

DRAFT SUMMARY OF 2024 BAC PRIORITIES

Prepared for February 28, 2024 BAC Meeting

Background

For the first Basin Advisory Committee meeting of 2024, discussion was focused on sharing and discussing BAC member priorities for the year and beyond. The key themes from the January 24 BAC discussion are summarized below (in no particular order):

- **Make progress and educate on the Bi-State Flow Study:** Continue to work toward a preferred alternative. Continue regular workgroup meetings. Educate the broader community on objectives of the Bi-State Flow Study and what it means for different stakeholders in the Basin.
- **Increase WW 2050 outreach and education:** Increase awareness of Walla Walla 2050 strategies by implementing community lead outreach.
- **Discuss winter water use:** Convene a discussion around the amount of physically and legally available water in the basin and discuss the variety of proposed and current uses of winter water including: aquifer storage and recovery, managed aquifer recharge, storage as part of a future anchor project, irrigation uses etc.
- **Develop an integrated plan for the Basin's two distributary systems:** Little Walla Walla River system and Mill Yellowhawk Cottonwood distributary system. The distributary systems are extremely important, and home to the much of the Basin's population. Many people expressed interest in these small streams at the open house. An integrated plan should address riparian, floodplain, irrigation, aquifer recharge and land use laws.
- **Focus on near-term streamflow restoration:** Given low snowpack in our current water year and an expected return of Spring Chinook in 2025, implementation of flow enhancement is needed in 2024 and 2025 to boost instream flows. Near-term instream flow enhancement could include; water right leasing, pulse flows, enforcement of developed water in accordance with RCW 90.90.120.
- **Reconsider some of the Tier 2 and 3 Strategies:** Revisit the list of Tier 2 and strategies and discuss any to be considered for OCR funding. There is particular interest in water conservation, piping, and irrigation efficiency work.
- **Clarify Flow Targets:** Request clarity on the use of existing flow targets from the Bi-State Flow Study and 2013 Stillwater Study.

DRAFT Tri-Sovereign Priorities

TRI-SOVEREIGN DRAFT PRIORITIES 2024-2025	
Major Reports/Studies & Legislation	Bi-State Co-Management
Advance Bi-State Flow Study	Finalize Tri -Sovereign MOU
Continue Progress USGS Study	Implement Developed Water Concept from RCW 90.90.120
Move forward on US Bureau of Reclamation Basin Study	Complete Stateline Basalt Aquifer Characterization
Pass OR Walla Walla Basin Legislation SB 1567 (companion to WA legislation)	Implementation of the 2050 Plan
Draft & Complete WA Legislative Report	Develop Biennial Budget Project List for Potential OCR Funding
Stakeholder Engagement	Greater Awareness & Action During Drought
Increase Federal Agency Participation	Complete Phase 2 Report- Implementation Details for Tier 1 Strategies
Support agricultural BAC interests with coordination outside of meetings	Formalize Temporary Winter Water Agreement
New & Updated Communication Materials (Website, storymap, handouts)	Allocate Leftover Partnership Money
Continue Small Group BAC-Tri-Sov Meetings	Evaluate Current Ecology tools (Metering Database etc.)
Consider Restructure of Working Groups as needed	Local 2050 Advocacy Formation for Future Federal Legislative Request
Increase County Engagement	Instream Flows Secured for Tribal Fisheries

WW2050 Plan Tier 1 Priorities

WW 2050 Strategic Plan Tier 1 Strategies

Floodplains, Habitat & Fish Passage	1.01	Reconnect floodplain and restore channel complexity Basin wide to reduce flood risk and improve habitat
	1.06	Improve fish passage and habitat conditions in weired and concrete channel sections of flood control project in Mill Creek
	1.07	Restore and protect riparian habitat along tributaries, small streams, and the Walla Walla River Basin wide
	1.09	Protect and improve fish passage at Nursery Bridge and implement levee setback projects upstream and downstream of Milton Freewater
	1.12	Improve flow and timing of fish passage through the Hofer Dam fishway
	1.19	Improve fish passage at Gose Street long term
	1.23	Improve fish passage at Bennington Diversion Dam
Monitoring and Metering	1.1	Develop an overarching monitoring strategy and adaptive management plan for fish, habitat, and water to inform actions and evaluate effectiveness
	1.15	Expand and fund streamflow gages throughout the Basin
	1.2	Improve agricultural irrigation water use metering and reporting programs in WA and OR by installing telemetry and improving data use by agencies and water users
Water Policy and Management	1.11	Address legal implications of Bi-State surface water management and protection of instream flow across the state border and protection of instream flow within States
	1.14	Improve coordination and response to drought management Basin-wide
	1.16	Increase coordination and enforcement of floodplain and riparian regulations and management between Counties and State water management entities
	1.21	Additional Bi-State coordination on groundwater regulation
Streamflows, Groundwater and Water Supply	1.02	Support the ongoing analyses of the Bi-State Flow Study and work toward a recommendation on implementation of the preferred alternative
	1.03	Direct additional winter flow down the Little Walla Walla River to support alluvial aquifer recharge and stream function
	1.08	Decrease surface water diversions or substitute for basalt wells during low flow periods
	1.04	Water rights acquisitions (short-term, long-term, and split season) to restore streamflows
	1.05	Improve and expand managed aquifer recharge (MAR)
	1.13	Expand and support Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) to maintain groundwater quality and capacity
Water Quality	1.17	Increase infiltration of stormwater rather than discharge to surface water bodies and improve coordination and management
	1.18	Upgrade Dayton wastewater treatment plant to meet Ecology requirements and watershed community environmental goals
	1.22	Implement conservation tillage and soil erosion BMPs to decrease nonpoint source pollution