

**Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting**  
**September 16, 2024**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**ATTENDEES**

**Board Members:** Jerimiah Bonifer (Zoom), James Baker, Ed Chesnut, Caty Clifton, Joel Huesby, Clark Lampson, Malcolm Millar, Ralph Perkins, Vern Rodighiero, Kevin Scribner, and Nathan Viavant (Zoom)

**Staff:** Troy Baker, Wendy Harris, Eric Hoverson, Tara Patten, Sara Harris, Brandyn Chaney, Luke Adams, and Graham Banks

**Guests:** Michelle Mclellan and Navi Gast (Zoom)

**Minutes**

Vern Rodighiero called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

**7:00 PM - Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**

- The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Vern asked if there were any additions or deletions. The minutes were approved as presented.

**7:05 PM - Columbia Basin Collaborative Integration/Recommendations Group  
Mid-Columbia Steelhead Pilot Project by Kevin Scribner**

- Kevin presented an update on the Columbia Basin Partnership Task Force, which began in 2017 to coordinate salmon recovery efforts across Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana. He emphasized the importance of collaborative work among various stakeholders, including tribal and non-tribal fishers, irrigators, and NOAA Fisheries.
- He discussed the Task Force's goal to establish quantitative targets for salmon recovery, focusing on natural production, hatchery support, and overall abundance for salmonid stocks throughout the Columbia River Basin.
- Kevin introduced the Mid-Columbia Steelhead Pilot Project, selected because of active restoration efforts in the Yakima, Walla Walla, and Umatilla watersheds, aiming to delist Mid-Columbia Steelhead by 2050.
- He highlighted the four main areas of focus, known as the "four H's" (Habitat, Harvest, Hydropower, and Hatcheries), which guide recovery strategies. He noted that the Collaborative aims to align local efforts, like the Walla Walla Watershed 2050 plan, with broader initiatives to boost funding and political support for salmon recovery.
- Kevin concluded by discussing the ongoing effort to connect the work of the Walla Walla Watershed 2050 strategy with the Columbia Basin Collaborative, ensuring that they

support each other's goals through integrated strategies and broad stakeholder engagement.

**7:20 PM - Flow Measurement and Drought Report by Luke Adams**

- Luke reported on recent streamflow measurements, noting variations in flows across different locations. He provided insights into drought conditions and water year data, highlighting above-average precipitation for September.

**7:35 PM - Mill Creek Water Transaction Update by Ralph Perkins and Troy Baker**

- Ralph and Troy discussed the Mill Creek water lease transaction, issues with gauge accuracy, and landowner concerns. Troy emphasized the need for improved communication and gauge verification.

**7:50 PM - Resignation Announcement and Farewell for Brandon Chaney**

- Troy announced Brandon's resignation and thanked him for his contributions. Brandon shared his plans, highlighting his continued work in ecosystem restoration.

**8:00 PM - North Fork Restoration Project Update by Eric Hoverson**

- Eric updated the North Fork Restoration Project, noting successful tree survival rates and recent funding awards. He highlighted increased interest from partners as the project progresses and the upcoming construction in October.

**8:10 PM - Couse Creek Restoration Update by Tara Patten**

- Tara detailed the progress made on the Couse Creek projects (RM 4 and RM8), including completed design plans and upcoming bidding processes. She outlined plans for a volunteer day with local students for restoration activities.

**8:20 PM - RiverFest Gala Update by Wendy Harris**

- Wendy provided an update on the upcoming RiverFest Gala, mentioning ticket sales, raffle promotions, and the need for auction item donations. She encouraged board members to help with outreach.

**8:30 PM - Closing and Tri-Sovereigns Meeting Discussion by Troy Baker**

- Troy informed the council about an upcoming Tri-Sovereigns meeting and encouraged board members to share any concerns or questions they would like addressed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:30 pm.

