Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership
May 24th, 2017
Multnomah County Library
Portland, OR
Meeting Summary - 7/19/17

List of Meeting Participants:

Alex Liverman, OR DEQ
Alice Brawley-Chesworth, Portland/ACWA
Andrea Matzke, OR DEQ
Andrew Collins-Anderson, NCUWC
Angela Previdelli, E Mult Soil & Water Cons Dist
Ben Hung, Anchor QEA
Beth Randolph, City of West Linn
Bob Sallinger, Audubon
Brenda Sanchez, ODA
Catherine Corbett, LCEP
Cindy Ryals, City of Portland
Connor Jordan, OHSU
Corrina Chase, Columbia Slough Watershed Council
Dave Livesay, GSI
David Farrer, OHA
Davis Zhen, U.S. EPA
Dianne Barton, CRITFC
Doug Larsen, PHCAG
Elena Nilsen, USGS
Erin Hughes, GSI
Eva DeMaria, U.S. EPA
Gail Fricano, IEC
Gayle Killam, River Network
Jackie Calder, Portland Harbor CAG
Jacob Neal, Portland General Electric
Jamie Minick, Oregon State University
Jason Rice, Oak Lodge Water Services
Jennifer Morace, USGS
Jennifer Wigal, OR DEQ
Jessica Lundin, NOAA
Jim Cathcart, WMSWCD
Jim McKenna, Governor's Natural Resources Office
Joel Salter, U.S. EPA
Julie DiLeone, E Mult Soil & Water Cons Dist
Karl Weist, NWPCC
Kathy Shearin, E Mult Soil & Water Cons Dist
Kaylan Smyth, Hart Crowser
Keith Johnson, OR DEQ
Keri Handaly, City of Gresham
Kevin Masterson, OR DEQ
Kevin Parrett, OR DEQ
Kevin Scribner, Salmon-Safe
Lacen Horter, Sauvie Island Grange
Leslie Bach, NWPCC
Lisa Cox, OR DEQ
Mary Lou Soscia, U.S. EPA
Meagan Flier, CTGR
Melody Poland, U.S. EPA
Micah Meskel, Audubon
Mike Karnosh, CTGR
Mitra Geier, OSU
Ranfis Villatoro, Portland Harbor Comm Coalition
Rebecca Hillwig, OHA
Richard Whitman, OR DEQ
Roy Iwai, Multnomah County
Sarah Greenfield, OR DEQ
Sean Sheldrake, U.S. EPA
Steve Mrazik, OR DEQ
Tosch McClure, Yakama Nation
Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper
Willie Levenson, Human Access Project

Welcome and Introductions to the Day
Keith Johnson opens meeting and facilitates introductions.

Kay Morrison describes the meeting logistics and format. She states that the objectives of the meeting are to build momentum and discuss desired accomplishments and goals of the collaborative effort as well as ways to move forward.

Welcome – Dan Opalski, EPA and Richard Whitman, OR DEQ
Dan Opalski and Richard Whitman provide introductory remarks.

Dan Opalski comments that the goals of the Portland Harbor Superfund Site cleanup are impacted by contamination upstream, and that this should be taken into consideration due to the time and money invested in the site. He adds that resource limitations require a realistic approach to what can be accomplished and emphasizes broader engagement from the community and agencies. Dan thanks the participants for offering their time and expertise and appreciates their contribution to public health and the environment.

Richard Whitman thanks the audience for their participation in kick-off. He describes everyone's role in making the resources of the Willamette available to all. He acknowledges the growing partnership between Oregon DEQ and EPA in recent years based on the Portland Harbor Superfund site and the recent fire response, and comments that EPA Region 10 and the Governor are committed to cleaning up Portland Harbor. Richard speaks to the importance of working in phases, starting with sources of upstream contamination and developing a broader effort on this foundation over time.

