

**Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting**  
**August 19, 2024**  
**Meeting Minutes (draft)**

**Attendees**

**Board Members:** James Baker, Caty Clifton (Zoom), Jack Ferrise, Joel Huesby, Clark Lampson, Malcolm Millar, Ralph Perkins, Vern Rodighiero, Kevin Scribner, Nathan Viavant, John Zerba

**Staff:** Troy Baker, Wendy Harris, Sara Harris, Tara Patten, Luke Adams, Brandyn Chaney

**Guests:** Yvonne Roberts (Zoom), Diana Bautista (Zoom)

**Minutes:**

**1. Call to Order and Opening Remarks (7:00 PM)**

- Chair John Zerba called the meeting to order, confirming a quorum was present. The July 2024 meeting minutes were distributed and approved without additions or corrections.

**2. Financial Audit Report Presentation (7:02 PM)**

Presenter: Yvonne Roberts, Connected Professional Accountants LLC

- Yvonne presented the annual financial audit report, noting an unmodified opinion indicating the highest assurance of financial statement accuracy. She detailed accounts receivable and payable changes, highlighting a positive financial status with total net assets at \$111,000. The report included a comprehensive breakdown of income, expenses, and cash flows, with no significant compliance issues related to federal funding.
- Kevin Scribner inquired about negotiating a higher indirect cost rate with federal funding agencies based on consecutive audit results. Wendy Harris provided insight into the complexities of adjusting indirect rates due to fluctuating funding sources, indicating a preference for using a standard 10% de minimis rate to simplify administrative processes.

**3. Flow and Snowpack Update (7:19 PM)**

- Luke Adams updated water flow measurements for various creeks and rivers, including the Walla Walla River and Mill Creek.
- The 30-day median average for the Walla Walla River is 18.3 CFS, with a measurement of 23 CFS on July 25.
- Mill Creek near Walla Walla shows a 30-day median average of 32.5 CFS on July 25.
- The National Weather Service reports below-normal precipitation and above-normal temperatures for the area, contributing to drought conditions.

**4. Mill Creek Water Management Issues (7:33 PM)**

- Troy Baker discussed the new water management policy involving the city of Walla Walla and the temporary transfer of 8 CFS from the city's intake to Mill Creek through the Walla Walla River to its confluence with the Columbia River.

- The policy aims to protect water across state lines and manage eight cfs through the system.
- Issues arise when the water management gage is found to be off by a significant amount, leading to a reduction in flow in Yellowhawk Creek.
- The community reacted with concerns about the impact on local landowners and the need for better communication and accurate data.

## 5. **Projects and Gala Updates (7:52 PM)**

### **Stream Restoration Workshop**

- Sara Harris, Tara Patten, and Wendy Harris discuss the recent stream restoration workshop, which focused on low-tech and engineered approaches to stream restoration.
- The workshop had seven attendees, including local landowners and media, and generated interest in the quarterly newsletter and our monthly board meetings.

### **Mill Creek Springs Project**

- Tara Patten and Arin Iverson, the summer intern, have identified springs in Mill Creek using Forest Service protocol, finding 22 springs so far.
- Arin has also created an ArcGIS Story Map to describe the Mill Creek watershed and its importance for municipal supply, which will be shared with the community.

### **Gala and Fundraising Efforts**

- Wendy Harris provided an update on the Riverfest Gala fundraiser, noting that ticket sales have been slow, but salmon raffle tickets have sold well.
- Efforts are being made to promote the gala through local vendors and contractors and at upcoming events like Friday Nights on Main in Milton-Freewater.
- The gala aims to raise awareness and funds for the watershed council's 30th anniversary and ongoing projects.

### **Couse Creek RM 4 Project Invasive Species Removal and Volunteer Engagement**

- Brandon Chaney discussed the progress of the second phase of the Couse Creek at River Mile Four restoration project, including installing low-tech processed-based structures and removing invasive species.
- Volunteer events are planned for October, including Whitman Day, to continue the restoration efforts.
- The council is seeing positive results from the installed structures, with willows growing and becoming part of the natural habitat.

## 6. **Adjournment (8:08 PM)**

- Chair John Zerba officially adjourned the meeting.