

TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, 10 June 2009 1:00 AM – 3:15 PM

U.S. Geological Survey Office in Tacoma
934 Broadway, Third Floor

Draft Summary

OF THE MEETING'S KEY DISCUSSIONS, DECISIONS AND AGREEMENTS

ATTENDED: Chris Burke, City of Tacoma; Bob Cusimano, Department of Ecology; Gary Gill, Pacific Northwest Laboratories; Heather Kibbey, City of Everett; Richard Jack, King County; Julie Lowe, Department of Ecology; Doug Navetski, King County; Mel Oleson, The Boeing Company; Rich Sheibley, USGS; Jim Simmonds, King County; Project Manager Karen Dinicola (Ecology); and facilitator Jim Reid.

THE STATUS OF THE FOUR PILOT PROJECTS AND SOME PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

This was the fourth update of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on the status of implementing the four pilot projects. The projects are: 1) the Development of Standardized Operating Procedures (SOPS) and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) for Stormwater; 2) the Inter-calibration Study; 3) the Stream Benthos Gap Analysis, Coordination, and Data Management Program; and 4) the In-Line Ditch Stormwater Treatment Best Management Practices Program.

Because Rob Fritz of King County could not be present, the TAC did not hear an update on the In-Line Ditch Stormwater Treatment Best Management Practices Program. *(Note: On behalf of Rob, facilitator Jim Reid sent Rob's preliminary report to all those on the Technical Advisory Committee mailing list during the week of 15-19 June.)*

Based on the updates on the other three pilot projects and the discussion that followed, it appears that the principal finding that could emerge from the work of the TAC on all four projects is this: Coordination among jurisdictions is a formidable and essential endeavor, and funding it, rather than relying on in-kind contributions of the participants, is critical to success.

1. Chris Burke and Julie Lowe provided the update on the status of the **Standardized Operating Procedures (SOPS) and Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPS) for Stormwater**.

The project's goal is to expand and standardize stormwater SOPs for any agency conducting monitoring, and to have a broadly available library of SOPs that could be easily referenced and used. The status of the pilot project is as follows:

- The four SOPs are now on Sharepoint.
- They should be finalized around 30 June, although it may take into July to finish them.
- On 25 June training will be conducted for jurisdictions' and organizations' staff in using the SOPs.
- Each of these procedures is being designed with a multitude of users in mind; they should be useable for industry as well as government.

Preliminary lessons from this project, which Julie and Chris will finalize and include in their report to the TAC, are:

- In-kind contributions from numerous jurisdictions ensured the success of the project, and project management costs were borne by Pierce County through Dana de Leon's and Chris Burke's time and efforts, and by Ecology through Julie Lowe's. While these in-kind contributions underscore the high level of interest among jurisdictions for the SOPs, future efforts to develop more of them cannot rely on the largess of participating agencies.
- Coordinating the participation of a wide variety of organizations and agencies is a necessary, fundamental, and valuable responsibility for somebody. It is also very time-consuming. It will not succeed if it must rely on in-kind contributions. Project management at this high level of coordination needs to be appropriately funded.
- Producing the thirty additional SOPs that have been identified as needed across the state may require approximately \$50,000 per year for seven years. Because of limited funding, it will be necessary to prioritize the SOPs that are produced.
- Contracts of a longer duration than one year are also needed to ensure such multi-jurisdictional projects are efficiently managed and conducted.
- Multi-jurisdictional collaborations can be streamlined when the parties work together to develop "pre-approved" procedures. Agreeing on the procedures before the parties implement them saves both time and money.

2. Jim Simmonds and Richard Jack of King County updated the Committee on the **Laboratory Inter-calibration Study**.

This pilot project is intended to achieve both standardization of the management of data among jurisdictions and more efficient data loading. The status of the project is:

- Two rounds of sampling were conducted at three sites by each participating laboratory. They took the first set of samples on 26 March, the second set on 1 April.
- The data from these events was submitted to King County in mid-April to be analyzed.
- The draft report of the findings will be issued in mid-June, with the final report being released by the end of July.

Preliminary findings are:

- There were some statistical divisions within the labs, but they were not high, indicating much precision.

- The data-delivery systems of the laboratories and jurisdictions differ tremendously. With common formats the findings would have been even closer, but not identical. Given the lack of consistency, there is a need for coordination among them to figure out what the data says.
- And yet the results illustrate or indicate that labs are doing work quite similarly.

3. Jim Simmonds also provided an update on the **Stream Benthos Gap Analysis, Coordination, and Data Management Program**.

The project’s goal is to expand and improve the data management system for stream benthos by standardizing the methodology for collecting, organizing and analyzing the information.

The status of this pilot project is:

- Over one hundred organizations were contacted multiple times. Sixteen or seventeen submitted information.
- Because of time and resource limits, the project was limited to data from 2002 to 2007.
- The draft report by those who participated in this pilot will be completed by the end of June, with the final produced in late July or early August.

Preliminary findings are:

- Data is being collected by jurisdictions and organizations throughout the Puget Sound region, so a multi-organizational system should be expanded to include the entire Puget Sound.
- Representatives of jurisdictions, agencies and organizations from across the U.S. and Canada are already inquiring about this work and indicating an interest in duplicating the system we are devising.

NEXT STEPS IN ACHIEVING THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE’S MANDATE

These are the steps the Committee members identified to conclude the work of the TAC on these four pilot projects:

1. Facilitator Jim Reid will develop a one to two page overarching summary of the preliminary findings of the pilot projects and send it to Karen Dinicola before it is submitted to the TAC members.
2. Meanwhile, draft reports, authored by those who worked on each pilot, will be produced by the end of June, and earlier if possible, for attachment to the one or two page summary.
3. Detailed reports with findings and recommendations will be produced by those who worked on each project and bundled with the final version of the overarching summary. This will serve as the final product of the TAC; it is expected to be produced in August.
4. The final report will be submitted to the Department of Ecology, the Puget Sound Partnership, and the Washington Monitoring Forum.

5. Karen has been and will continue to try to get time on an agenda of the Washington Monitoring Forum for the leads of each pilot to brief the WMF members about the findings and recommendations of the pilot projects and TAC.
6. Through coordination by email, TAC members will identify who else should receive the final report of the Committee.