

WALLA WALLA BASIN WATERSHED COUNCIL

WATERSHED WATCH

July 26, 2023 | Q3 Newsletter

Community Volunteer Opportunity!

The local Rural Development Initiative leadership program participants have identified the beautification of Marie Dorion park as their course project. Members of WWBWC plan to join them in their efforts on Saturday August 5 to lend a hand with some river clean-up and other tasks at hand that day. Join us and other community members to make this wonderful park an enjoyable area for all once again. Click the image for more information on this event.

**MARIE
DORION
PARK**
CLEAN UP



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- Summer Field Projects
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Source Waters of the Walla Walla River

With little-to-no precipitation in the area for several months and making our way through our hottest days of summer, having sustained flow in our river is a seemingly unfeasible task. Yet flow it does. How does it do it? The Walla Walla River summer flow, or baseflow for our area, is provided by multiple spring sources throughout the North and South Fork watersheds. These basalt groundwater springs are what has called the focus of the WWBWC.

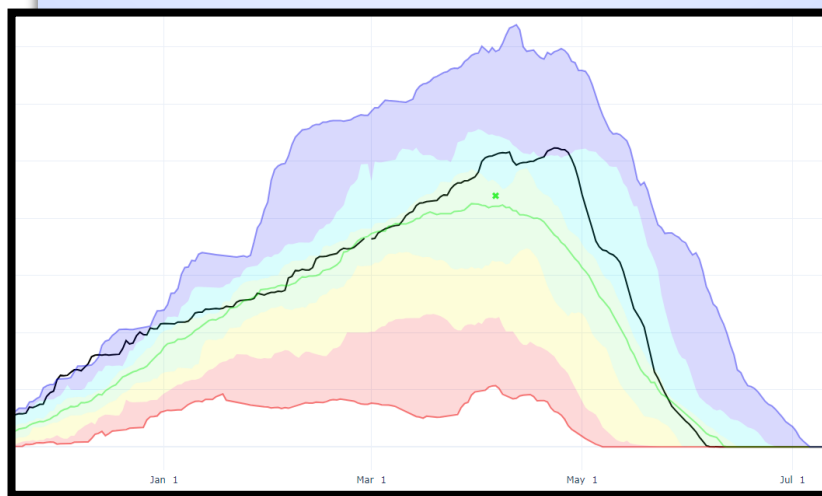
In 2018 an article was published with data projections of groundwater production, particularly in the Blue Mountains region of Oregon, decreasing by 10-30% by the year 2080. This wasn't the first article of its kind. For many years, water has become a much more central concern of the changing climate. The link here, between aquifer recharge and spring production, is snowpack. Even in a year like this, where NRCS recorded an above average amount further into the year, once it started to melt it was gone quickly. This quick runoff allows little time to recharge our groundwater. The U.S. Forest Service has since begun more documentation of the groundwater springs within their forest. Within the Walla Walla Ranger District, they have partnered with us for this effort.

While flows are measured at several locations on the Walla Walla River near Milton-Freewater, this allows us to get a better gauge of production direct from the multiple sources. In addition to surveying about a dozen mapped springs, WWBWC staff located and surveyed 99 previously undocumented springs in the middle and upper South Fork watershed in the '21 and '22 field seasons. Look forward to more information from this project to be available throughout the month of August on our website and social media pages.



The Little Loggers That Could

While it's easy to let curiosity get the better of you, when you see these small white cylinders, either in-stream or in nearby foliage, know that they were almost definitely intentionally placed there. They are out to collect data over the season for us; in the water they collect temperature and flow rate while in the atmosphere they only collect air temp data. When deploying, we try to place them out of the way and take lat/long points and pictures of where we leave them. While there's always a chance one has become dislodged and is no longer where we knew it to be, chances are it's exactly where we've documented them. If you think you've found one that's escaped us, please don't hesitate to get in touch with us about it! (but go ahead and leave it where you find it for the time)



Black line ('23 snowpack) falls quickly to 0 after maintaining higher volume compared to green line (median of snowpack from '91-'20)

2023 Project Season

July marks a turning point for our crew. While our monitoring programs require constant field work throughout the year, other aspects within our scope of work have a more limited field season. This year our crew is extra busy with 3 major projects.

Mill Creek Spring Inventory

Similar to our North and South Fork Walla Walla inventories in the previous years, groundwater spring survey work continues in the Umatilla National Forest, this year working in the Mill Creek Municipal Watershed. We are thankful for our project partners who make this work possible.

North Fork RM 3.6-4.3

This is the first major restoration construction the WWBWC is performing in the North Fork watershed. Getting designs conceived and agreed on to 100% approval is one task—another is securing all necessary permits for the work, particularly for instream construction; both of these feats have been accomplished. While additional miles of this stretch are being worked through for design right now, the ultimate goal will be to improve channel complexity and floodplain connectivity of just over 5 miles of river.

Couse Creek Low-Tech Restoration

Another exciting project, this will use numerous hand-made structures strategically positioned to facilitate the natural scour and depositional processes that produce resilient aquatic and riparian habitat. This “low-tech” approach encourages the river to do its own work. Over the coming years, staff will track changes to the river channel and modify structures as needed to maximize ecological gains.

