

Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Meeting
July 20, 2026
Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Board Members: Jerimiah Bonifer (on Teams), Ed Chesnut, Caty Clifton, Jack Ferrise, Mark Medina, Ralph Perkins, Kevin Scribner, John Zerba

Staff: Michelle McClellan, Tara Patten, Luke Adams, Jeff Catlin

Guest(s): Jean Dolling

(7:02 PM) Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Vice Chair Kevin Scribner. A quorum was present.

(7:02) Business

- June 2026 meeting minutes
 - Motion: John Zerba moved to approve the minutes.
 - Second: Ralph Perkins seconded.
 - Vote: Motion passed unanimously.
- Committee membership review, Chair elections
 - Michelle reviewed current committee membership and noted that Chairs still need to be elected by the full Board for two standing committees (Personnel and Project), per Council bylaws.
 - Discussion: The Project Committee will nominate someone to serve as Chair at the committee's 8/4 meeting.
 - Motion: Jack Ferrise nominated himself to Chair the Personnel Committee.
 - Second: Ralph Perkins seconded.
 - Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

(7:07) Flow & Conditions Report – Luke Adams, WWBWC Project Manager – Monitoring

- **Streamflow Conditions**
 - Luke provided streamflow updates for the period June 17 through July 17.
- **CTUIR Drought Early Warning System – Current Conditions, Weather Outlook, Climate**
 - **Current conditions:**
 - Most of Walla Walla County is in Moderate Drought
 - Umatilla County is in Extreme to Severe Drought
 - 4-week change: Mostly no change; one class one degradation in WW and Umatilla counties

- **Precipitation:**
 - Monthly outlook is mostly normal
- **Temperature:**
 - Monthly outlook is 30-40% above normal
- **Wildland fire potential:**
 - Progressively worsening across the Pacific Northwest through September

Kevin suggested that in the future we will attempt to correlate seasonal stream flow data with information from the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board about salmonid presence and fish rescues.

(7:23) WWBWC issues engagement

- American Ground Water Trust (AGT) conference. Kevin reviewed what has led up to WWBWC potentially having a role with the upcoming AGT conference in Walla Walla (March 8-10, 2027 at the Marcus Whitman Hotel) and asked if there are any downsides. Caty suggested reaching out to CTUIR as well as the Oregon and Washington water trusts. Tara clarified that AGT seeks help with ensuring a broad range of voices in the Valley are represented at the conference, and she shared some reservations and uncertainty about what the Council's message would be. Caty recommended reviewing last year's conference agenda and agreed that some caution is warranted. Kevin suggested this could be a discussion topic for the Aquifer Recharge Committee. Michelle explained that we do not have a funding source to cover staff time to explore this, but we could use our existing communication channels to promote the conference. Ralph asked if WWW 2050 is involved. Kevin said that Chris Kowitz is involved in the planning of the conference field trip.
- Blue Mountains Forest Plan Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Caty reviewed the planning steps, geographic scope, key dates, plan alternatives, the proposed action (Alternative 2), and some of her concerns. Caty and Ralph identified perceived gaps in the plan and answered questions. Group discussion centered on the pros and cons of WWBWC providing comment as an organization. Caty volunteered to continue sharing her thinking and notes with us during the public comment period and Kevin said this topic will be revisited at the August Council meeting. The comment period closes September 30.

(8:14) Announcements

With just a few minutes left in the meeting, Michelle requested an agenda change to make announcements before moving into Big Basin Issues for the remaining time.

- Michelle announced that after several years we signed a contract with the McNary Fisheries Compensation Committee for construction work on the North Fork.
- Ed announced that the Council's annual fiscal review has been completed, with no material discrepancies found.

(8:23) Big Basin Issues

- Issues discussed: Emergency response and support for Dry Creek landowners after the fire (Caty); South Fork Walla Walla trailhead (John); proposed Amazon data center in Burbank (Mark); Walla Walla Drought Plan and DEWS (Caty).
 - Action: Michelle will email Board members briefing documents about the data center prepared by Walla Walla Port Commissioner Amy Schwab.

(8:40 PM) Announcements & Closing

- Kevin restated the other announcements listed on the agenda.
- Tara announced that the Bureau of Reclamation will be presenting on the “anchor project” at the next BAC meeting.

(8:41 PM) Adjournment

- Meeting adjourned at 8:41 PM by Vice Chair Kevin Scribner.