

# WALLA WALLA BASIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BAC) MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, January 25, 2023

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Water & Environment Center at WWCC | WebEx

Time*	Agenda Item (Action items are marked with "I")	Reference Materials	Presenter(s)
1:00 (10 mins)	<b>Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome and opening remarks</li> <li>Introductions</li> <li>Review agenda</li> </ul>	Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Anton Chiono, CTUIR, on behalf of Tri-Sovereigns</li> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul>
1:10* (15 mins)	<b>Walla Walla Legislation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on status</li> <li>How BAC members can support legislation</li> <li>BAC Member Questions/Discussion</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Melissa Downes, ECY</li> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> <li>BAC Members</li> </ul>
1:25* (40 mins)	<b>Monitoring and Metering</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Briefing on consultant scoping memo</li> <li>Update on streamflow, habitat, fish indicators and metrics</li> <li>BAC Member Questions/Discussion</li> </ul>	Scoping memo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>David Pilz, AMP Insights</li> <li>Steve Martin, WDFW</li> <li>BAC Members</li> </ul>
2:05* (30 mins)	<b>USBR Basin Study and Integration Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview new study and next steps</li> <li>BAC Member Questions/Discussion</li> </ul>	Fact Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Melissa Downes, ECY</li> <li>Rebekah Triolo, USBR</li> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul>
<i>There will be a 10-minute BREAK around 2:35</i>			
2:45* (45 mins)	<b>BAC Issues and Tasks in 2023</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review and discuss draft list of Tri-Sovereign, BAC and Work Group issues and tasks</li> </ul>	Draft 2023 Issues and Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> <li>BAC Members</li> </ul>
3:15* (30 mins)	<b>Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Conference in May</li> <li>Draft Communications Strategy/Feb. Workshop</li> <li>WA Governor's Budget Update</li> <li>Project and funding updates from BAC members</li> <li>Updates from each Working Group</li> <li>Upcoming Meeting Dates</li> <li>Future agenda or field trip requests</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nick Velluzzi, WWCC</li> <li>Brook Beeler/Chris Kowitz</li> <li>Melissa Downes, ECY</li> <li>Facilitation Team</li> <li>BAC Members</li> </ul>
3:45* (10 mins)	<b>Public Comment</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul>
3:55* (5 mins)	<b>Closing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next Steps</li> <li>Closing comments</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amanda Cronin, Project Manager</li> <li>Chris Kowitz, OWRD, for Tri-Sovereigns</li> </ul>
4:00*	<b>Adjourn</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul>



## Opening Remarks

Anton Chiono (CTUIR) welcomed everyone on behalf of the Tri-Sovereigns and noted that we're at an exciting stage – legislation is moving through both Washington and Oregon to manage water in the Walla Walla watershed, and the US Bureau of Reclamation is joining the Walla Walla effort through the new Basin Study.

Susan Gulick reviewed the agenda and led roll call. Attendees are listed in **Appendix A. Attendees**.

## Walla Walla Legislation

- Melissa Downes (Ecology) shared an update on the Washington legislation (HB 1322/SB 5384). The Governor's Office gave the green light for the legislation to be sponsored by Ecology. So far, there has been one hearing for the bill in the House Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee. Five entities testified (Ecology, OWRD, CTUIR, WDFW, and Washington Water Trust) and 18 people signed in support. There was no one in opposition, which is incredibly unusual for a water bill. Melissa thanked everyone for their support and groundwork.
- BAC members asked if there was any need for people to go to Olympia and speak with legislators in person?
  - Tom Tebb and Dave Christensen have been doing in-person visits, so BAC members are encouraged to support via letters of support, calling their legislators, and testifying and/or showing support in committee hearings (which can be done virtually).
- Chris Kowitz (OWRD) announced that OWRD is currently working with Oregon officials on a legislative concept that would mirror the Washington legislation (with the exception of some details that are specific to Ecology). If it becomes a bill, Oregon would appreciate the BAC's support through letters of support and providing testimony.

## Monitoring and Metering

- Amanda Cronin (Project Manager, AMP Insights) introduced the technical scoping memos, which are focused on Tier 1 Strategies from the Walla Walla 2050 Plan. In this meeting, we are discussing the Monitoring and Metering Memo.

