



Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership



March 12, 2019

1:30pm – 4:30pm

Multnomah County Central Library Branch

US Bank Room

801 SW 10th Ave., Portland, OR 97205

Attendees:

Josie Clark, U.S. EPA
David Cohen, Intertwine Alliance
Eva DeMaria, U.S. EPA
Gail Fricano, Technical Consultant, Portland Harbor
Luke Fullington, City of West Linn
Sarah Greenfield, Oregon DEQ
David Gruen, U.S. EPA (ORISE Participant)
Keri Handaly, City of Gresham
Roy Iwai, Multnomah County
Gayle Killam, River Network
Tess Lydick, Hart Crowser
Kevin Masterson, Oregon DEQ
Andrea Matzke, Oregon DEQ
Jennifer Morace, U.S. Geological Survey
Steve Mrazik, Oregon DEQ
Michael Mulvey, Oregon DEQ

Marcus Mundy, Coalition of Communities of Color
Jacob Neal, Portland General Electric
Bruce Newton, Johnson Creek Watershed Council
Elena Nilsen, U.S. Geological Survey
Lori Pillsbury, Oregon DEQ
Binh Quan, QW Consulting
Kevin Scribner, Salmon Safe
Sean Sheldrake, U.S. EPA
Laura Shira, Yakama Nation
Mary Lou Soscia, U.S. EPA
Andrew Swanton, Oregon ACWA
Neil Ward, QW Consulting
Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper
Howard Young, CDM Smith (U.S. EPA Contractor)
Hunter Young, U.S. EPA

Round Table – Updates from Participants

Kevin Masterson, Oregon DEQ – Kevin highlighted Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's December 2018 release of the [Integrated Toxics Reduction Strategy](#) that describes 14 reduction and assessment actions for addressing toxics statewide over the next five years. The first Toxics Reduction Strategy was released in 2012; the Integrated Toxics Reduction Strategy updates the actions in the original plan. The Integrated strategy provides a holistic approach to toxics reduction efforts and complements ongoing efforts in DEQ's air, land, and water quality programs by improving integration, sharing best practices, and filling identified gaps.

In addition, Kevin highlighted PFAS compounds as an emerging chemical class of concern. PFAS compounds stand for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance. PFAS compounds are a concern because many of them are bioaccumulative, persistent, and toxic to humans and wildlife. Useful for their resistance to heat, water, and oil, hundreds of different PFAS compounds are used in consumer products, industrial processes, and in firefighting foams. Significant data gaps exist about PFAS, including but not limited to: safe exposure levels for specific compounds, fate and transport in the environment, location of contaminated sites, and the range of health impacts on wildlife and humans. The Portland International Airport and certain military sites in Oregon have detected high levels of PFAS contamination in monitoring wells in areas used for fire training.

Andrea Matzke, Oregon DEQ – Andrea provided an update on the in-progress Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Willamette River Basin. Originally scheduled to be released in April 2019, Oregon DEQ received permission from the court to extend the deadline for the release of the final report until the end of November 2019.

Michael Mulvey, Oregon DEQ – Michael reported that DEQ's Toxic Monitoring program will begin to research the impacts of metals in the Fall/Winter of 2019.

Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper – Travis reported that he was excited to hear Lori Pillsbury (OR DEQ) speak about data monitoring efforts. While recognizing the diligent, hard work of OR DEQ staff, Travis lamented the fact that the State of Oregon was not able to provide additional capacity and resources to address toxics in the environment.

Elena Nielson, U.S. Geological Survey – Elena reported that she proposed a study with a colleague at USGS to research PFAS compounds in the Columbia Slough. The research proposal is being considered for funding internally at USGS.

Marcus Mundy, Coalition of Communities of Color – Marcus recently joined the Coalition of Communities as its Executive Director. The Coalition of Communities of Color is composed of 19 culturally-specific member organizations in the Portland area. Marcus is interested in bringing an equity lens to the work of the Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership, highlighting that its members often experience disproportionate impacts from environmental pollution.

Sarah Greenfield, Oregon DEQ – Reported on the DEQ Clean Up Program's sampling of water and sediment above the Portland Harbor Superfund site to investigate potential locations for upstream cleanup activities.

Kevin Scribner, Salmon Safe – Kevin highlighted the success of the most recent Salmon in the City Event held in Seattle in January 2019 (the annual event alternates between Portland, OR and Seattle, WA). He introduced research being conducted in Puget Sound related to the toxicity of stormwater runoff from bridges to coho that may be relevant to the Portland area.

Sean Sheldrake & Hunter Young, U.S. EPA – It has been two years since the record of decision on the Portland Harbor Superfund site. As part of the ongoing community outreach effort, Sean and Hunter announced the next Portland Harbor Public Form to be held from 6:00pm – 8:30pm on April 17th at Portland State University. Individuals who are interested in attending should register for the free event through the link above. The event is held by the EPA with support from Oregon DEQ and the Portland Harbor Community Advisory Group. Attendees will have an opportunity to hear status updates from and ask questions to U.S. EPA, OR DEQ, and Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs).

