



## Strategic Plan Advisory Committee

March 24, 2021 Discussion Guide

### Strategy Prioritization Survey Results

#### Overview:

The Strategy Prioritization Survey gathered SPAC input on which strategies are the highest priorities to address water resource management challenges in the Walla Walla Basin. The survey is intended as a tool to help the SPAC make recommendations. The SPAC's role is to review the results and turn these into a strategic package of recommendations. During today's discussion and future meetings, the SPAC will be able to add and refine strategies to develop a strategic package of final recommendations.

All SPAC members completed the survey and results are summarized by strategy category below. It is important to note that the survey was designed to organize and summarize the SPAC members' priorities. As such, the summary information from the survey presented here should not be viewed or interpreted as a "result", but rather, as a starting point for discussion. The SPAC will now review the results and adjust as needed to reach consensus on a recommended package of priority strategies.

#### Methodology:

Prioritized strategies within a project type were summarized as follows:

- Initial results were weighted by interest group on the SPAC (e.g., a response from a single tribal interest carries the same weight as two responses from representatives of the federal government). We also looked at the unweighted results (where each person, rather than each interest, is weighted equally).
  - In most cases, the weighted results were nearly identical to the unweighted results.
  - There were two strategies that were prioritized into different tiers<sup>1</sup> when weighted.
- Strategies were "binned" into tiers using logical breakpoints in the results of the prioritization. Tiers were created where large breaks occurred between the number of responses.
- As mentioned previously, these "tiers" do not indicate how strategies should be prioritized, but rather they show natural breakpoints in the results for each project type to highlight "clusters" of strategies with relatively similar prioritization. This is intended as a starting point for SPAC discussion. SPAC may choose to reduce the number of tiers and/or move strategies to different tiers.
- SPAC members will provide initial feedback on the tiers during the meeting. Before the April meeting, the consulting team will do a deeper analysis of tiers to assess whether the combination of strategies add up to

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<sup>1</sup> Strategies affected by weighting vs unweighting:

Streamflow and Groundwater:

- "Protect saved water from new and completed irrigation conveyance efficiency projects instream". This is in top tier when each interest group receives one vote and in the second tier when each person receives one vote.

Floodplain and Habitat

- "Expand floodplain land or easement acquisitions to reduce flood risk and improve habitat". This is in top tier when each interest group receives one vote and in the second tier when each person receives one vote.

a strong strategic plan. This will include assessing things like timing, implementor, ease of implementation/barriers to implementation, coverage of issues, and geography.

**Discussion Questions:**

- Do the strategies that rise to the top look correct? What strategies should be considered for a different tier (either higher or lower)?
- What is missing? Where are there gaps?
- Do the prioritized strategies get us to the Desired Future Conditions?
  - If not, what else should be considered?

**Next Steps:**

**April SPAC Meeting**

- The Consulting Team will do further analysis of prioritized strategies to see if they add up to a strategic approach. The analysis will consider timing, implementor, ease of implementation/barriers to implementation, coverage of issues, and geography.
- The Consulting Team will bring a suggested package with some options for SPAC discussion and decisions on the package.
- During the April meeting, we will discuss if there are red flags. For example, are there any prioritized strategies that are not acceptable or are problematic to a SPAC member?

**May SPAC Meeting**

- The Consulting Team and Implementation WG will do final refinements to finalize SPAC’s recommended strategies prior to the meeting.
- SPAC will vote on final recommendations at the May SPAC meeting.

**Survey Results**

Additional information is available for each strategy in the [Strategy Tracking workbook](#). However, the numbering in the workbook does not match the numbering below.

