Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council
April 15, 2013
Project Committee Meeting Minutes

Present:
Council Members: Kat Brigham, Ed Chesnut, Stuart Durfee, Steve Irving, Clark Lampson, Malcolm Millar, Vern Rodighiero, Ralph Perkins, Larry Widner, Ray Williams, Jon Brough, Teresa Kilmer, Kevin Lindsey, Sue Greer, Chris Marks, David Lee.

Staff: Brian Wolcott, Steven Patten, Wendy Harris, Lyndsi Thomas, Graham Banks, Troy Baker, Will Lewis.

Regular Meeting was called to order at 7:00 by Vern Rodighiero.

Minutes from the March 18, 2013 board meeting were approved as written.

**OWEB project proposals due April 22**

The WWBWC Project Committee met prior to the council meeting to review three OWEB grant proposals for three projects; Shallow Aquifer Recharge Program, Little Walla Walla River Restoration, and the Bolen Kelly Designs. The Shallow Aquifer Recharge Program grant application is a proposal asking OWEB for $342,428 in funding for recharge projects in Oregon. The proposal asks for $291,644 in capital funds and $50,784 for effectiveness monitoring. Five aquifer recharge sites will be funded with these dollars. Three dual-purpose bulges will be constructed in the Fruitvale Water User’s Association’s district; one infiltration gallery will be installed off of the lower West Little Walla Walla; and one site will be located near the end of the Milton pipeline. The Little Walla Walla River Restoration proposal requests $54,451 in OWEB funding to implement actions prioritized in the West Little Walla Walla River Assessment and provide a more detailed action plan for the East Little Walla Walla River. Specific objectives of the proposal are to prioritize barriers, identify land owners that agree to barrier removal, design and implement solutions for passage barriers, locate/screen unscreened diversions, identify riparian areas in need of restoration and land owner willingness, provide riparian planting and fencing, and control invasive weed growth. The Bolen Kelly Habitat Design is an OWEB proposal in the amount of $77,000 that would fund designs needed to develop a habitat improvement project along a 3/4 mile reach, referred to as the Bolen Kelly reach, of the upper Walla Walla River. Landowners on both sides of the river are interested in a project that will create better instream habitat, improve the riparian area, create meanders and side channels, and improve bank stability. The plan is to complete designs for the project and then apply for restoration funds in a year to begin project construction.

Teresa Kilmer raised concerns regarding the Little Walla Walla River Restoration proposal. Her concern is steelhead will either become stranded during low flows or those farmers located lower in the system will end up with a situation where they are on the hook for either a steelhead being stranded or creating an inhospitable environment for the fish once they have already been re-established. Brian pointed out that we need to be proactive and take care of the fish passage issues before there is an enforcement action and individual landowners are forced to pay the
costs to rectify the situation. The discussion will come up during permitting and it can then be addressed.

The council unanimously approved all three proposals with the exceptions of the Little Walla Walla River Restoration. It was approved by a majority vote with Malcolm Millar voting against its approval.

**Levee Update**
Updated flood maps have been sent to FEMA for their review. Most levee repairs are completed. Nursery Bridge Grade Control Design work is planned to start this spring. The Tribal Habitat Program and Tribal Fish Passage Program have their BPA budgets finalized and will be contributing $65,000 toward the roughened channels below Nursery Bridger grade control structure. There was discussion at the last MFWCD meeting for them to put $35,000 of match funds toward this project. This will draw the channel toward the center and provide stabilization to the levee and will mean less work that will need to be done in the future. Jon Brough stated that he and HBDIC want to be directly involved in the design since it will affect their gauge station.

**Oregon Water Legislation** – Two Senate Bills, SB839 and SB846 have been written that would establish water development funding programs. SB839 establishes a statewide water supply development funding program. SB846 is specific to Northeast Oregon and may include project funding for projects in the Walla Walla Basin. The State of Oregon completed a water management plan for the state. Part of that plan was to designate money for irrigation efficiency, river water storage, groundwater storage. The frame work for the plan has been set up, but there still is a big question about where the money will come from.

**Sick Leave Bank** – Wendy has developed draft language to amend our WWBWC personnel handbook describing how a staff sick leave bank will be operated. Wendy has been getting feedback from the Personnel Committee. The committee would like contributions tied to each employee so that when the employee leaves the liability will leave the books and the donated sick leave will be removed from the bank. Wendy will make the requested modifications and submit to committee for approval.

**Announcements**
CTUIR Walla Walla Salmon Hatchery public input meeting is scheduled for April 16th, 6:00-8:00 PM, at the Milton-Freewater Community Building

Stellar Field Day will be May 2nd at Harris Park.

Kat announced that NOAA and OWRD would like to come out here and find out more about what is going on in the Walla Walla River Basin. They are pleased at what is going on but they would like to tour the basin some time, possibly May.

Meeting Adjourned at 7:50 p.m
Next Meeting: March 18th at the Rotary Room, Milton-Freewater Community Building, 5th Ave. and Ward St, 7:00-8:30 p.m.