Walla Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council
August 17, 2009
Draft Meeting Minutes

Present
Council Members: Ed Chesnut, Stuart Durfee, Clark Lampson, Malcolm Millar, Vern Rodighiero, Kevin Scribner, Larry Widner, John Zerba

Staff: Troy Baker, Wendy Harris, Will Lewis, Nella Parks, Steven Patten, Brian Wolcott

Guests: Jon Brough, Ron Brown, Kittee Custer, Judith Johnson, Dale McKain, Bill Neve, Carol Sams

Meeting called to order at 7:00 by John Zerba

July 20th Meeting Minutes
It was noted that Ron Brown did not receive a draft copy of the minutes this month. He asked that staff look into the omission and insure he has not been removed from the list. Minutes were approved as submitted.

WWBWC Membership
The Personnel/Nomination Committee met prior to the regular council meeting to discuss the council seat made available by the resignation of Leonard Brown. There were two applications for the position—Ron Brown and Ralph Perkins. Leonard served as a representative of the Walla Walla Irrigation District. It was decided that Ron would be recommended for the seat as he would represent the Walla Walla Irrigation District Board. Ralph’s application will be kept for a future open seat. Ed Chesnut moved to accept Ron Brown as the new member to the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Board; Vern Rodighiero seconded the motion.

Upper Watershed Wind Power Siting Update
The council participated in a meeting with County staff, CTUIR, and USFWS to discuss siting issues. Ed Chesnut and Jim Burns toured the participants to the proposed sites. The County refers to the Columbia Plateau wind energy guidelines; however, these guidelines do not take into account the higher rainfall, steep ground, and fishery issues associated with the Blue Mountains area of the watershed that would be affected by the proposed wind turbines and their roads.

On October 22, there will be a County Planning Commission workshop. The County has asked Brian to provide input. Brian will ask for a list of questions prior to the meeting so that if research needs to be done, answers can be available by the time of the meeting. The meeting will be in Pendleton.

Ron Brown tracked down the Washington guidelines that were created.

It was stated that to provide a recommendation for or against wind towers goes beyond Council lines. Brian clarified that the Council is not presenting an anti wind turbine strategy but does want to raise the concerns regarding streams and run-off from the potential wind projects in the upper watershed and provide input on how to reduce impacts.
Nursery Bridge Grade Control Project Update
The Nursery Bridge Grade Control Project has been designed and the Corps has funding for construction, but the sponsor, M-F Water Control District, is concerned about the liability because there is no money for future repair and an anchor point for project is the failing concrete Grade Control Structure immediately below the Bridge. The Corps is sending letters to agencies asking them to step up as a sponsor so the $500,000 they secured doesn’t go away. Brian has some of the same concerns as the M-F Water Control District, but wanted the Council to know it had been approached to be the new sponsor. The Tribes are looking into being the sponsor.

The FEMA flood plain boundary levee issues have been put forward as an Oregon Solution Teams Project. Senator Nelson had his first meeting with the planning committee to try to get solution to fix the levee. Brian thinks the Levee repair is necessary, but the Corps’ initial levee system was built too narrow for the flood energy of the river. He thinks it needs to be wider where landowners are willing to allow a setback levee. The purpose of Oregon Solutions is to facilitate the process and come up with an assessment of issues, then to develop a solution that can go out for funding. Their projects usually generate state or federal funding. The goal is to assemble the right people to get a problem solved. The first meeting was to identify who should be at the table for the meetings. Letters will go out to different agencies requesting their involvement. The next meeting will be September 14th.

Forest Service Trail Project Proposed
The Deduct Pond Trail Link will connect the South Fork trail and the North Fork trail to eliminate Oregon Class II and III ATV’s use of Forest Service roads where a recent law has made that use illegal. Brian submitted comments questioning how this may increase motorized trail use and potentially increase sediment impacts to the South Fork.

The Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership
The Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership has been established, authorized by Washington state and member selected. At their next meeting they will finish procedural things and then can move on to more policy making objectives. Judith Johnson proposed that Brian be her alternate as a resident of Walla Walla County. Brian is interested in seeing that bypass water is protected but also that aquifer recharge projects will have enough water in the winter to be effective. Right now Cathy Shafer is seeing if at-large positions, such as Judith’s, can choose their own alternate.

Brian will work with Cathy to see if the Partnership to come down and meet with our Council to work on bi state issues. There needs to be a link between the two councils. There are a lot of commonalities but they have a more authorities because of the legislation that mandates they solve some politically sensitive issues.

Their meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month. The next meeting is September 2nd.

Brian and Bob received an invitation to serve on the water resource panel and policy advisory group. They need to reply by September 18th. The council advised Brian to inform Cathy that they will participate.

Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program
The WWBWC may become a program partner on this project—replacing the Alliance. The BPA funded the program to get more water into the river through water transactions. The Alliance was never able to actualize the project objective. Kevin recommended that WWBWC and the Partnership be allowed to
move QLE status over to them in order for the process to continue. There are two entities that can already do this—one on each side of the border but Kevin feels it important that it be basin wide.

Just because there would be the capacity to implement the program doesn’t mean it would be exercised. It merely means we would have the ability. John feels we need more information. The Council can see how it would compliment what we try to do across state lines. The Tribes would need to be involved with this conversation. CTUIR have the contract with Fresh Water Trust (formerly Oregon Water Trust). Brian is intrigued by the idea of bi-state water transactions and funding for local capacity.

**ODOT Mitigation Funds**
There is $5,000 available for WWBWC project funding as Tollgate construction mitigation. For three years the Council has been waiting for final confirmation of these funds. Now that we have them the Council needs to work with ODOT to decide the best project to use the funds. Options include, design for the levee setback on Lampson, M-F levee improvement designs, aquifer recharge, and wetlands enhancement.

**Announcements**
The OWEB Grant deadline is October 19th. Reviews by the WWBWC will occur on September 21st.

CTUIR & WWCC are partnering for the Return to the River Celebration on August 29th at WWCC. WWBWC will have a booth at the event.

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:25.**