

# Spokane River Regional Toxics Task Force Zoom Meeting

August 24, 2022, Meeting Notes

Facilitated by White Bluffs Consulting

Meeting Documents: <http://srtrtf.org/?p=12763>

## Attendees:

### ***Voting Members and Alternates***

Tom Agnew, BiJay Adams – Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District

Sarah Gilbert – Inland Empire Paper

Brent Downey – Kaiser Aluminum

Craig Borrenpohl, Alyssa Gersdorf – City of Post Falls

Jeff Donovan – City of Spokane

Mike Lascoula – Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD)

Mike Anderson, Ben Martin – City of Coeur d’Alene

Holly Davies – WA State Department of Health

Amanda Parrish – Lands Council

Chris Donley – WA State Department of Fish and Wildlife

Ken Windram – Hayden Area Regional Sewer Board

Kristin Lowell – Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

### ***Advisors***

Karl Rains, Annie Simpson, Cheryl Niemi, Bill Fees, Sandy Treccani, Diana Washington – Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology)

Brian Nickel, Gunnar Johnson – 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

Andy Dunau – Spokane River Forum

Doug Austin – Chesapeake Bay Program

Robert Mott – Mott Consulting

Gary Jones – Printing United Alliance

**Introductions and Agenda Review:** After introductions, Ben Floyd reviewed the agenda. Karl Rains introduced Annie Simpson who is replacing him.

**Meeting Summary Action:** The Task Force (TF) approved the June meeting summary after a minor change suggested by Lisa Dally Wilson regarding the TTWG update and Lara Floyd will post the final notes to the website after the edit.

**ACE** – Jeff said they have \$800,000 in uncommitted funds from the state. The TF balance was down at the end of July, but the Ecology reimbursement came through recently. Rob got contracts finalized for Gravity and SVL, but Gravity is still reviewing the river work contract that will be starting soon. Karl said they did get the contract amendment signed recently with Ecology also.

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

- The TTWG met in August, and they are formalizing geographic boundaries of the Mission Reach. Regarding the next level historical review – LimnoTech will be prioritizing sites – have asked people to comment on straw man that was provided by August 30 and in September Dave will give a presentation at the TTWG level then at the TF meeting
- Fish trend assessment – some changes in scope for Reach 6
- Project updates
  - QAPP and addendums needed to proceed with field work in August
  - Additional SRRTTF projects – to be further vetted in September, possibly for approval to TF in September
- Next meeting will be third Wednesday in September

Dave talked about synoptic survey/well and sediment and biofilm and putting in SPMDs to measure water in the Mirabeau area. There will be a fourth study in October with WDFW collecting red band trout and the QAPP addendum was sent to Ecology for review. If fish sampling causes harm to the population, plans will be reconsidered. One segment along reach 6 is below the city wastewater treatment plant. When DFW went out in 2020 there was not a large amount of fish and wanted to collect 25 fish in each reach but interim plan in 2022 was to collect 15 fish and will that cause effects to population? Chuck Lee said he is comfortable with a 3-5 year frequency so do we collect in 2022 and then do only every 3-5 years or will there be damage to the fish population doing this in 2020 and 2022? Once we figure it out, we can implement work in October.

Chris said he hasn't sat down with Chuck yet and he thinks it is ok in 2022 but don't do it again for 3-5 years. What are we gaining that we didn't learn in 2020? Will we be able to see if fish below treatment are responding? Dave said that is a reasonable request. It is a small population of fish. Lisa said if it is every 3-5 years it may be nice to make it 4 years so data of fish trend would be collected at the same time. Water column data are collected once every 2 years and could do at the same time on those years. Chris said they are open to options other than doing every other year and TTWG will discuss it at their next meeting.

Dave mentioned almost everything is in place for sampling starting next week but one issue is SGS AXYS who supplies sample bottles and don't have them yet. They do have one-liter bottles so Gravity would have to do more samples and will require more coolers to ship bottles back so cost will be more and possibly an additional \$5,000 for shipping. The bottles may show up in time but if they don't may want to approve additional money if needed. Ben said we can do an informal approval now for the extra money if needed and Karl said Ecology supports that and Jeff agreed.

Rob asked if SGS will send one-liter bottles to Gravity and if they too would incur additional cost? Dave said they haven't mentioned that it would cost more. Rob asked when Gravity may seek reimbursement and he could do a change order now or after the September TF meeting. Ben suggested holding on it for now to do a change order but having an informal approval. Dave suggested approving \$6,000 just to be safe and the TF members agreed to the amount.

