

**Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting  
May 19, 2025**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:**

**Board Members:** Jerimiah Bonifer (Zoom), James Baker, Jeff Catlin, Ed Chesnut, Caty Clifton, Jack Ferrise, Joel Huesby, Steve Irving, Ralph Perkins, Vern Rodighiero, Kevin Scribner (Phone), and John Zerba

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

**Guests:** Jon Brough (Zoom)

**(7:06 PM) Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair John Zerba.

**(7:07) Approval of April Meeting Minutes**

- The April 21, 2025 meeting minutes were reviewed.
  - Motion: Ralph Perkins moved to approve the minutes.
  - Second: Ed Chestnut
  - Vote: Motion passed. One abstention.

**(7:08) New Business – Office IT Upgrade**

- Tara Patten introduced a proposal to allow James Baker's SeVein IT consultant to have remote access to WWBWC's router for tech support.
  - The board discussed potential security concerns and confirmed no financial conflict of interest.
  - General support was expressed; no objections were noted.

**(7:16) Umatilla Basin Watershed Council Update**

- Wendy Harris detailed WWBWC's interim support for UBWC, including finalizing reports and managing funds.
  - WWBWC applied for OWEB Council Capacity funding on behalf of UBWC.
  - A decision from OWEB is pending and will influence future involvement.

**(7:26) Strategic Action Planning Update**

- Michelle McClellan outlined process and time frame updates based on internal review of content commitments made to the primary funder (OWEB).
- A revised mission statement was proposed and discussed.
  - Motion: James Baker moved to adopt a streamlined mission: "Our mission is to enhance, restore, and protect the Walla Walla watershed while supporting a sustainable economy."
  - Second: Jack Ferrise
  - Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

### **(7:41) Basin Advisory Committee (BAC) Update**

- Tara Patten reported on the April 30 BAC meeting and her official appointment to the committee.
- Updates included a new CTUIR habitat assessment report and a prioritization tool from WA Water Trust.

### **(7:50) Groundwater / Aquifer Recharge Update**

- Tara Patten and Michelle McClellan presented a summary of the 2025 season (no recharge activity due to permitting delays).
- Discussion included long-term strategic options, partner coordination, and historical legal framework (1932 court decision).
- Suggestion to document and synthesize historical recharge program work to inform future possible actions.

### **(8:15) Stream Flow and Snowpack Report**

- Luke Adams presented hydrology data:
  - South Fork Walla Walla: 200 CFS
  - North Fork: 39 CFS
  - Walla Walla at 15th Ave: 280 CFS
  - Little Walla Walla Diversion: 114 CFS
  - Mill Creek: 56 CFS
  - Pine Creek: Dry
- Snowpack: 116% of median (with site breakdown)
- Observations showed channel shifts due to high flow events.

### **(8:25) Projects Update**

- The Projects Committee met prior to the board meeting.
- Projects recommended by staff, including those under the OWEB Small Grant Program, were reviewed by the Committee.
  - Motion: Ralph Perkins moved to approve the proposed projects.
  - Second: Ed Chesnut
  - Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

### **(8:30) Announcements and Closing**

- Staff shared recent highlights including Council staff's invited participation on a panel at the OWEB all-staff meeting in Salem, Eric Hoverson's presentation to the Milton-Freewater Rotary about North Fork restoration, and an agency meet-and-greet at the WWBWC office.
- Upcoming events:
  - May 22: Water & Wine at Roti Cellars
  - May 28: WW 2050 BAC Meeting at WWCC
  - June 5: Stormwater Engagement, Orchard Park
  - Hydromania Camp
  - Farmers Market & Friday Nights on Main
  - June 16: Next Board Meeting

### **(8:36 PM) Adjournment**

- The meeting was adjourned at 8:36 PM.