

Consortium Technical Committee Meeting Summary



NOVEMBER 3, 2021 CALLED TO ORDER: 1:32 PM ADJOURNED: 3:29 PM
QUORUM PRESENT - YES - 13 MEMBERS
MEETING HELD VIA ZOOM/VIDEOCONFERENCE

Approval of September 1, 2021 Meeting Summary

Approval of the September 1, 2021 meeting summary was postponed until the next Consortium Technical Committee (CTC) meeting as quorum requirements were not met at the beginning of the meeting.

PFAS – At a Glance

Doug Wise, Groundwater Protection Program Manager at the Portland Water Bureau joined the CTC meeting to give a presentation on PFAS – Per & Polyfluoroalkyl Substances. PFAS is a family of compounds of hundreds to thousands of unique molecular structures that share a common feature which is a string of carbon atoms bonded to chlorine atoms. The carbon/chlorine bond is the strongest in organic chemistry so PFAS are extremely stable and bioactive at low concentrations making them persistent and potentially long term risk contaminants.

Doug reported that in addition to being very stable, PFAS are persistent in the environment, toxic and bioaccumulative, and mobile in water. Current source identification efforts are focused on fire stations/training sites, airfields, landfills, and chrome plating operations. There is not a federal maximum contaminant level that applies to this category as of yet.

Doug explained that recently there has been a significant amount of media coverage on PFAS and listed some examples of the coverage. Doug reported that at the end of September the Oregon Health Authority promulgated a State of Oregon specific numeric standard which was a health action level for combined PFAS for four different species. Doug shared information about the regulatory status, impacted sites and water system nexus of PFAS.

Doug mentioned that for those who are interested in more information, on November 15 ACWA is putting on a more detailed virtual discussion that will provide participants the opportunity to hear from technical, regulatory, and utility leaders on what is known about PFAS in our environment, wastewater,

stormwater and biosolids and how we are equipping our teams to communicate and mitigate the impacts.

CTC members thanked Doug for his presentation.

Director Report

Hotwash/After Action Tabletop Exercise: Rebecca Geisen, Consortium Managing Director mentioned that a “save the date” recently went out for an upcoming virtual after action tabletop exercise. The exercise is going to be a regional after action/hot wash/report out on the response and lessons learned during the emergencies, i.e., wildfires, winter storms, pandemic, etc. that have happened over the past 18 months or so. Kim Swan, Robin Pederson, Riley Berger, and Rebecca have been planning the event.

Workforce Planning: Rebecca reported that she and Bonny Cushman have been attending meetings of a state-wide group called DRIP -Drinking Water Intern Program. The group is focused on how to bring more operators and others into the water sector workforce. Discussions have focused on what role the Consortium can play in this effort including developing a webpage with resources about job opportunities within the water sector. The Consortium is well positioned to host and share this type of information and give people a centralized place to house and find information.

RDPO Provision for Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan: Rebecca gave an update on the Provision for Emergency Drinking Water Framework Plan. Rebecca reminded CTC members that the goal of the Plan is to provide water providers, emergency managers, and others responsible for temporary drinking water provision post-disaster with a framework that will help them assess current systems, identify gaps between current capabilities, fill gaps, and incorporate needed improvements into long term planning. Rebecca reported that at present steps 1-5 have been completed: 1) reviewed existing plans, policies, and resources; 2) defined roles and responsibilities; 3) developed a method for estimating base water use; 4) identified emergency water supply resources; and 5) completed a gap analysis. The consultant is drafting the sections of the plan.

Next steps include developing regional policies and recommendations. A regional tabletop exercise is scheduled for February 2022 to vet the regional policies before the final framework plan is developed.

Rebecca mentioned that Denise Barrett, RDPO Director has resigned from her position so there will be some changes in leadership at the RDPO, however, Rebecca does not anticipate any impacts to the project as a result.

Seattle Supply Forum: Rebecca mentioned that she was recently interviewed by the Seattle Supply Forum on regional resiliency as part of their planning efforts.

Legislative Update: Rebecca reported that the Association of Oregon Counties is putting together a Community Water Needs Forum because they want to be more involved in water supply planning and are looking for partners.

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) is getting 70 new positions: 35 permanent positions and additional limited term positions. One of the positions will be a public information and resiliency staff person.

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) is developing new Emergency Response Rules to be in alignment with AWIA. They will be adding additional requirements related to vulnerable populations, communications, and source water assessments. Public comment will be open sometime in November.

Program Updates

Bonny Cushman, Consortium Program Coordinator reported that over the past year, the Consortium has developed a number of member outreach toolkits. Bonny noted that whenever the Consortium develops new initiatives the question arises regarding the sharing of the materials with community partners to help get the information to the public. Bonny asked if CTC members had any concerns with sharing the toolkits with external regional partners and non-regional members.

CTC members discussed the sharing of information and work created by the Consortium. It was suggested parameters of use standards should be created with branding intact. It was noted that boundaries on how others can apply the messaging/work is needed.

