PRESENT


Staff: Troy Baker, Bob Chicken, Wendy Harris, Will Lewis, Nella Parks, Steven Patten, Chris Sheets and Brian Wolcott.

Guests: Jon Brough, Larry Boe, Judith Johnson

The meeting was called to order by John Zerba at 7:03.

Minutes from the September 21st, 2009 meeting were approved as submitted.

Staffing update
Chris Sheets was introduced as the new Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant for the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council Staff.

Oregon Solutions Team and The Milton-Freewater Levee Update
The Oregon Solutions Team had been given the task of identifying priorities and the timelines for assessment, designs, permitting and funding for short term repair goals, floodplain insurance mapping, finding an agreement on the vegetation dilemma and a sustainable long term solutions to the levee problem. The team has held two meetings already and there is another scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, 2009. One topic will be to try to find an acceptable map for use by FEMA. The current map needs to be improved. Also, the team is looking into ways to improve the probability of a bond measure passing in a local election. These funds are needed to match any outside sources that may be able to be acquired for design, construction, and inspections. It has been two years since the last inspection. Anderson Perry is scheduled to do the next inspection during summer 2010. Brian will keep the Council updated as things develop.

Oregon Water Resources Strategy
The Oregon Water Resources Department has been directed by state legislature to develop a statewide water plan that will look at the surface and ground water needs and trends in dropping levels in the rivers and aquifers across the state. They are looking for comments on their planning strategy. Brian has an email with a link that will take you directly to a place to provide feedback. Brian is concerned that the Umatilla valley has gotten funds but there won’t be any allotted to our basin. We have already seen dried up hand dug wells and are working on ways to stop the decline in groundwater. OWRD is looking at both at rivers and aquifers for water quality and water quantity issues. There is some anxiety that this will lead to a new structure of water rights but Brian is hearing that this is not the intent of Water Resources Department. Brian said that Tony Justus and/or Mike Ladd could be asked to come to one of the Council meetings and explain the intent of the OWRD Planning, if the Council is interested. The members expressed a desire to have one of them come to discuss the situation. Brian will schedule them to attend an upcoming meeting.

Measure 66 Renewal
The Measure 66 Renewal is a voter initiative that dedicates 7.5% of Oregon Lottery proceeds to watershed restoration. It was passed in 1998 and sunsets in 2014. There is a new ballot initiative being developed to renew that funding. The Oregon Network of Watershed Councils has been assisting with this initiative. Brian has a copy of the initial language. They will be making some changes. They are not getting signatures of support yet. They are trying to make sure there is no confusion with local organizations doing any enforcement actions. That needs to clearly be a state agency activity.
**Riparian Changes Over Time Related to Land Use**

Nella Parks presented on the work she has been doing regarding riparian changes over time related to land use along portions of the Walla Walla River, Touchet River and Mill Creek. The purpose of the study was to understand the interactions between riparian vegetation and land use in the basin. The goal is to survey land use and link it to the presence/absence of riparian trees over time on the three basin rivers. Nella looked to answer three major questions with her study. First, what is the current extent of riparian trees in the basin? Second, has land use affected the extent of riparian trees and how? Third, what might future riparian conditions be given the current trends. Nella’s research found that along the Walla Walla River, agriculture has decreased since 1939, developed land has slightly increased and riparian has increased significantly. Along Mill Creek agriculture has held steady, development has increased slightly and riparian has remained fairly steady. Agriculture has decreased along the Touchet while development and the amount of riparian have increased. Possible explanations for these results may be a decreased river area due to flood control and channel narrowing, the ability for riparian to establish itself on farmland no longer being used, and that the topography limits land use. Nella believes this data will be helpful in planning land use and resource management, protecting existing stands of riparian trees and to better focus restoration efforts in the basin.

**Walla Walla River Fisheries and Hydrology Geodatabase**

Troy Baker presented the work he has been doing creating the Walla Walla River Fisheries and Hydrology Geodatabase.

The goals of the project are to:
- Develop a geodatabase for the Walla Walla Basin
- Refine and improve geospatial data for hydrology
- Develop spatial and temporal GIS data models for hydrology/hydrogeology and fisheries
- Generate numerical and visualization outputs

With the output created by this project, the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council will be able to better provide:
- Education and outreach on fisheries program development and the Walla Walla Basin collaborative effort
- Fish-hydro integration on spatial/temporal analysis as it pertains to life histories, passage, surface flow, and groundwater conditions.

Troy demonstrated the current capabilities of the Geodatabase. The next steps will be to apply fish life cycle layers. He will also coordinate with Juniper GIS to create additional analysis output maps to refine symbology for the model data and interactions between fish/flow/temperature. Troy will also integrate OSU water table layers to analyze the interactions with the surface and temperature models. He will complete the animations and output maps in December.

Ron Brown would like to see the data for the area between the diversion and tumulum bridge. He thinks that by leaving more water in the river during the hot times it draws the fish in to waters that are too hot for them. The questions was raised that if flow increases is there a significantly decrease in temperature? Troy said that he would need to perform tests but it would require pumps being off for a day in order to run the test.

**Announcements**
- Network of Oregon Watershed Council Conference is October 27-30 in Klamath Falls
- Water and Land Use in the Pacific Northwest Conference is November 4-6 in Stevenson, Washington
- The Milton-Freewater levee meeting is on Tuesday, October 20th

**Meeting was adjourned at 8:30**