

Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting
May 15, 2023
Meeting Minutes (draft)

Attendees:

Board Members:

Ralph Perkins, Vern Rodighiero, Jack Ferrise, John Zerba, Ed Chesnut, Kevin Scribner, Katy Clifton, Clark Lampson, Steve Irving, Arnold Coe, David Haire, and Malcolm Millar

Staff:

Troy Baker, Emily Tilden, Brandyn Chaney, Tara Patten, Luke Adams, Graham Banks, Eric Hoverson

Guests:

Jean Coe

(0:01:43) The Meeting was called to order by John Zerba at 6:59 pm.

(0:01:51) Introductions

(0:02:10) Minutes from April 17, 2023: No additions or corrections; they will stand approved.

(0:02:23) Troy announces the impending audit and informs the board that a report will be made available to them about the audit, most likely in July.

(0:03:05)- Flow and Snowpack Report by Luke Adams

The database has not been updated, so there is less data to share now than usual. While the updating process has been completed, some issues are still being worked out with the reporting after the update, so the sites will be offline temporarily.

The flows on 5/12/23 were as follows:

WWR at 15th Ave Bridge (Grove) was 472 cfs (OWRD)

Little Walla Walla Diversion was at 111 cfs (OWRD)

WW River below Tum-A-Lum Bridge, Nursery bridge, North Fork WWR near the Confluence, South Fork WWR near the Confluence, Couse Creek at River Mile 1.1, and Pine Creek at Schubert Road are offline for this board meeting.

-WWR at 15th Ave (Grove) Bridge:

-Had a 30-day-median of 489 cfs (OWRD)

-Against a 10-year median flow, this trends higher for the first half of May. April's 10-year median ended lower than average this year at 372 cfs.

-For the long-term data comparison, Luke plotted a 30-year in addition to the whole data set (47-year) median. The 47-year data is slightly higher at a total yearly volume of 153,514 acre-feet of water compared to the 30-year total annual volume of 147,669 acre-feet.

-The bi-monthly acre-feet is up for the last half of April and the first half of May, and the year's sum is trending higher than the historical data. *This data is now set to the 30-year, whereas in previous presentations, it had been the more extended data set, and we showed under for the sum of the years flow data.

NRCS Snow Water Equivalent in Walla Walla as of 4/11/2023 shows 155% of the median. The snowpack at the following sites is High Ridge 571% (currently 24" compared to median 4.2"), Milk Shakes 115%, Sourdough Gulch 0%(no snow was reported here last month), Spruce Springs 0% (determined that must not have been reporting and it's likely there is still some snow here based on elevation), and Touchet 125%.

MilkShakes SNOTEL data shows a snow depth of 82" and a snow-water equivalent of 38", slightly above median data of 75" and 34", respectively.

Shared NOAA/NWS update- our area will likely be hotter but may see more than average precipitation.

(0:13:23) Updates:

Projects

-Couse Creek: All of the wood is delivered. It's looking like late July for implementation. All the permits we have control over getting done are completed; waiting for NEPA from BPA should be done in the next two weeks.

-North Fork: One permit returned for edits, and some have been returned as approved. Scheduling a meeting with the design contractors to start working on the next reach. Pursuing a WaterSMART grant that will get the designs done in the entirety of the work planned to do in this area of North Fork

- Cup Gulch: possibilities for more ponds potentially or for the more low tech—also a passage barrier. Wholistic watershed approach, not just a mainstem focus

Marie Dorion Park: The city and the leadership group have been looking at improving Marie Dorion, which, if/once cleaned up, could be an excellent opportunity for WWBWC to utilize for outreach and education with students.

Walla Walla Water2050- Feedback from the community meeting is appreciated. The implementation workgroup meeting was held on May 11, mainly provided a background of the TMDLs, talked more specifically about the Dayton wastewater treatment plant—also spoke about more stormwater retention and giving more attention to non-point source pollution via no-till practices (to which Troy also associated the PSP program). The OCR project list will be rated soon; over 6 million in projects with a budget of 2.3 million. Kevin would like to know what expectations/responsibilities WWBWC has in 2050, what authority it has, and how it is being supported. Ralph mentions that on the OCR project list, the projects are predominately focused only on about 25% of the total land in question and ignore many areas of water origin that make up the other 75% of the land—not that many of the projects in the 25% aren't worthy. Still, it's essential to have a holistic approach. Implementers Capacity Survey reveals feeling underfunded and under capacity but willing to be involved if that could be reversed.

(0:38:50) Emily Tilden presents on the Outreach and Engagement progress in 2023 – Projects tour; general community engagement survey Walla Walla Water 2050 PFO public meeting—second overall and first since COVID. Earth Day Oregon and Lampson tree planting. Return to the River; Luke and Graham knocked it out of the park. Upcoming outreach/engagement: photo contest, Marie Dorion, our website; we want to have a south main focused event, but that will be next year's event, but we will host another open house. Our quarterly newsletter reboot is doing well. Looked at the year's reach, visits, and likes/followers statistics on social media.

(1:26:16) Announcements:

- May photo contest- flowers.
- The next WW Water2050 BAC meeting is May 24th from 1-4p.
- The next WW Water 2050 PFO meeting is May 25 from 9-11a.
- The next board meeting is June 19, 7- 8:30p.

Graham shared some upcoming student events: 4th graders Frazier Farmstead field day on Thursday, Weston 6th graders outdoor field day at Harris park, MF 5th graders will be at the salmon hatchery on June 7.

(1:32:39) Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.

The entire 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.