Bonny reported that the final media shoot of this year's campaign was done with Garden Time on Monday. The story was shot at the Grant View reservoir and highlighted a regional resiliency focused project and encouraged viewer to go to the Consortium's website for information on more resiliency projects going on in the region.

The Consortium is working with KUNP on a Spanish newsletter and promotion focused on emergency preparedness.

Work continues on the how-to video project. UASI grant funds have been secured to take the Consortium's three emergency preparedness videos and translate them into 10 languages. Listening sessions have scheduled with community members to get feedback on the topics, what they anticipate might be barriers for their community to do the preparedness work, and input on how to best get the videos out to the community once they are completed.

Bonny advised that a curtailment and communication focused tabletop exercise is planned for late spring 2022. Consortium staff is looking for member staff support to help plan the event.

Transmission and Storage Strategy and Interconnections Update

Carrie Pak, Kari Duncan, and Rebecca recently met to discuss a potential update of the Transmission and Storage Strategy (RTSS). The final report of the Strategy was adopted in June 2000 and developed short and long-term visions for regional transmission and storage and identified the institutional arrangements to facilitate these visions. Carrie advised that since the adoption of the Strategy, various planning assumptions and conditions have changed and the need for enhanced regional collaboration has only intensified, especially with additional attention to emergency preparedness for events like wildfire, winter storms, Cascadia Subduction Zone seismic events, harmful algal blooms, etc.

A proposal was prepared for CTC consideration. The proposal outlined a framework for the potential update that most likely entails engaging professional consulting services. It was recommended that a small group of CTC members work to further flesh out the framework and scope for the project. Carrie asked if there was a general interest/consensus to do this work.

In general, CTC members were supportive of exploring an update of the RTSS. It was noted that will be important to consider costs and how a project like this may affect dues. The drinking water framework plan may also inform the project. Mike Grimm volunteered to assist with this effort. Beth McGinnis expressed interested as well pending discussion with Todd Heidgerken.

October Consortium Board Follow-Up

Rebecca reminded CTC members that at the October Board meeting, Board members participated in breakout sessions to discuss strategic plan initiatives. Rebecca reflected on the themes discussed including:

- Increasing awareness of the Consortium and its work
- Bringing in more presenters of interest to Board meetings
- Concern for staff fatigue
- Need to reach broader community including BIPOC communities and increasing equity, diversity, and inclusion in the Consortium's programs
- Climate change and understanding its impacts
- Challenges in delivering water – costs, supply chain issues and emergency events
- Need to better tell the Consortium's story
- Increasing advocacy for water entities at the State level; improving partnerships

CTC members discussed the Board meeting. There was general consensus that the Board members like to meet in smaller breakout session as it promotes more robust discussion and gives all participants more of an opportunity to contribute to the discussion. It was noted that the themes

discussed were not new and for the most part are included in the current Strategic Plan but perhaps some thought should be given to reorganizing the priorities of the Plan and focus on those areas that have not been in the forefront of programming and emphasis.

It was noted that it is important to understand who the Consortium's audience is with regard to better delivering the Consortium's messaging and programs. Often organizations are not their best messengers of their message and it is important to leverage relationships with stakeholders and community partners so they can advocate on the Consortium's behalf. Relationship building is key.

FY 2022-23 Consortium Budget and Work Plan Discussion

Rebecca advised that Consortium staff is awaiting staffing costs from the City of Portland. The costs are typically available in early December. Rebecca will incorporate the new staffing numbers into the budget spreadsheet for discussion at the January CTC meeting.

Legislative Update

[HB 3115](#): (Relating to the regulation of public property with respect to persons experiencing homelessness) was discussed and is shared here for your information as it could affect property within your water district or city.

Oregon Health Authority Rule Making: The Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division (OHA) is proposing to permanently amend Oregon Administrative Rule 333-061-0064 related to emergency planning for public water systems. The amendments are necessary to improve and streamline emergency planning requirements and to be consistent with the American Water Infrastructure Act. Notice of Proposed Rule Making. Comments are due November 30, 2021.

Meeting Attendees:

David Winship – City of Beaverton

Beth McGinnis – Clackamas River Water

Niki Iverson – City of Hillsboro

Sarah Jo Chaplen and Jeff Page – Oak Lodge Water Services

Edward Campbell, Doug Wise, and Erich Pacheco – City of Portland

Kari Duncan – Rockwood Water PUD

Craig Sheldon – City of Sherwood

Wyatt Parno – South Fork Water Board

Brian Rager – City of Tigard

Heidi Springer – City of Tualatin

Carrie Pak – Tualatin Valley Water District

Mike Grimm – West Slope Water District

Martin Montalvo – City of Wilsonville

Rebecca Geisen, Bonny Cushman, and Patty Burk – RWPC Staff

Next CTC Meeting: Wednesday, January 5, 2022 via *Zoom/videoconference*.