Discussion on purpose of the Willamette Toxics Reduction Partnership
- Keith Johnson, Mary Lou Soscia, Alex Liverman, Andrea Matzke, Kevin Masterson and all participants
Portland Harbor Record of Decision calls for in-water sediment cleanup and upland source control. Contaminants will continue to arrive from upstream sources after sediment cleanup.
The proposed goal of the Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership is to:

1. Compile existing data
2. Assess existing efforts and data gaps
3. Recommend new efforts, strategies and put them forward to the appropriate agencies for future work

Initial scoping, Phase One:

- Broadway Bridge up to Willamette falls, including tributaries
- Portland Harbor background contamination
- Request all DEQ and federally-held data

Purpose of group is to get input and ideas on how to share data and information collected and develop recommendations. A final report is expected by the end of 2018.

Q: How did DEQ decide on Willamette Falls as initial focus area?
- The initial scope of this work will take place in a limited amount of time without funding. Gathering data and looking at it effectively takes time and is easier to do in small pieces. There may be a decision in the future to extend the work further upstream.

Q: Why was Columbia Slough not included?
- It may be included in the future, but for now, see answer to Q above.

Q: Given that the Portland Harbor Superfund Site Record of Decision emphasizes monitored natural recovery as the highest percentage of the remedy, and the river runs upstream to down, why is more consideration not placed on downstream towards Columbia?
- This question was directed to the Portland Harbor team for future response.

Q: What are the efforts that are already being done in this focus area?
- There is a map showing existing programs, their coverage and obvious sources. It shows stormwater/wastewater discharges; cleanup sites listed in environmental cleanup site database; hazardous waste generators; facilities required to create toxics cleanup plans; school lab cleanups; etc.

Map could be used as a visual tool and help point direction of work (i.e. showing composition of sediment collected downtown).

Brainstorming for positive action to reduce toxics:

- OR Human Health Criteria – how to implement through OR DEQ
- Work with cities to get increased toxics reduction in MS4 permits
- Green infrastructure
- Habitat and floodplain restoration
- Certification and recognition programs (like Salmon Safe)
- OR legislature; getting reductions on diesel emissions
- Expand take-back programs to urban areas
- Green chemistry and Safer Choice program advertising
- Integrate habitat restoration efforts with toxics reduction
- Engage communities that have not been historically involved
- Potential opportunity - Columbia Restoration Act restoration program
- Identify data gaps ASAP and figure out how to fill gaps; prioritize goal of human health, ecological health and determine what needs to be elevated with existing funding
- Elevate frequency of DEQ lab sediment sampling
- Look at existing data at the range of pesticides and elevations in local creeks

Who is missing that should be here?

- PH Community Coalition
- Communities of Color
- Clean Water Services
- OR OSHA

How can there be coordination with other communities in the area?

- Call on community for jobs

What are the next steps to lower the threshold of toxics coming in (regulating for these)?

- DEQ received $100,000 grant from EPA tied to CERCLA work related to Portland Harbor (site assessment to look at upstream sources); Want to look at sediment impacts, tributaries, places that are historically industrialized.

What kinds of actions have been successful in the past once sources of pesticides have been determined?

- OR Dept. of Agriculture administers area plans for agricultural land management, prioritizing erosion, land management and toxics. Works with soil conservation district to implement land-area plan.
- West Linn City: USGS did study for Clackamas county and found fertilizer levels in Clackamas county streams due to mansions. Provide a list of alternative fertilizers/pesticides.
- Create Spanish-language materials. Watershed Council in Lane County targeted Hispanic community.

Additional Comments from Open Roundtable

- Metro and OSU extension working on IPM program for residential use that will be online (and in Spanish). Program is seeking input on how to improve. (Contact Kevin Scribner)
- EPA has Columbia River Website and is creating a Willamette River Toxics Reduction page on this website. EPA will provide presentations from this meetings, maps and other information on that website. It was recommended to use other program information like Metro and EPA Urban Waters.