### Monitoring and Metering Memo Overview (David Pilz, AMP Insights)

- The Strategic Plan identified 60 total strategies but prioritized 23 of those as Tier 1 priorities. We've grouped the Tier 1 strategies into five groups and are drafting memos for each group.
- The memos synthesize current studies and reports in the Basin to review progress to date, and then flesh out on-the-ground actions, funding sources, and lead entities for the strategies as a roadmap to guide implementation.
- The Monitoring and Metering strategies include 1.1 (develop a monitoring integrated strategy), 1.15 (expand streamflow gauges), and 1.2 (improve water use metering infrastructure).
- **Strategy 1.1:**
  - While there is lots of monitoring in the basin, we want to enhance everything that's happening.
  - Need to narrow down a set of indicators for key parameters we're looking for in the basin. These indicators will help us communicate how the health of the watershed is progressing.
  - Need to develop an accessible online platform/communication tool.
- **Strategy 1.15:**
  - Current gauge network is not sufficient to meet our goals. We need both new gauges and rehabilitation of existing gauges to ensure we have the infrastructure, and the accuracy/precision, that we need.
  - Currently looking at list of gauge sites. Need to secure funding, install gauges, and monitor flows.
- **Strategy 1.2**
  - To be efficient and productive, irrigators need data about what water is in the streams, what they are taking/using, and how to move water around in irrigation districts.
  - OpenET is a potential method for verifying our data – actual consumptive use of irrigated crops
  - Need to inventory what meters are there, identify gaps, and then decide/prioritize *where* to deploy meters when we are ready to add meters!

## Discussion:

- BAC members recommended that the Monitoring and Metering Memo include CTUIR's proposed bi-state management plan for management and protection of Walla Walla 2050 project outcomes.
- BAC members emphasized the importance of not just gaining a better understanding, but also deciding how we will act on that information.

## Update on Streamflow, Habitat, and Fish Indicators (Steve Martin, WDFW)

- We want to leverage existing efforts. To do this, we need to track resource status (indicators and metrics) to inform future projects, communicate with the public, and guide adaptive management. You can't manage what you don't measure.
- **Streamflow:** Water temperature and stream flow are continuously monitored at (soon to be) 15 locations.
- **Fish:** Adult salmon and smolts are counted at multiple locations around the basin (through traps, PIT tagging, and PIT antennas).
- **Habitat:** Physical habitat is generally not measured at the watershed scale, so we need to develop a plan for this vital sign.
- Our vision is to have a few indicators (like streamflow, connectivity) that we monitor, and could guide adaptive management. Challenges include data gaps, limited human capacity to collect data, limited funding opportunities for monitoring, and the need for a central data "steward" for 2050 projects.

## USBR Basin Study

### USBR Basin Study Overview (Rebekah Triolo, USBR)

- Rebekah Triolo is the US Bureau of Reclamation Regional Basin Study Coordinator and will also be the Basin Study Manager. Rebekah acknowledged all the work that has already been completed in the Walla Walla Basin. Basin studies create mitigation and adaptation strategies that respond to current or future water supply and demand imbalances.
- Basin Studies do not provide recommendations, address the feasibility of any specific project, program, or plan, and do not represent a commitment for future federal funding. While Basin Studies do not provide recommendations, it does develop strategies to supply adequate water in the future and analyze the options identified.
- We are currently in the planning phase. We are creating a Memo of Agreement, which will include three living documents: the Plan of Study, the Technical Sufficiency Review Plan, and the Communication and Outreach Plan. Once the Memo of Agreement is signed, the study will have a three-year time frame.
- Rebekah reviewed several previous basin studies: Upper Deschutes Basin Study, Henry's Fork Basin Study, Hood River Basin Study, and Yakima Basin Study.

## Discussion:

- BAC members asked if there was a mechanism to incorporate new developments or work in the basin that occurs during the study's three years.
  - Rebekah answered that the USBR team discusses how best to incorporate forthcoming data.
- BAC members asked for clarification around the idea that basin studies do not address the feasibility of any programs or projects. Would we have to complete a feasibility study after the basin study? Additionally, what is USBR's process for analysis and implementation?
  - Rebekah commented that feasibility studies are a possibility, but not a requirement for projects to be completed after the Basin Study. USBR does not address feasibility in basin studies because that would require an act of Congress.
- BAC members asked if the study could take less than three years.
  - Rebekah noted that USBR's in-kind services has to happen within three years, but moving faster than three years is ok.

- BAC members shared that there is a lot of existing information and research in the Walla Walla Basin. It's critical that the Basin Study collects and streamlines all of this existing work, because we don't want to duplicate work we've already done, or delay needed projects.
- BAC members commented that the USBR Basin Study is distinct from the USGS Groundwater Basin Study, and we will need continue distinguishing between the two so to not confuse people.
- BAC members clarified that some of the information that comes out the USBR Basin Study might be useful information to secure funding from other sources. We may need Congressional approval for whatever comes out of the Bi-State Flow Study, so we need to align the Flow Study with the USBR Basin Study to ensure that we are prepared for those approval points.
  - BAC members discussed that, beyond Congressional approval, the Bi-State Flow Study's preferred alternative will require federal funding. USBR could also be pulled into our conversations about ownership and operation of an anchor project. Having done a Basin Study, USBR may be in a better position to be involved.

