Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council  
November 19, 2012 Meeting Minutes

Present:  

Staff: Brian Wolcott, Steven Patten, Chris Sheets, and Graham Banks.  

Guests: Kevin Lindsey, Jon Brough, Bob Lewis, Teresa Kilmer and Chris Marks.

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

October 15, 2012 council meeting minutes approved as submitted.

Zell Diversion Fish Passage Project update- Some rock has been placed and new culvert put in to protect the ditch from flooding. Trying to get in a head gate before the river flows go up. Once all of the permits are approved a more permanent structure will be constructed. Two more grants have been submitted for this project. It looks like there will be some cost to the landowners for the point of diversion change. There have been discussions with WRD about this.

Shallow aquifer recharge (SAR) site development discussion regarding Little Walla Walla and Eastside sites – Two more sites are planned for construction this winter, both on Hudson Bay, but we would really like to focus on developing some sites closer to the river, preferably including the Eastside area. There are many landowners that are agreeable. Getting water to these sites is the biggest obstacle. Some ideas: WWRID would have to change to an improvement district, or Hudson Bay runs recharge water in WWRID ditches, neither of which came without criticism. Another idea is to work on getting the Walla Walla RAC to change the Basin Rules to count storage and recharge as a new beneficial use. Clark commented that this seemed to be a good suggestion to move forward with. It would be a good tool to have available. John noted that maybe there could be some type of wording added that would satisfy the tribes so that we could go ahead with recharge projects unless things change and the water is no longer available. As it stands now with the SAR limited licenses that we have, we are only guaranteed 5 years of water at sites that have been constructed. It was suggested that Brian draft a letter to the tribes explaining what we would like to do and relating all the benefits to the river. Chris Marks reported that the tribes are not interested in a water rights settlement and a no action report is probably coming down the line, but their foundational process is to keep flows in the river. Ron noted that he would like to continue to see the west side recharge. The bi-state instream flow protection problem was brought up. Chris Marks stated that the tribes as a council have voiced their concerns to WDOE regarding a need for coordination between the two states. After all the discussion, the conclusion was that an effort was needed to change the basin rules and also continued effort to get the tribes on board with water for SAR will be the main goals at this point.
Walla Walla Action Plan Development – Brian reported that we need to update our Strategic Action Plan. We need to confirm the types of projects we will be working on over the next few years. Brian would like help setting up a prioritization matrix. This will assist with developing a scope of work for in stream projects, BPA funded projects, and will satisfy the new OWEB funding requirements. A list of project types will be developed and reviewed with project partners and the WWBWC board.

Wind Power Transmission Line update- A new transmission line is being proposed for the new Chopin wind power farm approved to be constructed. The county denied the transmission line application, saying they should tie into one of the nearby existing transmission lines, but this decision was overturned on the state level. The county will likely have to issue a permit with a watershed protection plan conditions and erosion control condition. County has asked that the Watershed Council help review the wind company’s plan. It was agreed on by the board that we would assist the county.

Announcements – The Walla Walla Critical Low Flow Plan meeting – November 26, 1:00-4:00

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m

Next Meeting: December 17 at the Rotary Room, Milton-Freewater Community Building, 5th Ave. and Ward St, 7:00-8:30 p.m.