

**Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting  
August 18, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:**

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

**Staff:** Luke Adams, Sara Harris, Cat Garza, Eric Hoverson, Wendy Harris, Michelle McClellan, Tara Patten, and Lillian Lowery

**Guest(s):** No guests attended.

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

The meeting was called to order by Chair John Zerba.

**(7:05) Approval of July Meeting Minutes**

- The July 21, 2025, meeting minutes were reviewed.
  - Motion: Kevin Scribner moved to approve the minutes.
  - Second: Jerimiah Bonifer
  - Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

**(7:10) Staff Updates – Tara Patten & Michelle McClellan**

- New Staff Introduction
  - Tara introduced Lillian Lowery as the new Watershed Technician.
  - Lillian is pursuing a degree in Agricultural Systems and has prior experience with Washington Conservation Corps, field survey work, and outdoor science education.
- Agency Coordination
  - Tara and Michelle reported a positive meeting with Chris Kowitz (OWRD)
    - Limited license review is delayed due to staff workload, not objections.
    - A 5-year permit is expected upon approval.
    - Regular bi-monthly coordination meetings with OWRD will be established.

**(7:25) Stream Flow and Snowpack Report – Luke Adams**

- Luke Adams reported on stream conditions (May 14–June 13):
  - South Fork: 88 CFS
  - North Fork: 4.2 CFS
  - Walla Walla River: 94 CFS
  - Mill Creek: 27 CFS
- Most of Umatilla County is in “Severe Drought” (D2).
- Seasonal outlook indicates that drought will persist.

**(7:40) Strategic Discussion – “Expand and Lead”**

- Context
  - The Board previously approved “Expand and Lead” as a broad strategic direction. This session focused on identifying water issues and projects in the basin and the process by which WWBWC will track issues and set priorities.
- Board Discussion Themes:
  - Need to compile a comprehensive list of ongoing basin issues and projects (via BAC and staff) before prioritization.
  - Agreement that the Council cannot and should not be involved in all efforts; importance of focusing on alignment with mission.
  - Recognition of gaps in basin coordination and opportunities to lead in aquifer recharge, habitat monitoring, and water conservation projects.
  - Suggestions for improved Board reporting, potential virtual roundtables, and a GIS/map-based tool to track projects.
  - Emphasis on measurable outcomes (e.g., fish counts, aquifer depth changes, water savings).
- Next Steps:
  - Staff and Board gather a project list from BAC and other partners.
  - Future Board sessions will refine priority projects and assign roles (e.g., lead/support/inform).

**(8:25) Announcements and Closing**

- BAC Implementation Work Group Meeting
  - August 20, 10:00 AM (virtual)
- BAC Policy, Funding, and Outreach Work Group Meeting
  - August 27, 1:00 PM (virtual)
- Next WWBWC Board Meeting
  - September 15, 7:00 PM (hybrid)
- BAC Open House
  - October 21, 4:00 – 8:00 PM
  - Reid Campus Center, Whitman College

**(8:34 PM) Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 8:34 PM.