Q: NPDES permits don't apply to toxics of focus. Is there a way to focus on the toxics of interest?

- Water quality permits require monitoring of other toxics

- Erin (GSI): Portland Harbor database contains data that reaches up to the falls. Start with the Portland Harbor database format and rules and decide how to move forward with this.
- Micah (Audubon) interested in how collection of data might inform future regulatory reform.
- Yakama Nation expressed concern on fish and ESA listed species. No interaction between CWA and ESA. Could states voluntarily make their NPDES permits go through ESA compliance?

- Crossover of regulatory compliance issues; OR OSHA requires pesticides containers to be triple-rinsed in rural areas for worker protection and runoff goes into surrounding waterways. OR OSHA should be invited to table to prevent competing interests.

- Unifying themes that could provide funding opportunities: environmental justice, outreach and education to reduce toxics at individual, home-owner level.

- Clean Rivers Coalition: Outreach coalition for behavior change focused on stormwater. Need to use social media and make it culturally relevant. Need to use a regional outreach approach.

- Jamie (OSU): What about atmospheric sources/PAHs?
  - Many sources are nonpoint and many are outside of the region.
  - PAH is probably more localized; could be some point sources such as machinery.
  - Academic institutions could help contribute to data gaps.
  - Diesel is a priority for another DEQ program; Diesel impacts from vehicles also a contributor.
  - Papers recently published on deposition of PAHs into Willamette River; OSU has data.

- Pesticide Stewardship Partnership program model
  - (Kevin S): PSP voluntarily chooses to work with DEQ to conduct water quality sampling. DEQ evaluates samples and returns to growers to determine if levels are exceeded. Helps growers change behavior to get chemicals under thresholds.
  - How to do water sampling at key areas in urban areas? Could we set up feedback loops to trigger behavioral change?
    - (Kevin M): Focus on sub-watersheds and work with landowners. Start with small scale and then move out. The many contributors in urban watersheds make the work challenging but Urban PSPs are underway and should be increased. Pharmaceuticals are more difficult to control due to nature of passing through bodies. Pesticides are easier to keep out of waterways. Could look into doing this with other contaminants. Similar effort at Amazon Creek in Eugene.

- Coordinate meetings to ensure adequate communication between agencies, public and stakeholders. How does this process interact with other processes that are ongoing?

- Get people involved in monitoring construction sites.

- Citizen science approach to identify places and problems where sites are not managed properly.
  - Increasing ability to do things on the ground with apps and internet.
    - Ex: Muddy Water Watch (used by Tualatin Riverkeepers); Scorecard to look at sites and judge stormwater management.

- Jessica (NOAA) toxicology: Address municipal wastewater plants across Willamette
  - Evidence shows that secondary and tertiary systems are more effective at removing contaminants of emerging concern (estrogens, pharmaceuticals).
  - How to increase public pressure through factsheets, informing people, encouraging mandates for improvements to wastewater systems
  - Focus on effectiveness of pollution prevention as wastewater treatment approach limits public awareness/responsibility.
    - Jennifer (USGS): Wastewater treatment plants could help reach out to public via info through billing. (ex: Tualatin Clean Water Services puts out newsletters that talk about best practices by public to prevent pollution)

- Lisa (Sauvie Island): How to get wealth of information to community and involve those who are contributing to the problem?
  - Brainstorm ways to involve citizen scientists
  - Target local areas

- Willie (Human Access Project): Tax pesticides and fertilizers

- Use bond measures to reduce usage on consumer end
- Generate revenue to update wastewater treatment plants
- Treat agricultural chemicals as a scarce resource
- *Work on this at state level, not federal*

What is the biggest problem in this stretch of the river?

- Travis Williams – In addition to common household pesticides, there should be a focus on Red ant-killer (bifenthrin); NPDES and MS4 permits are not focusing on this.

