

Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting
April 17, 2023
Meeting Minutes

Present:

-Board Members: Ralph Perkins, John Zerba, Kevin Scribner, Vern Rodighiero, Malcom Miller, Steve Irving, Katy Clifton, David Haire, Arnold Coe, Larry Widner, and Ed Chesnut.

-Staff: Troy Baker, Wendy Harris, Emily Tilden, Tara Patten, Luke Adams, Brandyn Chaney, Eric Hoverson, and Graham Banks.

-Guests: Dan Dorran (Zoom)

(0:1:40) The Meeting was called to order by John Zerba at 7:00 pm. John observes we have enough members for a quorum.

(0:2:02) Minutes from March 20, 2023: John mentions one correction for the minutes; the Chairman cannot make a motion. No one else offers corrections or additions. John states the minutes will be approved as corrected.

(0:2:53)- Flow and Snowpack Report by Luke Adams

The flows on 4/14/23 were as follows:

WW River below Tum-A-Lum Bridge was 249 cfs

Nursery bridge had no data collected

Little Walla Walla Diversion was at 93 cfs (OWRD)

WWR at 15th Ave Bridge (Grove) was 280 cfs (OWRD)

North Fork WWR near the Confluence was at 147 cfs

South Fork WWR near the Confluence was at 184 cfs

Couse Creek at River Mile 1.1 had 38 cfs

Pine Creek at Schubert Road was 48 cfs

*notes that the numbers may not appear to add up correctly, but bear with him until the 30-day median

The 30-day median for each of the sites was as follows:

-South Fork WWR near the confluence was 217 cfs (reports that he and Emily took a high flow measurement at this location on 4/11/23 of 574 cfs)

-North Fork WWR near the confluence was 69 cfs (reports that he and Emily took a high flow measurement at this location on 4/11/23 of 219 cfs)

-WWR at 15th Ave (Grove) Bridge was 283 cfs (reports OWRD measured 600cfs, at which time the flow was recorded approximately 100 cfs fewer so it looks like some adjustments still need to be made for that device). The monthly median flow v. 10-year median flow at Walla Walla River at 15th Ave. Bridge (Grove) showed March finished below the median and so far April is well below the median as well, but may bump up with a surge later in the month. In terms of volume, the last half of March and first half of April are both below for WY2023 vs. the 46-year average

-WWR below Tum-A-Lum bridge was 189 cfs (reports that he and Emily took a high flow measurement at this location on 4/11/23 of 677 cfs)

-Couse Creek at River Mile 1.1 was 24.4 cfs (will measure this site in coming week)

-Pine Creek at Schubert Road was 35.2 cfs (will also measure this site)

NRCS Snow Water Equivalent in Walla Walla as of 4/17/2023 shows 124% of the median, and notes we are past the median peak. The snowpack at the following sites is High Ridge 186%, Milk Shakes 105%, Sourdough Gulch 0%(no snow), Spruce Springs 107%, and Touchet 120%.
Shared NOAA/NWS update.

(0:11:11) Informational presentation ends and entertained questions/comments/suggestions:

- Ed asks about comparing data (flow) to a 30-year average/median instead of 46 years to see if the previous 16 years skew data.
- Butch asks about a correlation between shallow aquifer water table and flow (indirect measurement).
- Ralph shares about spring performances regarding the Little Walla Walla
- Troy mentions the wells show clear spikes in level when the flow surges do occur (answered Arnold's first question)
- Malcom and Ralph discuss the spring performances more, saying that spring performance is not necessarily new. Ralph agrees

(0:16:54) Updates:

Projects

- Graham talks about the projects tour that was held over the weekend.
- Emily talks about upcoming planting and local businesses making donations.
- Tara shares about Couse Creek RM4; materials and permitting update. Groundwater monitors have been installed for pre-treatment data.
- Troy shares that PSP 2023-2025 biennium funding was received.
- Brandyn shares upcoming projects partner meetings for Mill Creek and updates permitting status.

Walla Walla Water2050- OR and WA legislative update. PFO (Policy, Funding, and Outreach) event for 2050 4/26/2023 from 6-8p. Scoping strategy for floodplains and habitats has been underway as well. Broad floodplain discussion is sparked from here. The following 2050 meeting is in May.

(0:43:56) Eric Hoverson gave a presentation on the NF Walla Walla River Project RM 3.6-4.4 – Starts by updating on the progress of the latest related proposal in OWEB. Segues by talking about brook lamprey, brook trout, and mountain whitefish; they're all up in the North Fork.

(0:51:00-0:52:42 aerial footage of this stretch of the project) Ties in floodplain discussion from earlier and presents on river dynamics, how we're going to change the river, why (reasons behind doing it this way), and what we should see from it.

(1:12:30) Announcements:

- April photo contest- stormy photos. Get ahold of Emily if you'd like to submit outside of Facebook.
- Re-iterate Earth Day planting/volunteer event.
- Re-iterate WW Water 2050 PFO meeting 4/26/23 from 6-8p.
- The next WW Water2050 meeting is May 11th from 1-4p.
- Next board meeting is May 15th.

David shares Return to the River is May 13th.

Steve shares appreciation of WWBWC working with MFCDA, and shared that MFCDA had a clean-up event the previous weekend and thanks the attendees.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14 pm.

Next Meeting: May 15, 2023, 7:00–8:30 pm, at WWBWC office, 810 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater, OR.

Full meeting is recorded and posted on the website and the times before each heading are the meter times on the video recording for each topic.