Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council  
June 20, 2011  
Draft Meeting Minutes

Present:  

Staff: Brian Wolcott, Rick Henry, Wendy Harris, Steven Patten, Will Lewis and Bob Chicken.

Guests: Chris Marks, Melissa Jenck, Shannon Hoehna and John Halverson.

Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by John Zerba.

May 16, 2011 council meeting minutes were approved.

STELLAR UPDATE – Bob Chicken reported that the 2011 Ferndale Watershed Field Day was a success and thanked the many volunteers that contributed their efforts to put on the event. An assessment was given to the 4th grade students before and after the event in an effort to gage the benefits of the day-long event. Prior to the field day the students averaged 19% correct on the assessment. After attending the different stations the students averaged 41%. While the numbers are still not where Bob would like them to be, it does show that there is a definite benefit to the program. The day’s events were captured on a video produced by 2010 Mac-Hi graduate Cody Clark. The video is available to view on the WWBWC website.

The STELLAR project was awarded $12,000 by the Meyer Memorial Trust but was declined a $2,000 grant request to the Wal-Mart Foundation.

The STELLAR Summer Science Camp will be taking place July 13-18. Trisha Shell is co-directing the camp this year with Bob. Rob Shell and Kathryn Gray are also volunteering their time for the event.

Bob expressed his appreciation to Jolene Norton for volunteering her time with the Ferndale After School Science Club this past winter and spring. With her assistance the program was able to enroll more students and have better assistance and supervision of the students during hands-on projects. Bob also thanked Jon Brough for recruiting Jolene for the program.

NRCS EQIP Program – Shannon Hoehna, Melissa Jenck and John Halverson from NRCS came to the meeting to discuss the EQIP program. The program’s current focus is air quality. The goal is to encourage farmers to convert from smudge pots to wind machines for frost control. Their next focus will be trying to get farmers to use chipping as opposed to burning.

In the past the EQIP program has not focused on any one environmental issue; however, they are taking a new approach. They feel they will be able to do a more comprehensive job if they focus on one environmental concern at a time.
As always, the NRCS is looking for more participants for their programs.

**Milton-Freewater Levee Update** – Permits have been submitted for Levee repairs at Nursery Bridge, below Nursery Bridge, at Couse Creek Bridge, and for work on culverts. GeoEngineers completed the hydraulics analysis and have identified a flood capacity issue with the levee at the 15th Avenue bridge. The bridge does not meet current FEMA standards for passing flood flows and providing the necessary freeboard. Options to correct this issue are currently being discussed.

The photos taken during the LIDAR flight are being used to start the remapping process with FEMA. The goal is to use the new mapping to get the levee back into the levee management plan.

Progress has been made on reaching consensus on a levee vegetation plan.

Permitting is causing delays for projects that were scheduled to take place this year. There is a possibility that at least some of the work could be completed this year. Representative Wyden’s Office is working to get the lower insurance rates extended and towards resolving the issues with permitting.

**Walla Walla River Flow Enhancement Feasibility Study Discussion** – CTUIR, the sponsors of this Corps of Engineers project met with members of the community to discuss methods to reduce the costs of the project. A workshop is scheduled for Friday of this week to work on the details of cost cutting ideas. The outcomes from these meetings will be given to CHM2 Hill for their analysis. The forum will be opened up later for further discussion.

Brian questioned whether Fruitvale Water User’s Association’s seven cfs was factored into the Corps’ numbers. It was decided that it had been lumped into the total.

**Umatilla County Development Code Amendments** – At the June 14th meeting, the question of who is responsible for decommissioning the windmills was discussed. Currently, a letter of credit is provided to ensure that the wind companies are responsible for the clean-up, but a surety bond is much more in line with what should be required. The letter of credit is not going to have as much guaranteed accountability attached to it as a bond; especially if wind companies disappear should technology change, leases run out, etc.

The Umatilla County Board of Commissioners are evaluating proposed Development Code amendments developed by the Planning Commission. These refer to industrial development of wind power generation facilities, and how to reduce impacts to the county’s residents and resources, as these types of projects are reviewed for potential permitting. There will be a key meeting on June 28th at 9:00 a.m. in the Justice Center in Pendleton that will include discussion and input on new standards developed to protect the Upper Walla Walla Watershed from commercial wind development impacts. Community input on this topic will assist the Commissioners in reaching an informed decision. For more information on the topic and to see the proposed Development Code changes, go to the following link at the County website: [http://www.co.umatilla.or.us/planning/wind_energy.html](http://www.co.umatilla.or.us/planning/wind_energy.html). It was decided that Brian will review
the policies, make suggested changes, send out to the Board for comments and approval and then forward a letter with proposed policy changes to the Commissioners. The Blue Mountain Alliance is working toward requesting a moratorium on wind projects until the language for the policies is sorted out.

**WWBWC Committee Work** – The Financial Committee met and reviewed the updated Fiscal Procedures. The Committee recommended to the Board that the Policies be adopted. Ralph Perkins moved that the Board adopt the Policies, Steve Irving seconded. The Board unanimously adopted the Fiscal Procedures.

**Announcements:**

Next Meeting: July 18th, 2011 at the Rotary Room, Milton-Freewater Community Building, 5th Ave. and Ward St, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:10 p.m.