## BAC Issues and Tasks in 2023

- Susan introduced the Issues and Tasks List, and asked BAC members what the BAC should do this year.

### Discussion:

- BAC members suggested adding a task for the BAC to communicate, engage with, and inform elected officials (state and federal) about Walla Walla water management efforts and projects.
  - BAC members recommended hosting a tour with elected officials.
- Based on the Monitoring and Metering Memo, BAC members discussed the importance of and need to develop a unified set of metrics that can be applied across the Walla Walla 2050 priority projects. Members discussed the possibility of creating a monitoring plan that lines up our overarching goals with clear metrics. Having consistent metrics across projects will then help us measure success and create compelling stories to share during outreach and when applying for funding.
  - BAC members identified the need for a central database that stores all monitoring and metering data, so it is accessible. While the Monitoring and Metering Memo also identified this need, BAC members noted that there has not yet been a clear entity/volunteer who would own and maintain this database.
  - BAC members also commented that monitoring should be integrated within each project, and should be considered when applying for funding.
- One member requested regular BAC review of the timeline of and progress on all ongoing efforts/studies.
- Susan encouraged BAC members to send any remaining edits or comments on the Issues and Tasks List to the facilitation team via email.

## Updates

### General Updates

- Nick Velluzzi shared that the annual **Pacific Northwest Regional Economic Conference** (<http://pnrec.org/>) is going to be held in Walla Walla this spring, on May 8-11, 2023. They would like to host a panel about Walla Walla 2050 and water management work in the Basin. The panel is tentatively scheduled for May 10, from 8 – 10 AM. If people are interested in being on the panel, please contact Nick.
- Brook Beeler discussed the **Draft Communication Strategy** developed by the Tri-Sovereigns and announced that Ecology plans to host a public workshop in the spring to elevate awareness about the work we are all doing. Chris Kowitz shared that OWRD and Ecology also plan to host a public meeting for the USGS Groundwater Study at the end of February (February 28, 6-8 PM). We will discuss both workshops and the Draft Communication Strategy in the PFO meeting on February 1.
- Melissa Downes provided an update on the **WA Governor's Budget**. Ecology's Office of Columbia River requested an overall budget of \$49M, and the Governor's Budget reduced that by 11%, to \$43.85M. Based on this cut, the requested \$4.7M for Walla Walla would reduce to \$4.1M. The budget will ultimately be decided by the



legislature. It would be unusual for them to reduce the budget more than the Governor's recommendation, so this cut represents the largest reduction we will likely see.

- John Foltz shared additional updates from the **WA Governor's Budget**. For the Brian Abbot Fish Barrier Removal Board, the Governor's budget included \$48M, which would fund 2 out of 3 fish passage projects in Mill Creek. The salmon recovery regions were supported for an operating budget increase request. One of their priorities would be supporting Walla Walla.
- John Foltz announced that **Snake River Salmon Recovery Funding Board** just released an **RFP** for fish passage work. They will be awarding \$2.8M, and several projects from Walla Walla could move forward.
- Chris Kowitz added that Oregon does not have a Governor's budget yet, but they are expecting to not see any significant increase in staff funding or capacity.

## Funding Opportunities

- US Bureau of Reclamation – \$80M for Water Conservation and Water Management Projects. Cost share requirements would be between 25-50%. Applications are due March 28.
- NOAA Pacific Coast Salmon Recovery Fund – funding requests can be up to \$30M; for fisheries projects, effectiveness, baseline monitoring, and more. Applications are due March 6.
  - John Foltz noted that Washington applies for this fund as a state in coordination with the Tribes, so we don't need individual proposals.
- OWRD Water Project Grants and Loans program is currently open for applications. \$19M available, 25% cost share, available to states, tribes, or individuals. Applications are due April 26. More information here: <https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/FundingOpportunities/WaterProjectGrantAndLoans/Pages/default.aspx>.

## Project Updates

- Frank Nicholson shared National Fish and Wildlife brochures about Mill Creek work. He added that the City of Walla Walla got two USBR grants for ASR work, and two FEMA grants to study the watershed and make it more resilient to fire. Frank also shared that there are several open job positions at the City!
- John Foltz updated that the Tri-State Steelheaders won funding for Mill Creek Fish Passage at 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave, and will be working with City of Walla Walla Public Works. Federal transportation funding will also be supporting bridge replacement at 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.
- John Foltz shared three upcoming events:
  - Eastern WA Riparian Planting Symposium, on March 14, from 9:30 – 4 pm. Attendance is free.
  - Salmon Recovery Conference, on April 18-19. More information here: <https://rco.wa.gov/salmon-recovery/salmon-recovery-conference/>
  - Return to the River (hosted by Walla Walla Community College and CTUIR), on May 13.
- Gary James announced that CTUIR won more Pacific Coast Salmon funding, and will be passing some of that funding to Frank at the City of Walla Walla for work on Mill Creek instream flows. Additionally, CTUIR got a NOAA Fish Passage grant.
- Annie Byerley noted that the Conservation District put a floodplain restoration project out to bid.

