PRESENT
Council Members: Kat Brigham, Malcolm Millar, Vern Rodighiero, Kevin Scribner, Larry Widner, Keith Woods, John Zerba

Staff: Bob Bower, Bob Chicken, Wendy Harris, Will Lewis, Nella Parks, Colin Shepley, Brian Wolcott

Guests: Tonya Dombroski, Rick George, Tony Justus, Karen Leiendecker, Brian Mahoney, Carol Sams, Teresa Yeager, Mike Sirrine, Jon Brough

Minutes from the July 21, 2008, meeting were approved.

Water Rule Update

At the last meeting the council agreed aquifer recharge water should not be made subordinate to water for storage. A letter was written to the water rules advisory committee stating the council’s position. The council decided to withdraw its request to make a rule change at this time regarding recharge. A new five year limited license application to allow shallow aquifer recharge to continue.

Update on Walla Walla Rive Flow Improvement Feasibility Study

Kat Brigham shared that the Tribes have put a lot of work into the feasibility study and it is their intention to share the information with the community. The Corps of Engineers’ contract is with the Tribes and it may be against their policy to release the information to any party other than the agency for which they are contracted. This may be the reason for the hesitation to release information regarding the study.

The Tribes and Corps are having a meeting to discuss the delays with the study and Tribes intend to provide more outreach to the community regarding the project. It was also agreed that a meeting of fish managers, hydrologists, etc. be convened to insure the most up to date data is being used in the study.

The feasibility study will not be completed this year. Brian Wolcott spoke with Margie from the Corps. She indicated the environmental impact statement will be completed in the summer of 2009. They anticipate the final proposal going to Congress in December 2009 in time for the funding of large water projects in January 2010.

How the Umatilla Basin Water Exchange Projects Works

Tony Justus from Oregon Water Resources Department gave a presentation on the workings of the Umatilla Basin Water Exchange projects that involve exchange Umatilla River Water for Columbia River water to serve irrigators so that Umatilla Basin irrigators can leave their original source of water in stream for fish. He gave a history of the project and showed a map of the water routes. He provided a description of how each of the involved irrigation districts participates in the exchange. He provided information and examples of the monitoring and accounting that must occur daily for the project to work properly. Tony pointed out that all water exchange projects have their own challenges but all systems require an annual operations plan, a water management plan, clear understanding of staffing needs, hold regular river operations meetings and the ability to continue to learn and adapt where needed.
Walla Walla Water Management Initiative and the Development of a Watershed Partnership

Kevin Scribner updated the council on the Walla Walla Water Management Initiative and the Development of a new organization to be called the Watershed Partnership. He announced there would be a conference call with the Director of the Department of Ecology on Tuesday. A proposal is being developed.

Kevin had just come from a meeting where it was decided to draft a summary report on the Walla Walla Water Management Initiative. The report will be distributed on September 2nd.

Umatilla Sub-Basin 2050 Water management Plan

JR Cook from Umatilla County Planning updated the Council on comments on the draft Umatilla Sub-Basin 2050 Water Management Plan. He stated that they are looking at how to coordinate with the Walla Walla Basin and how it may be treated separately from the Umatilla Basin where the study and planning took place. Also, there is still a lot to learn on recharge. It will be critical for ground water areas to have funding and rule changes.

JR requested that a member of the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council or staff be appointed to the Umatilla Water Management Advisory Committee. He will provide Brian Wolcott with the requirements of the position so that a representative can be assigned by the September meeting.

STELLAR Summer Science Camp Report

Bob Chicken reported on the Ferndale Summer Science Camp. Students were hand picked by the Principal and teachers to participate. The group spent two days locally. They spent their time at the Tamástslikt Cultural Institute, Frazier Farmstead Museum, Key Technology, and Bennington Lake. They then moved on to Camp Wooten for a few days of science related activities. It was a successful educational experience for the campers.

SOLV

Mike Sirrine is the new SOLV representative for our region. He came to the meeting to inform council members of opportunities to receive grants, training, materials and technical assistance for volunteer projects within Oregon communities. There will be meetings held in communities across Oregon to identify projects for the Oregon 150 “Take Care of Oregon Days”. The Milton-Freewater meeting will be held on September 18th, at 6:30 in the Library.

Announcements

- WWBWC received a partnership award from the Umatilla National Forest.
- The Bureau of Land Management’s Baker Resource Management Plan Revision has started. This includes the South Fork Walla Walla area. Larry Widner has already sent a letter voicing concerns.
- OWEB proposals are due by September 15th to the Watershed Council for their review.
- The OWEB Biennial Conference will be held in Eugene from November 5th through the 7th.
- The OWRD/WWBWC/WDOE Groundwater Workshop is being planned for the fall—possibly November.
- The Umatilla Confederated Tribes are holding their Salmon Celebration dinner on September 2nd, from 5:00 to 7:00 at Harris Park.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:50.