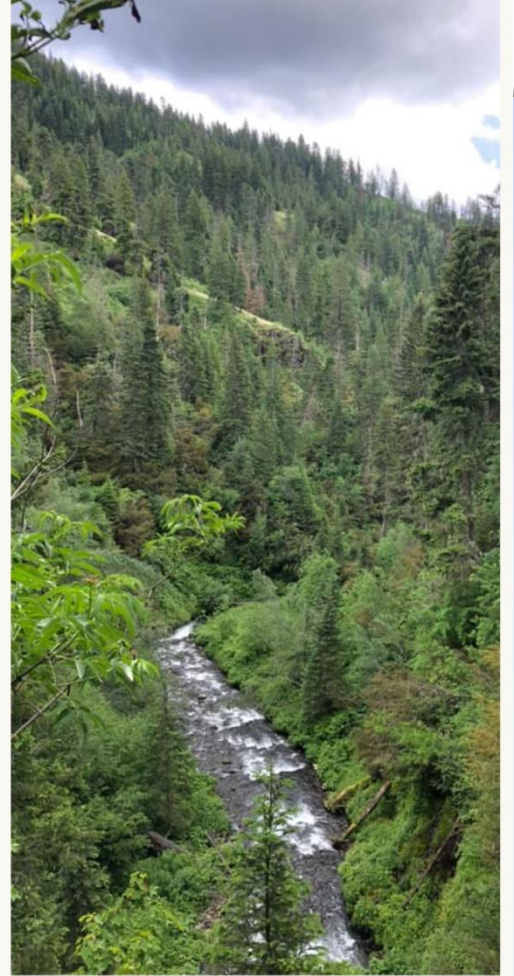
*Both Couse Creek and the North Fork projects are on private land. We appreciate the willingness of the landowners to work with us in improving the system for all.

Other Summer Happenings

Walla Walla Basin residents, we enjoy interacting with you all and engaging with you on your thoughts and concerns about basin water issues. We have been trying to get out into the public a little more frequently to do just that. For example, our staff have made a few appearances at the Farmer’s Markets so far this year in Milton-Freewater; have you spotted us down there? We plan to make a few more appearances there this year and plan to participate in the Milton-Freewater Chamber Downtown Alliance’s Friday Night’s on Main. If you see us out and about, make sure to stop by and say hi!

August							
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	
			1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
13	14	15	Farmer's Market	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	Friday Night on Main	26	
27	28	29	30	31			

September						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	Farmer's Market	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	Friday Night on Main	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30



Join our social media
*photo
contest*

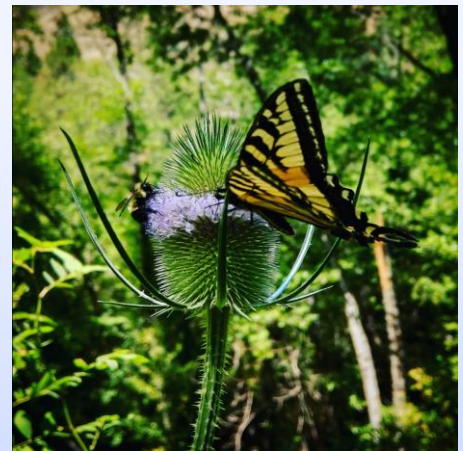
Photo Contest Updates

If you haven't participated with us yet, I encourage you to do so! The easiest way is through Facebook, but we have had several entries both by emailing info@wwbwc.org and from stopping by the office.

We have found this to be a very enjoyable monthly contest, and all staff have been able to decide the monthly winners by anonymous vote so far. However, our team has experienced a change recently and June's results are tied. Newsletter readers, we need you! Click the link to visit a poll we've set-up and vote through the month of August for either A) Pollinator pair or B) Bird of prey as the June contest winner.

[VOTE] <https://forms.gle/MWH6Tp96vtUQCACt6>

A)



B)



Board Updates: May-July

In addition to the outreach events held earlier this year (projects tour, volunteer planting, and Return to the River) we were also able to participate with the CTUIR hatchery and Tri-State Steelheaders to give Milton-Freewater 5th graders a fun-field day right before their summer break. We appreciate our partner's teamwork to make events like this happen. Our education Salmon in the School program also had another successful year and resulted in three different groups being able to release classroom raised salmonids.



During the June board meeting, member Ralph Perkins shared with the group that earlier this year Capital Press published an article on Lampson Blueberries ([read here](#)). Clark Lampson, another board member, is also the stakeholder where a past projects and successful levy setback occurred, and where our Earth Day tree planting took place. The trees have had multiple follow-up visits to give them extra water, and appear to be managing their first summer well. Thank you again to all who volunteered with us on Earth Day and the Victorian Gardens, Inc. for their donation of the linden trees.

The WWBWC welcomes Jerimiah Bonifer as our CTUIR sector representative as their newly appointed fisheries manager. He is taking over Gary James' position, who retired earlier this year.

Join our board meetings in person at our S Main office or via Zoom on the 3rd Mondays of each month at 7pm.

Employment Opportunity

As mentioned in the photo contest section of this newsletter, one previous member of our team has left us since the last newsletter was sent out. While we are very pleased this former teammate was able to pursue a career that better aligned with their life's wishes, we would certainly like to fill the void we're experiencing. Not only do we face more photo round ties than ever, but this could be an exciting moment for us to restructure roles a little. However, there has not been much movement in the applicant pipeline. If you know anyone with accounting, finance, business administration, human resources, or a related field experience looking for a new opportunity with a fun and an environmentally centric group, have them get a hold of us or send them the following link.

<http://wwbwc.org/about/staff/2-uncategorised/223-employment-opportunities.html>

Connect with us!

If viewing on a computer or mobile device, logos are linked. Otherwise find us using our handles for social media, or scan the code to visit our Flip Cause.



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