to have results from Aug/Sept monitoring for November TF mtg.

The next SRRTTF meeting will be held on October 26 at 8:30 am at the Spokane County Water Resource Center.