**The TF informally approved the \$6,000 but will come back with an official approval at the September TF meeting.**

**iPCB/TSCA** - Lisa shared the following on Doug's behalf:

- iPCB National Outreach Campaign project: (Website: [www.ipcbfree.org](http://www.ipcbfree.org)) draft report provided to iPCB/TSCA workgroup for review & comment - 3 month extension to September 30, 2022 for completion of project/final report
- Lower Procurement Limits Campaign (Braided River): draft report provided to iPCB/TSCA workgroup for review & comment
- Develop Industry List of Chlorinated Pigments (ChemForward):
  - Research 100% complete
  - Software development 75% complete
  - Data population and curation 90% complete
  - Communications and Outreach 20% complete
- Safer Products WA – SRRTTF Action TBD @ September 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 TiO<sub>2</sub>
- There are a number of websites being developed and with the TF sunseting, where do those things get housed and how to access them? May want to discuss at the next TF meeting?
- Text for website and identifying website partners with Chem Forward project and Doug wonders where that website will be housed?
- Approval of national outreach campaign and Braided River report at September TF meeting. Also, industry list of pigments projects and work group may not be able to reach consensus on language of website and will include discussion of hazard information presented in website.

**Spring Media Campaign Report Presentation** – Andy Dunau gave a presentation. The campaign is reaching 75,000 -100,000 people per month or 33% of population over time and they are getting message 1 to 4 times. Stormwater ads are doing better than previous campaign. Facebook reaches more people than Instagram, especially video so focusing on it more. The most popular stormwater ads were car wash and pesticides. For next steps they will probably do a mix of stormwater and some new content. Some considerations are e-waste, adjusting sprinklers to avoid fertilizer, pesticide runoff, general ads or others.

**Comments:**

- How did you set your goals? *Andy said it comes from the media company we contract with and is all algorithms as to what we should be seeing. Forty percent or above is good. Every month when we look at stats, I do adjustments based upon what we see.*

**iPCB National Outreach Campaign Update:** Amanda Parrish from Lands Council gave an update. They have received comments to consider. Purpose was to do qualitative outreach and do one on one communications on EPA reform of iPCB water quality issue. They built a website and a database of folks to reach out to both in WA and nationally. A lot of the contacts were old

by the time they started due to staffing issues and time spent on reforming and revising website. They contacted 110 different entities and had 31 sign ups and they will provide an appendix of those contacts. One comment received from Doug was wanting more examples of responses received. In some cases, organizations and colleges said they were generally not able to make endorsements.

The Lands Council can continue to house the website domain name but waiting for direction from the TF. Amanda said they will incorporate the comments received to give a few more qualitative examples of comments received.

#### Comments:

- Were other geographic areas across the country interested? *Amanda said eight of the 31 sign ups were from out of state entities. The out of state were less aware of the inadvertent PCB issue and they gave more education about it and the website was valuable. They will include geographic regions in the data.*
- For the 31 sign ups is there any expectation of follow up activity on their part or was this qualitative outreach a one and done and they knew that when they signed up? *Amanda said not sure what the part two follow up is and there isn't an expectation we gave them, and we want to take advantage of the momentum.*
- I'm curious if iPCBs are a focus of the Chesapeake Bay Program and wonder if Doug Austin can comment on this? *Doug said yes, we are aware of the issue and if Amanda wants to send anything my way, please do as we are interested. We have bigger fish to fry but we would like to keep tabs on this.*
- In your assessment of outreach, is there enough of critical mass or will we be proceeding on our own? *Amanda said from a national campaign standpoint, a lot feel like Doug said that they will wait and see. They were interested but want to see what is happening with TMDL process. They have other environmental issues in their communities and it is not a priority right now. If the TF wants to pursue, would they want to work with legal strategists instead of us, a regional non-profit?*
- Doug Austin said they are in the stages of trying to get different people together to discuss iPCBs and maybe this could be folded in? I meant within PCB context as we have so many PCB TMDLs in our watershed. *Amanda said the inadvertent EPA reform wasn't rising to top of priority list for many.*
- The Spokane River is unique as there isn't a lot of sediment although have legacy PCBs, the iPCBs rise up a little more in importance due to that. Wastewater plants are state of the art now and do a great job removing higher weight congeners, but light congeners are often more in inadvertent category, so Spokane River is unique.
- Given the response from Doug, one path moving forward could be a maintenance track where the Lands Council is provided a nominal amount of funding to maintain some of these relationships developed and track to see when timing may be right for more of a national campaign larger effort. The timing may not be right now but let's not drop it completely. Amanda said Lands Council would consider that idea.

