Columbia River Basin Restoration Program Working Group
Toxics Monitoring Subgroup Meeting Summary

December 14, 2022
1:30 pm – 3:00 pm (Pacific)

Attendees:

Alan Kolok, University of Idaho
Amy Puls, USGS/PNAMP
Andy James, University of Washington Tacoma
Austin Baldwin, USGS
Cailin Mackenzie, Oregon State University
Cavan Gerrish, USBR
Chris Eckley, EPA
Chris McCullough, WA Dept of Ag
Cindy Fields, EPA
Colin Kelly, EcoSPEARS
Collin Eagles-Smith, USGS
David Gruen, OR DEQ
Dorie Sutton, City of Vancouver
Gina Hoff, USBR
Greg Frey, Council Oak
Ian Waite, USGS
Jay Hesse, Nez Perce Tribe
Jen Bayer, USGS/PNAMP
Jennifer Morace, USGS
Jim Medlen, WA Ecology
Karl Rains, WA Ecology
Keith Dublanica, WA Governor's Salmon Recovery Office
Kelli Daffron, North Coast Watershed Association
Kevin Masterson, Stonycreek Consulting
Kris Olinger, City of Vancouver
Lauren McDaid, EPA
Lisa Kusnierz, EPA
Margaret Drennan, WA Dept of Ag
Mark Jankowski, EPA
Mark Peterschmidt, WA Ecology
Mary Engels, University of Idaho
Mary Lou Soscia, EPA
Matthew Ferry, EPA
Maureen Purcell, USGS
Megan Dethloff, USGS/PNAMP
Meghan Dunn, EPA
Michelle Wilcox, EPA
Paige Haxton-Evans, OR DEQ
Patrick Moran, USGS
Sean Payne, USGS
Sierra Higheagle, Nez Perce Tribe
Tamara Knudson, Spokane Tribe
Tim Counihan, USGS
Travis Schmidt, USGS
Whitney Fraser, Lodestone LLC
William Hobbs, WA Ecology

Welcome, Agenda Review, Introductions

Mary Lou Soscia (EPA) introduced the goals for this sub-group, which grew out of the larger Columbia River Basin Restoration Working Group. The Toxics Monitoring sub-group is a venue for coordination and communication among toxics monitoring projects across the Basin. The objective for today's webinar is to bring together current grantees with other interested partners to discuss priorities and provide technical support.

Recap of 2022 Progress

Jen Bayer (USGS) presented a recap of the three Toxics Monitoring sub-group meetings held earlier in 2022, including the questions asked and feedback gathered from attendees. The March 2022 meeting touched on consistency in sampling and analytical methods, monitoring gaps of greatest concern, and using EPA's WQX system to manage water quality data. During the April meeting, the group continued the discussion on data sharing, discussed a bi-annual research priorities workshop, and agreed that the contaminants of concern should be updated every 5–10 years. The June meeting focused on the potential for a Basin-wide QAPP, standardizing monitoring design, and other suggestions for a Basin-wide Toxics Monitoring Strategy. Past meeting summaries and presentation materials can be found here.

Moving Forward

Jen Bayer went on to highlight some activities for the future of the sub-group. During each of the next two years, EPA and USGS staff will support three meetings of this group and one workshop to focus on a specific topic in greater detail. EPA staff will create a matrix of grantees' monitoring efforts across the Basin. Jen asked participants to review priorities identified in previous meetings, add any new suggestions, and rank their highest priorities in a Slido poll.

QAPP Training

Meghan Dunn, EPA Region 10 Sample Control Coordinator, introduced Cindy Fields, EPA Region 10 Quality Assurance Manager. Grantees should know that the average review time for a QAPP is three weeks. Before starting a QAPP, a grantee should identify data quality objectives (DQOs) that spell out the purpose and goals for the monitoring effort. EPA has a planning process for developing DQOs. QAPPs allow for flexibility to adjust for the complexity of the project.

To assist with QAPP development, EPA has three main tools that are available online. The QAPP Development Tool is made up of six modules that guide users through the development process. The Citizen Science QA Handbook and Toolkit provides guidance for monitoring efforts that utilize members of the general public for sample collection. Finally, the QAPP for Tribes webpage has information and templates geared specifically towards Tribes.

Major QAPP sections include: Project Management; Data Generation and Acquisition; Assessment and Oversight; and Data Validation and Usability. The Project Management section is the "meat" of the QAPP. The Data Generation section outlines the sampling methods. Assessment and Oversight clarifies how data will be accessed and the need for an accredited laboratory. Data validation and Usability describes how data will be shared. Meghan then outlined the Region 10 EPA QA Review Process.

- *Question*: For those planning to contract with a private environmental lab, can the QAPP draft be completed before the lab is selected, given that the QAPP addresses laboratory analytical processes and instruments?
    - *Answer*: the QAPP should clearly spell out the requirements for the lab, analytical methods, and reporting levels, in the event that a lab has not been identified.
- *Question*: Can you talk about differences between citizen science focused QAPPs vs research focused QAPPs?
    - *Answer*: citizen science uses the general public to collect data.

Closing and Next Steps

In closing, Mary Lou Soscia asked attendees what else they wanted from this sub-group and how to make it successful. One suggestion was for EPA to review the QAPPs for all the monitoring grant projects and compare the methods and constituents/contaminants being monitored. It would be helpful to add context on why a project might choose one method over another. Another suggestion was to quickly share information on the monitoring projects at future meetings, perhaps grouped by constituents (e.g., projects sampling for PCBs or mercury). These suggestions will be incorporated into a plan for the sub-group's activities, which will be shared in early 2023.