



Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership



January 29, 2020

1:30pm – 4:00pm

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
700 NE Multnomah St., Portland OR 97232

Attendees:

Lara Christensen, Oak Lodge Water Services
Stacey Dalgaard, Oregon Environmental Council
Luke Fullington, City of West Linn
Jake Halsey, Oswego Lake Watershed Council
Keri Handaly, City of Gresham
Brad Hermanson, Hermanson Consulting
Paul Ketcham, Portland Bureau of Environmental Services
Willie Levenson, Human Access Project
Jennifer Morace, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)
Bruce Newton, Johnson Creek Watershed Council
Jamie Pang, Oregon Environmental Council
Laura Shira, Yakama Nation
Andrew Swanton, Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies / Clackamas County Water Environment Services

Davis Washines, Yakama Nation
Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper

David Gruen, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
[ORISE Participant]
Kevin Masterson, Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality (OR DEQ)
Andrea Matzke, OR DEQ
Steve Mrazik, OR DEQ
Mary Lou Soscia, EPA
Hunter Young, EPA

Round Table – Updates from Participants

Mary Lou Soscia, EPA & Kevin Masterson, OR DEQ: The Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership is on the agenda at the next [Oregon Environmental Quality Commission](#) meeting on the morning of March 18 at the Oregon Department of State Lands Building [775 Summer St. NE #100] in Salem, OR. Mary Lou and Kevin will present on the Partnership's work, including the recently-developed [StoryMap](#), and updates to Oregon DEQ's Toxics Strategy.

Hunter Young, EPA: The Portland Harbor Superfund Program recently signed up two new project areas for remedial design – Willamette Cove and River Mile 9 West. The Willamette Cove agreement is with several public agencies, including the City of Portland, Port of Portland, the State of Oregon, and settling federal agencies. Federal potentially responsible parties include United States Maritime Administration, the United States Coast Guard, the United States General Services Administration, the United States Bonneville Power Administration, the United States Department of Treasury, and the United States Department of Defense with respect to the Department of Navy and the Army Corps of Engineers. The agreement at the River Mile 9 West project area is with the FMC Corporation.

Bruce Newton, Johnson Creek Watershed Council: This year is the 25th anniversary of the watershed council. For over 20 years, the organization has been monitoring the health of the creek and implementing projects to restore riparian habitats and improve fish passage. The watershed council is cautiously optimistic about the latest data from macroinvertebrate surveys. Last year's results showed improvement on the mainstem Johnson Creek, and the current results from this year's survey show similarly positive results.

Willie Levenson, Human Access Project: This year marks the 10th anniversary of the [Big Float](#) – the annual celebration will be held on Saturday, July 11th. In addition, there have been several consecutive months without a combined sewer overflow (CSO) releases into the Willamette River.

Keri Handaly, City of Gresham: The Regional Coalition for Clean Rivers and Streams, composed of public agencies in the Portland-Vancouver metropolitan area, launched its first student video contest in Fall 2019. Students in the 6th – 12th

grades in the metro area are encouraged to submit short videos on stormwater topics. The deadline for submitting a video is on March 31, 2020. Visit their [website](#) to learn more.

Travis Williams, Willamette Riverkeeper: Recently, there was a sewer overflow event near Salem, OR due to “flushable” wipes that caused over 80 gallons of raw sewage to flow into Mill Creek. The “flushable” wipes do not biodegrade and can clog sewer pipes, pumps, and treatment plant infrastructure. This is an important issue that should be addressed.

Davis Washines, Yakama Nation: I work for the Department of Natural Resources in the Fisheries division as a Government Liaison. I was just participating in the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians Winter Convention meeting where similar topics and concerns were being discussed. It is important for all of us in the region to come together to protect and restore water quality.