David Cohen, Intertwine Alliance – The Intertwine Alliance is a coalition of more than 150 public, private and non-profit organizations working to integrate nature into the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area. David shared that the Alliance is doing a lot of work related to the connection between health/healthcare and access to nature and natural areas.

Gayle Killam, River Network – River Network is a national organization of 6,000 organizations engaged in protecting rivers and streams. The River Network empowers organizations and individuals with the tools, training, and resources needed for success. In the Portland area, the River Network has engaged with residents who live near waterways to learn about their relationship to water and why they might be interested in restoration activities.

Clean Rivers Coalition Update – Keri Handaly, City of Gresham and Roy Iwai, Multnomah County

Clean Rivers Coalition's mission is to build the bridge between clean water and health communities by integrating sound-science with effective storytelling. Keri presented a spreadsheet made by a Portland State University master's student in coordination with the Coalition that provides a risk-assessment tool to compare the relative harmfulness of various pollutants and identify which substances should be a focus of the outreach campaign. The goal is to identify stormwater pollutants that can be effectively addressed through a public information campaign designed to change consumer behaviors to reduce the sources and exposure to toxics. The Coalition's next step is to conduct a public survey

to learn about the behaviors that increase/mitigate exposure to pollutants, the biggest obstacles to changing behaviors or reducing exposure to toxics, and the communication strategies that will most effectively reach target communities.

Willamette River Monitoring

DEQ's Preliminary Willamette River Toxics Monitoring Results – Lori Pillsbury, Oregon DEQ

Lori presented on DEQ's preliminary draft toxics monitoring results on the Willamette River. The data are currently under internal review and the initial draft results presented below are subject to change. Between 2008-2010, DEQ sampled water, sediment, and/or wildlife tissue at 20 sites in the Willamette River watershed. In 2016, DEQ replicated samples at 10 of the original sites and at 14 new sites in the watershed. The PowerPoint Presentation utilized provisional draft data and therefore is not suitable for distribution. When DEQ releases the final data/report, an updated PowerPoint file will be uploaded to the EPA site.

Update on USGS Willamette River Monitoring – Jennifer Morace, U.S. Geological Survey

Jennifer presented provisional results from the National Water Quality Assessment Program (NAWQA) and the Regional Stream Quality Assessment (RSQA) that evaluate stream quality and the relationship between stressors and ecological conditions. Jennifer announced that the NAWQA program may be significantly cut-back or discontinued in the next several years – jeopardizing the continued operation of six sampling sites in or immediately downstream of the Willamette River watershed.

In 2015, the USGS began the [Pacific Northwest Stream Quality Assessment](#) (PNSQA) to evaluate stream quality, the relative influence of environmental variables on biological communities, the relationship between measured stressors and biological communities, and to develop statistical models and management tools to predict concentrations of stressors and resulting ecological conditions in wadeable streams in the region.

Working Session: Willamette River Toxics Reduction Story Map – Neil Ward and Binh Quan, QW Consulting

Neil Ward presented the draft version of the [Willamette River Toxics Reduction Story Map](#), a collaborative partnership between Oregon DEQ and the EPA Urban Waters Program. The website is intended to convey information about the state of the Willamette River, the Toxics Reduction Partnership, educational infographics, and “River Stories” that provide information on specific topics of interest. The Story Map may also provide a media to engage with communities that traditionally lacked representation, including low-income communities, communities of color, Tribal Governments, and others.

Columbia River Basin Restoration Act – Clean Water Act Section 123 – Mary Lou Soscia, U.S. EPA

Mary Lou updated the Partnership on the passage of the 2016 Columbia River Basin Restoration Act (CRBRA), an amendment to the Clean Water Act that was signed into law in 2016. The CRBRA calls for the convening of a volunteer working group and the establishment of a competitive grant program focused on toxic monitoring, reduction, and public outreach activities throughout the basin.

Where are We Going from Here? Opportunity for Group Reflection and Discussion – All

In general, many of the participants at the meeting focused on the public/community outreach opportunities around actions that individuals can take to reduce toxics. There was a recognition that those are the activities that everyone can work on together, whereas the regulatory actions are not something that all the entities at the table can coordinate on and implement together. Additionally, the exchange of information and data that the Willamette Partnership Toxics Reduction Partnership facilitates can help members develop, inform, and focus regulatory proposals.

PowerPoint Presentation slides will be posted to the [EPA website](#) when they are available for publication.

The next Willamette Toxics Reduction Partnership meeting will be held on June 13th, 2019 from 1:00PM – 4:00PM at the Oregon DEQ building (700 NE Multnomah Street, Portland, OR 97232) in the 3rd Floor conference room (L700).