## Working Group Updates:

- Bi-State Flow Study Workgroup is meeting on Thursday, January 26. We have a big agenda; all are welcome to attend.
- Implementation Workgroup will meet in February. Please send any agenda requests to Amanda and Nicole.
- PFO Workgroup will meet on February 1. We will discuss the Communication Strategy that Brook shared today, and the Outreach for Strategies that workgroup members have been developing.

## Upcoming Meetings:

- **BAC**
  - *No February BAC meeting*
  - Wednesday, March 22, 1 - 4 PM, Water and Environment Center
- **Bi-State Flow Study Working Group**
  - Thursday, January 26, 9 – 12 PM, Water and Environment Center

- PFO and Flow Study Working Group meetings will share the same meeting slot (fourth Thursday of the month, 9-11 AM) moving forward. The facilitation team will communicate which working group is meeting via email.
- **PFO Working Group**
  - Wednesday, February 1, 9 – 11 AM, Virtual via WebEx
- **Implementation Working Group**
  - Thursday, February 9, 1-3 PM, Virtual via WebEx
- BAC members asked if there is any way to consolidate meetings for Walla Walla, since there are currently so many. Can some working group content be moved up into BAC meetings?
  - Susan noted that the working groups include some attendees that are not BAC members, and they help refine key issues.

## Public Comment

*No comments.*

## Closing

BAC members celebrated and thanked Gary James for his 40+ years of work in the Walla Walla Basin!

Chris Kowitz thanked Gary on behalf of the Tri-Sovereigns. He commented that many pieces are coming together at the same time – USBR joining us as a federal partner, and there is legislation in process for both Oregon and Washington. It's exciting and overwhelming! He thanked everyone for their advocacy and support, and promised to keep the BAC updated on the Oregon legislation.

## Appendix A. Attendees

### WWBAC Members & Alternates

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Annie	Byerley	WA Agriculture
Anton	Chiono	CTUIR
Brook	Beeler	Ecology
Chris	Kowitz	OWRD
Cindy	Boen	USACE
Colleen	Fagan	NOAA NMFS
Frank	Nicholson	City of Walla Walla
Gary	James	CTUIR
Jack	Miller	Columbia County
Jerry	Norquist	Blue Mountain Land Trust
Jeff	Dengel	WDFW
John	Foltz	Snake River Salmon Recovery Board
Judith	Johnson	Kooskooskie Commons
Linda	Herbert	Blue Mountain Land Trust
Melissa	Downes	Ecology
Mike	Frederickson	Port of Walla Walla
Nick	Velluzzi	Walla Walla Community College
Ralph	Perkins	WWBWC
Sarah	Dymecki	Washington Water Trust
Steve	Martin	WDFW
Steven	Patten	City of Milton-Freewater
Taylor	McCroskey	ODFW

### WWBAC Members Not in Attendance

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Allie	Newhouse	Little River Group
Dan	Dorran	Umatilla County
Justin	Yeager	NOAA NMFS
Mark	Wagoner	Gardena Farms Irrigation District
Todd	Kimball	Walla Walla County
Travis	Trumbull	WWRID

**Attendees Continued on Next Page**

## Other Attendees

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Alle	Brown-Law	Cascadia Consulting Group
Amanda	Cronin	Amp Insights
Bill	Neve	Water Right Solutions
Chris	Beard	Ecology
Dan	Haller	Aspect Consulting
David	Haire	CTUIR
David	Pilz	AMP Insights
Emily	Tilden	WWBWC
Eric	Hartwig	Ecology
Gina	Hoff	USBR
Jaime	Short	Ecology
Jamie	Clark	WA DOH
Janna	Stevens	ODFW
John	Fazio	
John	Warinner	
Kelsey	Mach	Aspect Consulting
Luke	Martin	OWRD
Ray	Williams	Irrigated Farmer
Rebekah	Triolo	USBR
Scott	Tarbutton	Ecology
Stephanie	May	Ecology
Stuart	Crane	Yakama Nation
Susan	Gulick	Sound Resolutions
Teeny	McMunn	City of Dayton City Council
Tim	Poppleton	Ecology
Tim	Seymour	OWRD
Troy	Baker	WWBWC
Willow	Walker	