

Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting

April 21, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Board Members: James Baker, Jeff Catlin, Ed Chestnut, Joel Huesby, Steve Irving, Ralph Perkins, Vern Rodighiero, Kevin Scribner, and John Zerba

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

Guests: Mikahala Waters (Alta Science & Engineering)

(7:28 PM) **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by John Zerba at 7:28 pm.

(7:29 PM) **Approval of March Minutes**

- Minutes were reviewed.
- **Motion:** Ed Chesnut moved to approve the March meeting minutes.
- **Second:** Ralph Perkins
- **Vote:** Motion passed unanimously.

(7:31) **Strategic Plan Update**

- The Strategic Planning Committee updated the board that the organization will pursue an 'Expand and Lead' direction.
- Finalization of goals, strategies, and measurement framework is underway.

(7:33 PM) **Executive Director Update**

- The Personnel Committee announced that Michelle McClellan will step in as Executive Director (30 hours/week) and Tara Patten will serve as Deputy Director.
- The arrangement will be evaluated after six months.
- Michelle McClellan will start in the Executive Director Position April 28th
- Tara Patten will start the Deputy Director position immediately.
- **Vote:** Appointment approved unanimously.

(7:36) **Endowment Update**

- Board reviewed the Endowment Application.
- John Zerba will complete the Endowment Application and send Board Members a copy of it.
- **Vote:** Approved Unanimously

(7:38) Hydrology and Current Snow Pack Update

- **Flow Monitoring:**
 - **South Fork Walla Walla River:** 320 CFS
 - **North Fork Walla Walla River:** 120 CFS
 - **Mill Creek:** 200 CFS
- **Snowpack:** 105% of the median level.
- **Drought Conditions:** No current drought conditions.

(7:43) Steelhead Monitoring Project Update

- Observations: 50 redds and 9 steelhead observed, primarily in North Fork.
- Video documentation and increased spawning activity noted.
- Community and landowner support growing due to steelhead observations.

(7:50) Couse Creek River Mile 4 – Project Update

- Post-treatment monitoring shows enhanced floodplain function, increased sediment deposition, and diverse flow patterns.
- Landowner feedback is positive. Engineers and Anabran staff validated results for design improvements.
- Structures effectively generating depositional features and side channel reactivation.

(8:00) Projects Update

- **Lower Pine Creek Livestock Exclusion Fencing:** The project has been reviewed and approved by the grant review team. With spring underway, the landowner's goat herd has grown, increasing the urgency for the fence. We are currently in the process of selecting a licensed Oregon contractor to install the exclusion fence along lower Pine Creek.
- **Workshops:** Communications with a speaker from the WWCCD to present at a workshop in May is underway.

(8:10) Senate Bill 761- Update

- Oregon bill aims to match WA funding for 2050 implementation projects.
- Proposed projects: North Fork improvements and Nichols Canyon stormwater retrofits.
- Amendments include cross-state funding flow and instream protection of voluntary flow reductions.

(8:20) Announcements

- **Walla Walla 2050 BAC Meeting:** April 30, 1–4 PM, Dayton
- **Pub Trivia:** April 24, 5–7 PM at Quirk Brewing
- **Next Board Meeting:** May 19, 7–8:30 PM

(8:25) Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25