**1. Water Quality**

Strat. #	Strategy
<b>Tier 1</b>	
<b>1a</b>	Conduct outreach to agricultural entities and provide tools to landowners around livestock BMPs and pesticide use
<b>1b</b>	Increase infiltration of stormwater rather than discharge to surface water bodies
<b>1c</b>	Implement conservation tillage and soil erosion BMPs to decrease nonpoint source pollution
<b>1d</b>	Incentivize hookup to City sewer systems in lieu of septic systems where feasible
<b>Tier 2</b>	
<b>1e</b>	Encourage Low Impact Development (LID) in urban areas and small towns
<b>1f</b>	Upgrade Dayton wastewater treatment plant to meet Ecology requirements and watershed community goals
<b>Tier 3</b>	
<b>1g</b>	Conduct outreach and provide financial assistance to implement urban lawn BMPs
<b>1h</b>	Implement erosion control on roadside cut banks
<b>1i</b>	Improve communication and resource sharing between entities managing stormwater

## 2. Streamflows & Groundwater

Strat. #	Strategy
<b>Tier 1</b>	
2a	Expand managed aquifer recharge (MAR)
<b>Tier 2</b>	
2b	Enhance upper watershed through retiming and infiltration projects
2c	Protect saved water from new and completed irrigation conveyance efficiency projects instream
2d	Substitute off-channel stored water for surface water diversions where possible
2e	Direct additional winter flow down the Little Walla Walla River to support alluvial aquifer recharge and stream function
2f	Decrease municipal surface water diversion or substitute for basalt wells during low flow periods
2g	Water rights acquisitions (short-term, long-term, and split season) to restore streamflows
<b>Tier 3</b>	
2h	Review WDFW diversion to Bennington Lake to ensure that streamflow is not impaired
2i	Restore flushing flows to Yellowhawk

## 3. Water Supply & Efficiency

Strat. #	Strategy
<b>Tier 1</b>	
3a	Bi-State Flow Study Anchor Projects <sup>2</sup>
3b	Improve on-farm irrigation application efficiency
<b>Tier 2</b>	
3c	Strategic piping of irrigation ditches
3d	Implement on-farm BMPs for water retention and efficiency
3e	Continued successful conservation by detecting and repairing municipal leaks
3f	Expand and support municipal ASR
3g	Develop detailed forest management plan for water supply in the upper Mill Creek Watershed
3h	Implement municipal water conservation strategies such as tiered water rates, cash for grass, toilet rebates, decreasing irrigated landscapes, and planting native species
<b>Tier 3</b>	
3i	Convert from higher demand water use crops to lower water demand crops
3j	Strategically plan to supply water to development outside city limits. Keep development small and compact in urban growth areas and develop associated incentives.
3k	Expand emergency municipal interties to improve reliability

<sup>2</sup> Note: The Bi-State Flow Study Anchor Projects were not included in the Strategy Prioritization Survey. We are not evaluating these projects as a part of this effort but will be included as a priority project. The Bi-State Flow Study and WWW2050 Plan are complementary efforts and the Strategic Plan will encompass both.

#### 4. Policy & Regulatory Actions

Strat. #	Strategy
<b>Tier 1</b>	
4a	Address legal implications of Bi-State surface water management and protection of instream flow across the state border
4b	Additional bi-state coordination on groundwater regulation
4c	Increase coordination and enforcement of floodplain and riparian regulations and management between Counties and State water management entities
<b>Tier 2</b>	
4d	Improve coordination and response to drought management Basin-wide
4e	Review existing exempt well mitigation program in WA; Consider expansion of mitigation program for other uses in OR and WA
4f	Develop local flood response plan including broad community outreach for emergency response procedures to better protect floodplain function and riparian health
<b>Tier 3</b>	
4g	Implement incentives to encourage rural developments to annex
4h	Implement Mill Creek GI action related to threshold of diversion to Bennington Lake
4i	Continue to support and enforce existing rules and regulations under Stormwater Management Plan and Critical Areas Ordinance

#### 5. Monitoring & Metering

Strat. #	Strategy
<b>Tier 1</b>	
5a	Expand and fund streamflow gages throughout the Basin
5b	Expand groundwater and hyporheic zone monitoring to show seasonal hydraulic connection to adjacent rivers and creeks
5c	Improve water use metering and reporting programs in WA and OR by installing telemetry and improving data use by agencies and water users
<b>Tier 2</b>	
5d	Develop an overarching monitoring strategy and adaptive management plan for each of the monitoring topics
5e	Conduct habitat status and trends monitoring
5f	Conduct fish status, trends, and distribution monitoring
5g	Conduct systematic surface water quality monitoring to provide baseline data and inform management
5h	Improve forecasting system for high-flow and flood events to help water managers make real-time and fast decisions
<b>Tier 3</b>	
5i	Implement soil and water quality testing for MAR sites
5j	Install and implement Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI)/smart meters for municipal water use
5k	Expand stormwater monitoring

