Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council  
January 21, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Present:

Staff: Brian Wolcott, Wendy Harris, Troy Baker, Steven Patten, Chris Sheets, and Graham Banks.

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

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

Minutes from the November 19, 2012 and December 17, 2012 board meeting were approved as written.

Walla Walla Action Plan Development – Brian reviewed the Action Plan with board members and noted the changes made from comments at the last meeting. It was brought to attention that there was an extra “and” under Restoration. Brian explained that this Action Plan is going to be a necessary tool that our funders are going to require, if they don’t already do so. Under “Priorities” Brian explained that these were in no particular order. It was suggested to add “including temperature and quantity” to improve water quality. As Brian explained, many times projects are steered by funders and sometimes projects are site specific, but we need to have a list of our general priorities. There is opportunity to submit project funding requests to OWEB in April and a few of the projects we may want to consider submitting for are: joining forces with the tribes on the Kentch property for______, Nursery bridge grade control, lower Walla Walla between Stateline and north of Walla Walla District fish barriers. It was also noted that our October submissions to OWEB made it through the first round of review.

Milton Freewater Levee Update – There has been discussion with FEMA about accepting the remapping with the work that has been done to the levee. If they are not receptive, we may need to consider contacting our legislators. 15th Avenue bridge is done except for the guardrail and Troy is working on getting the flow meter back in place.

Feasibility Study – Chris Marks reported that the feasibility study has officially been set aside with a “No Action Report”. The tribes are still entertaining the idea of settlement and this in no way changes the tribes commitment to flows and their vision for the Walla Walla River. Brian asked Chris if he knew if the 40 million that was committed by Washington will be available for projects on a smaller scale. Chris said he would look into it, as he did not know.

A local approach to the Columbia water exchange project – Ray Williams spoke on the project he and others have been looking at for a water exchange, similar to the tribes aforementioned feasibility study, but on a smaller scale and without the Corps of Engineers
involvement. This project would be from the Columbia River at Wallula to the Gardena system as phase I of this project, and phase II would move on to the Hudson Bay system East of Umapine. The group looking at this possibility, (which consists of the Gardena water district and Hudson Bay) has hired IRZ to engineer plans for the first phase at a cost of $20K. They are looking at several different ways in which to get funding for this project, one being a possible bi-state bond.

Aquifer Recharge Program Update- Steven got word from the Water Resource Department that we should have our Limited License by mid-February barring any hiccups. We should be able to start construction in March on the 2 sites. He would also like to get recharge sites going at Barrett and NW Umapine. We have been working with the Conservation District on the Stiller Pond site, but he will be meeting with WDOE to look for alternatives to the water testing that has been done in the past as it would run about $30k per year.

OWRD Feasibility Study Grant Program for water conservation, reuse, or storage- Brian asked the board if they would be interested in him submitting a proposal for this money. Some ideas that he mentioned using the money for were: Eastside water storage, implementing the next phase of our recharge projects, smaller site surface storage, on farm water storage, upland ponds or even the phase II of the water exchange Ray and others are working on (design money). Brian asked the board for their ideas and input. Brian will put together a list of possible projects for the next meeting and welcomed any ideas the board may have.

Announcements – Larry asked for support for a public hearing to be held February 6th at the county courthouse regarding him being able to get a road to access his cabin up South Fork.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:37 p.m

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