Clean Rivers Coalition Presentation:

On behalf of the Clean Rivers Coalition (CRC), Lara Christensen from Oak Lodge Water Services and Keri Handaly from the City of Gresham presented the status of the coalition’s statewide public education campaign. Comprised of over 60 currently participating organizations and a 9-member steering committee, the CRC is focused on changing behavior related to yard-care and the use of toxic insecticides, herbicides, and fungicides on residential landscapes. Lara and Keri presented the results of a recent survey of 1,000 Oregonians and two focus groups in the Portland and Medford areas. Individuals reported their number one issue of concern is clean drinking water, they are motivated to protect fish and wildlife, children, and pets. Individuals in the 35-54 age range who are more connected to rivers were more willing to change their behavior. Moving forward, the CRC plans to develop messaging focused on reducing the use of pesticides.

Columbia River Basin Restoration Act Update:

Mary Lou Soscia from the EPA provided an update on the Columbia River Basin Restoration Act (CRBRA), created by a 2016 amendment to the Clean Water Act. The CRBRA directed EPA to formalize an existing toxic reduction working group established in 2005 and develop a competitive grant program to address toxics throughout the U.S. portion of the Columbia River Basin. On September 30, 2019, EPA released a request for applications focused on four priorities: monitoring, nonpoint source pollution reduction, clean-up of contaminated sites, and outreach related to pollution prevention. The application window closed on December 20, 2019; EPA is in the process of reviewing applications and plans to announce decisions on grants by the spring or early summer. This month, EPA received a Congressional appropriation of \$1.236M for FY20.

Willamette Mercury Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL):

Andrea Matzke from OR DEQ provided an update on the status of the revised Mercury TMDL for the Willamette River basin. In November 2019, DEQ submitted the TMDL to EPA, which EPA disapproved on November 29, 2019. Under the Clean Water Act, when EPA disapproves a TMDL EPA must issue a new TMDL within 30 days. EPA retained as much of DEQ’s work as possible but revised the allocations where necessary to ensure water quality standards were met. At the end of 2019, EPA released the TMDL; the public comment period closed on February 4th, 2020. Until a final TMDL is released by EPA, the 2006 Willamette Mercury TMDL remains in effect.

Pesticide Impacts to Urban Streams:

Jennifer Morace from the USGS highlighted the results of a recent [meta-analysis](#) of nationwide data from the National Water Quality Assessment database from 1992-2011. The study results found that pesticides were detected in urban streams >97% of the time, and 35% of measured environmental concentrations in sediments exceeded regulatory threshold levels, driven mainly by insecticides, particularly pyrethroids. Another [study](#) of 50 runoff events at 21 sites found that stormwater transports substantial mixtures of PAHs, pesticides, and pharmaceuticals.

Contaminants of Concern Update:

David Gruen, ORISE participant at EPA, presented the work by members of the Columbia River Basin Restoration Act Working Group to update the [2007](#) list of contaminants of concern (CoC) in the basin. With the goal of facilitating action, the CoC subgroup developed a framework that groups pollutants by pathways into the environment (e.g. agriculture, urban/stormwater, etc) and by the potential actions that could be taken to address the chemical (e.g. reduce runoff, source

reduction, etc). The CoC subgroup plans to finalize the list in February/March and present it to the broader Columbia River Basin Restoration Act Working Group at the next meeting on May 20, 2020.

PFAS Issues and Monitoring in Oregon and the Willamette Basin:

Kevin Masterson from Oregon DEQ presented on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in the State of Oregon. [PFAS](#) compounds are a class of ~5,000 chemicals that have been used since the 1940's and 50's in a wide range of products, including carpets, furniture, outdoor gear, clothing, cookware/food packaging, and firefighting foams for their polymerization, repellence, and surfactant properties. Limited monitoring in 2013-15 found no detections of PFAS in public drinking water wells that serve more than 10,000 people. Known contamination sites in the state are associated with firefighting foam use or storage. In collaboration with Oregon Health Authority, DEQ is also working to identify and map potential sources of PFAS contamination to assist local water providers with efforts to protect the source(s) of drinking water. Additionally, Oregon DEQ is working to develop advanced PFAS analytical methods for environmental monitoring efforts and collaborating with other agencies and states on multiple PFAS pollution prevention initiatives.

Next Meeting:

The next Willamette River Toxics Reduction Partnership meeting will be held in mid-June at a location to be determined.