## 6. Floodplains & Habitat

Strat. #	Strategy
<b>Tier 1</b>	
6a	Conduct targeted outreach to urban and suburban landowners located on small streams related to stream and riparian health
6b	Floodplain reconnection and restore channel complexity on the Walla Walla Mainstem and tributaries
<b>Tier 2</b>	
6c	Expand floodplain land or easement acquisitions to reduce flood risk and improve habitat
6d	Improve fish passage at Nursery Bridge
6e	Invest in outreach to community members, elected officials, planning departments, and the real estate community related to stream and riparian health
6f	Implement levee setback projects through Milton-Freewater
6g	Mill Creek floodplain reconnection upstream and downstream and flood control project
6h	Restore and protect riparian habitat along the Walla Walla River
6i	Floodplain reconnection and restored channel complexity and riparian habitat in the Touchet River and tributaries
<b>Tier 3</b>	
6j	Improve fish passage through engineered portion of the Mill Creek concrete channel
6k	Provide access to cabins on private land in the South Fork Walla Walla with minimal impact to the river
6l	Restore and protect riparian habitat along small streams throughout the Basin
6m	Study and analyze benefits of flow enhancement in the Little Walla Walla River
6n	Improve fish passage and habitat conditions in weir sections of flood control projects in Mill Creek
6o	Improve fish passage at Bennington Diversion Dam
6p	Conduct channel migration zone mapping
6q	Enhancement of critical fisheries
6r	Improve fish passage at Gose Street long term
<b>Tier 4</b>	
6s	Improve flow and timing of fish passage through the Hofer Dam fishway
6t	Conduct outreach related to levee setback projects through Dayton and Waitsburg

### Desired Future Conditions

- SPAC members were also asked to rank DFCs from most important to least important. Results are summarized two ways:
  - Table 1 presents results in which each individual SPAC members responses are weighted equally. In also includes a column that highlights how many SPAC members selected that DFC as their top option. Note that this “top” pick was done under a hypothetical scenario of limited funding in which each respondent was “forced” to pick a top DFC and could not pick multiple DFCs as being all equal.
  - Table 2 presents results weighted by representation (i.e., a response from a single tribal interest carries the same weight as two responses from representatives of the federal government).
  - We will not spend a lot of time on these rankings unless the SPAC needs to make difficult choices in developing recommendations.

**Table 1: Responses by Individual Members**

DFC	Average Score (1 = highest priority)	#SPAC Ranking DFC Top Priority
Enhance instream flows	4.5	4
Build resiliency in the water supply	5.3	2
Stabilize aquifer levels	5.8	2
Improve fish passage	5.9	2
Increase monitoring	6.5	1
Increase channel complexity	6.6	1
Improve floodplain function	7.3	1
Meet recovery targets & treaty fishing obligations	8.0	0
Reduce flood risk	8.4	2
Increase riparian cover	8.8	0
Increase climate resilience	9.0	1
Increase infiltration/ inundation	9.2	0
Restore sediment transport regime	9.6	0
Meet TMDL targets	10.2	0

**Table 2: Responses Weighted by Interest Group**

DFC	Average Score (1 = highest priority)
Increase infiltration/ inundation	3.8
Build resiliency in the water supply	5.7
Improve fish passage	6.1
Restore sediment transport regime	6.2
Meet recovery targets & treaty fishing obligations	6.5
Increase riparian cover	6.6
Enhance instream flows	6.6
Meet TMDL targets	7.5
Stabilize aquifer levels	8.6
Reduce flood risk	8.9
Increase climate resilience	9.2
Increase monitoring	9.4
Increase channel complexity	9.7
Improve floodplain function	10.2