- People don't understand their connection to the river, especially their impacts
  - Consumer choice (PSP, toxic reduction list)
  - Focus on fat-soluble pollutants: "If you put this in river, it is going to be in your food or water supply."

- Scale-back reach of impact; DEQ does not have funding to enforce its own permits and can only use command and control approach.

- Consider NGOs that do synergy work such as Intertwine.

- Need effective, affordable alternatives to pesticides or consumers will continue to use them.

- Engage suppliers like Costco to drive supply change. Suppliers are interested in state data showing impacts of contaminants.

- Roy: ACWA is working on Phase 1 and 2 of statewide toxics reduction campaign over past year. Campaign purpose is to raise awareness for clean water and influence behaviors associated with cultural change. The campaign will be launched in a year. The geographic focus is Willamette River Basin and southern Oregon. Plan to get grant funds to develop strategic plan and public campaign. A forum on July 12 at Kaiser City Hall will look at methods of informal learning, priority pollutants, realistic goals. All MS4's (municipal separate storm sewer systems) will be represented. NGOs and watershed councils invited to collaboration. Expected to partner with DEQ and EPA.

- State Integrated Pest Management Website
  - Will feature alternatives to buying pesticides (upstream methods)
  - English and Spanish resources for all Oregonians, municipalities, land managers, landscapers
  - $3 million project that needs additional funding
  - Contact OSU (lead) or Metro to get involved

Q: What is the range of the contaminants of discussion? The emerging contaminants being discussed are not on original list of contaminants.

- We want to start out with initial contaminants for assessment. Original list gives us a manageable way to approach data collection. Actions taken for some contaminants can extend to other contaminants.

- How to target urban landscape and rural "hobby farms"? Farmers already have a lot of regulations and are working on controlling pesticides.

- Columbia River Restoration Act signed into law but needs appropriation to set up grant programs. Push for funding. Senator Merkeley might be working on this currently.

What's next? Structure moving forward

Mary Lou Soscia mentioned that an upstream watershed plan was called for in the ROD based on government-to-government discussions with tribes. She expressed interest in reaching out to people and brainstorming about ways to approach this. The group agrees that the collaboration should continue to meet.

Additional comments and considerations were provided:

- Data collection is a good place to start.

- What is the commitment? We need some structure that leads to action, especially if this is backed by ROD. Could follow OR Solutions model in which the governor makes a commitment and identifies a convener, then agencies come together and work towards a solution.
    - Richard Whitman spoke to a need to follow up with people in the room to flesh out details of this idea and talk broadly about where this goes beyond phase one to make a concerted commitment.

- Consider State of the River Action Plan and look at existing info as part of phase one.

- Consider a steering committee with buy-in from several agencies. Have as many in-person meetings as possible for community. Involve entire Willamette River because work done here can be carried out elsewhere. Data compilation should not be the primary focus of this group.

- Members are not necessarily sampling for toxics of interest to group, but once the resources, data and information have been identified in phase one the group can begin to look outward and at data gaps.

- The database for the lower Columbia and classes of contaminants. Legacy contaminants, PBDEs, mercury and other contaminants get broken down into classes.
    - Include PBDEs since they are highly prominent.
    - Possibly select a contaminant from each class to begin.

Wrap-up

The meeting concluded with statements with follow up actions and remarks from ODEQ and EPA.

Mary Lou asked participants interested in being part of a steering committee to identify themselves on sign-in sheet.

Richard Whitman appreciated the ideas and energy of the participants and encouraged the development of the steering committee, vision, and action plan with emphasis on short-term progress.

Dan Opalski expressed a sense of accountability to tribal governments in addressing contaminants of concern. He remarked that branching into other contaminants is worth consideration depending on the interest and limitations of the group.

Keith Johnson remarked that he is transitioning to ODEQ's Cleaner Air Oregon program. Steve Mrazik from the DEQ water program will be the new DEQ lead on this work.

Mary Lou Soscia and Kay Morrison thank audience for their time.