Amanda asked about the contract and the \$26,600 budget and at first only part was approved. Jeff said they were invoiced for some, and it was all approved by the TF. Rob shared that in

March 2021 total estimated was \$26,600 and 70% was given out and other 30% would be given following the interim report of activities. Jeff said they will figure it out between ACE and Lands Council and the IPCB work group.

**SRRTTF Path Forward update:** Ben mentioned the ad hoc group that was organized with certain members of the TF. They met and discussed different options but narrowed it down to one option which was put into a memo.

**Comments:**

- Did Adriane meet with Ecology yet to share the memo? *Karl said he asked Adriane and not sure when those conversations will take place.*
- Rob said Spokane County is on board and looking forward to a new path forward.
- Craig asked about discussions on close out activities or any final reports between now and next June? *Ben said there will be some loose ends we need to discuss and once we get a response from Adriane from Ecology and bring a formal recommendation back then we should plan.*
- Rob said from an admin standpoint a number of items from ACE will need to be done. I don't see a future group abandoning some of the goals and objectives this group is already doing now. My hope is a lot of same good work will continue and it's more about governance and how funds are managed, and I see a transition. Tom agreed and EPA's TMDL will be major in how this moves forward.
- Ben said it may depend on how Ecology is able to help transition so there is a seamless transition.
- Karl said for our ID partners, the dischargers still have their NPDES permits saying they have to participate and need to acknowledge how it will work for those entities going forward.
- Brian said DEQ is working on those reissued permits for Spokane River dischargers in ID and don't have a date for those yet.
- Is there any word from DEQ about whether they are planning to continue the requirements in the EPA permits for the ID dischargers? Kristin will email them to ask.
- Is there another ad hoc work group scheduled? Seems like we need more discussion. Ben said just waiting to hear from Adriane where internal discussions are with Ecology first and he hopes to have a meeting in September.

**Measurable Progress (MP) Draft Report Overview:** Karl prepared a report and wanted to get it out to the TF, but it does not require TF approval. He would like comments by end of day on September 15 and please send them to Karl, Annie and cc Adriane, Ben and Lara.

**Comments:**

- What is this report going to be used for now that there is the PCB TMDL? *Karl said it can be used for whatever future form the TF evolves into and it justifies that this approach has been successful. It can help serve as a close out report, except for the last two years of the TF.*

**Permitting update/EPA update:** Karl said the permits have all been issued and four have been appealed to date. Brian said they are analyzing data and have done prelim analysis on USGS

Gauge data, collected data on topography and other GIS data. They are developing technical approach on calculating the allocation, work on source assessment, and assessing PCB water quality data that primarily Ecology and the TF have collected starting with 2010 and more recent data. EPA has a webpage now and it will continue to expand as they have more work products to share.

#### **Comments:**

- Are you going to be looking at a total PCB TMDL? *Brian said allocations will be total PCBs and how all water quality standards are expressed. The TMDL is going to be designed to meet water quality standards and it dictates the form of PCBs regulated.*
- Will sharing the technical approach be an update at the TF level or will we sit down and have more of an update? *Brian said that is reasonable and he will mention it to the team that there is some two-way communication on it when ready to share.*
- You mentioned EPA was working on an outreach strategy, is there an update? *Brian said he does not know. We understand and want to make sure everyone is adequately informed.* It would be helpful to know what EPA's plans are with this.

#### **Future meeting topics for September**

- Add taking action on iPCB national outreach report
- Project proposals for TTWG
- Braided River report
- Vote on language of industry list of pigments website?
- Change November 30 item to 2022 field work update and prelim findings

Lisa mentioned projects like historical level site review and how work will be used by Ecology and others moving forward with transition. Karl mentioned a task for \$200,000 with legislative funding that is already been put in. How the report may be used going forward, there is also an anticipation that this group will be rebranded into something doing similar work. I see the historic work feeding into implementation down the road and Lisa agreed.

Ben said there are several components that should be part of a transition plan. Jeff asked do we start new projects early next year or have a clean break? Ben suggested a clean break and need to figure out in the transition plan starting this fall. Karl agreed but for the funding, the June 30 deadline should be considered. If something comes out of historical report and TF isn't constrained by any limitations, feel the TF should do the work with current funding if possible and should start the work to use the money.

Ben asked Dave on schedule for sites review – presented to TTWG last week and will have revised version next month to look at next steps. They would like comments by end of August.

Karl asked work group leads to add Annie onto their lists so she can learn what is happening and he thanked everyone for the opportunity to work with the TF.

**The next SRRTTF meeting will be held on September 28 at 8:30 am at the Spokane County Water Resource Center.**