

**Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting  
February 24, 2025  
Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:**

**Board Members:** James Baker, Ed Chesnut, Caty Clifton, Jack Ferrise, Joel Huesby, Ralph Perkins, Vern Rodighiero, Kevin Scribner (Zoom), and John Zerba

**Staff:** Wendy Harris, Sara Harris, Graham Banks, Tara Patten, Luke Adams, Eric Hoverson, Cat Garza, and Colin Meister

**Guest:** Jeff Catlin

**(7:00 PM) Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by John Zerba.

**(7:03) Approval of January Meeting Minutes**

- The January meeting minutes were reviewed.
- Motion: Ralph Perkins moved to approve the minutes.
- Second: Vern Rodighiero
- Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

**(7:04) Board Member Appointment**

- Discussion to seat Jeff Catlin in the Recreation Sector position on the board.
- Motion: Ralph Perkins moved to approve the appointment.
- Second: Vern Rodighiero
- Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

**(7:06) Strategic Plan Update**

- The next committee meeting is scheduled for March 4.
- Board members were reminded to review the attachments.
- Kevin Scribner noted he had not received the whole packet and requested confirmation.

**(7:07) Legislative Update – Oregon Senate Bill 761**

- The bill proposes state funding to match Washington's contributions to the Walla Walla Watershed 2050 Implementation of basin projects.

- Discussion on funding distribution and concerns about prioritization of projects benefiting Oregon.

#### **(7:13) Grant Proposal Review**

- The Projects Committee met prior to the board meeting to review two grant proposals:
  1. **Pesticide Stewardship Partnership Grant:**
    - Includes a new Perennial Crop Advisory Group and farm assessments.
    - Digitization of outreach materials.
  2. **Agricultural Water Quality Support Grant:**
    - Annual Crop Advisory Group and assessment of conservation practice barriers.
    - Development of an ArcGIS Story Map and an annual outreach event.
- Motion: Caty Clifton moved to approve both grant applications.
- Second: John Zerba
- Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

#### **(7:16) Pesticide Use Limitation Areas Workshop**

- Scheduled for March 4 at the Water Center.
- NOAA Fisheries and EPA will discuss regulatory changes for pesticide use near water bodies.
- Concerns raised about grower outreach and event promotion.

#### **(7:27) Hydrology Update**

- Recent high-flow event observed in the Walla Walla River Basin.
- Luke Adams reported updated flow measurements:
  - South Fork Walla Walla River: 240 CFS at confluence
  - North Fork Walla Walla River: 94 CFS
  - Couse Creek: 38 CFS
  - Mill Creek: 200 CFS
- Snowpack at 118% of the median level.

#### **(7:36) Water Recharge Permit Update**

- Application under review by multiple agencies.
- ODFW requested past diversion rate data, which was submitted.

#### **(7:37) Steelhead Numbers Updates**

- There was a notable increase in steelhead sightings at Nursery Bridge in December and January.
- Ongoing stream restoration efforts are performing well under high flows.

#### **(7:39) Outreach & Engagement Events**

- **Water & Wine Series:**
  - The February 5 event at Roti Cellars with Rory Corrigan (Forest Service) had ~20 attendees despite weather concerns.
  - The March 25 event at Echolands Winery will feature Brian Rudin discussing regenerative agriculture and vineyard management.
- **Pub Trivia Night:**
  - The February 11 event at Big House Brewpub had four teams fostering water-related discussions.
- **Upcoming Workshop:**
  - March 20: OSU Extension's Cody Copp will present on Horticultural Pest Management and Watershed Health.

#### **(7:48) School and Community Education Updates**

- Ferndale and Athena-Weston schools actively engaged in fish education programs.
- Spring volunteer planting events planned.

#### **(7:51) Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.