

WALLA WALLA BASIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

Wednesday, May 28, 2025 | 1:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Room 2023-24 | Water & Environment Center at WWCC | 640 Water Center Drive

Hybrid Meeting via Zoom

Time*	Agenda Item (Action items are marked with "I")	Reference Materials	Presenter(s)
1:00 (15 mins)	Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Welcome and introductions Review agenda Opening remarks 	Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larry Mattson, Ecology, on behalf of the Tri-Sovereigns Alexandra Doty, Facilitator
1:15 (55 min)	OCR Project Funds and Update on OR Legislative Session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss current status of the WA OCR capital project funds and project funding requests Share updates with the BAC about the OR legislative session 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amanda Cronin, Project Manager Melissa Downes, Ecology Anton Chiono, CTUIR BAC Members
2:10 (25 mins)	Port of Walla Walla project updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updates on the Port projects relating to municipal water systems, industrial water uses, and economic development perspectives on Port properties. BAC member discussion and questions 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patrick Reay, Jay Hester, Port of Walla Walla Amy Schwab, Port Commissioner BAC Members
There will be a 10-minute break around 2:35			
2:45 (15 mins)	Fall Open House Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reporting out ideas we've heard so far Discuss and brainstorm approach for the fall open house; look ahead to the June 3 PFO working group meeting 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alle Brown-Law and Carson Brock, Cascadia Alexandra Doty, Facilitator BAC members
3:00 (10 mins)	Fill BAC Caucus Vacancy (I) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BAC Decision Item: Discuss and consider approval of proposed BAC caucus vacancy within the State Caucus 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Doty, Facilitator BAC Members
3:10 (10 mins)	Confirm 2025 BAC Meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss and confirm BAC meeting schedule for remainder of 2025 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Doty, Facilitator
3:20 (30 min)	Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fisheries update Return to the River share out Upcoming and recent events April 30 field trip report out and future field trip ideas Project and funding updates Working Group updates Drought ag survey Other updates? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Doty, Facilitator Amanda Cronin, Project Manager Jerimiah Bonifer, CTUIR BAC members
3:50 (5 mins)	Public Comment		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Doty, Facilitator
3:55 (5 mins)	Closing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps Rotating BAC Member closing remarks 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alexandra Doty, Facilitator Annie Byerly, Walla Walla County Conservation District, Agriculture Caucus Member

*All times are approximate and may change.



Welcome and Introductions

- Alexandra Doty, facilitator, welcomed everyone to the meeting, reviewed the agenda, and led roll call. Attendees are listed in **Error! Reference source not found.**
- Larry Mattson, Ecology, shared opening remarks and welcomed everyone on behalf of the tri-sovereigns.

Washington OCR Projects and Update on Oregon Legislative Session

Oregon Update, Anton Chiono

- Senate Bill 761 originally contained two components: one funding request for \$2.5 million and the instream leasing authority for perennial crops. As the legislation continued, it made sense to split the two components. The \$2.5 million is expected to be added to the end-of-session spending bill, and the instream leasing authority portion has passed the House and is awaiting the Governor's signature. The \$2.5 million request for the Walla Walla Basin remains under consideration, and we will know more in mid-June.

Washington OCR Project Update, Melissa Downes and Amanda Cronin

- Amanda provided introductory information and shared that there was a call for project proposals last July for WA Ecology's OCR funding. The team received project proposals from across the Basin, and four sub-workgroups met several times throughout 2024, reviewed all the project proposals, and provided a recommended ranking to the BAC. The BAC considered this list and made a final project recommendation list to Ecology in the fall; however, OCR received \$1.3 million instead of the requested \$2.8 million.
- Melissa Downes, Ecology, described that Walla Walla was one of the project submittals where the legislature reduced the request. The Governor signed the budget last week, so it is now official. OCR has received \$2.4 million for Walla Walla implementation, which includes the ongoing studies (USGS Groundwater Study, USBR Reclamation Study, facilitation contract, and more). Ecology examined this in earnest and reduced the total costs to ensure that as much money as possible is available for project implementation. There is now \$1.3 million available for project implementation.
- This meeting's objective is to discuss and decide on an approach for prioritizing projects so that the BAC can make a formal recommendation to Ecology during the June BAC meeting.
- The facilitation team gathered the following updates from project sponsors:
 - There are rollover funds for water right acquisition transactions, so that was taken off the list.
 - Two TSS projects are highly likely to receive funding from another source, but this has not been confirmed yet.
 - WDFW elected to withdraw its basin wide monitoring project from the list and anticipates receiving alternative funding.
 - The "Modified Request" column shows the updated amounts resulting from changes made by project sponsors in May.
- Additional context was provided by project implementers:
 - For the Little Walla Walla Irrigation Efficiencies, the match comes from the implementers' own funding, which could also be classified as a water rights transaction. The project description has shifted slightly because we have identified other projects for piping and other efficiencies. We have federal funding for the bigger efficiency project (which is about \$6 million).



- The Heritage Gardens project is intended to be low-hanging fruit to help establish the WW2050 name. If this project is funded, a WW2050 sign could be added next to the Heritage Garden sign.
- For the Aquifer Recharge project, the Oregon portion was removed, so the funding amount currently covers just Stiller Pond. Consequently, the money would be allocated to WWCCD for work on the WA side.

BAC Discussion

- While reviewing the October 2024 BAC List with Sub WG Rank table on slide 12 of the slides, a BAC member raised concerns about whether the table shown accurately reflects the project rankings that the Habitat sub-workgroup had.
- While reviewing Package 1 (Slide 13), a BAC member noted that they wouldn't want to lower the Gose Street project funding amount on the assumption that it will get additional or external funding.
- While reviewing Package 2 (Slide 14), a BAC member asked for clarification.
- Various BAC members shared that they were in support of the Heritage Gardens project, adding the following points:
 - WW2050 could get a lot of great photos of gardens to use for publicity.
 - The City of Walla Walla would feature this project in their newsletter.
 - Walla Walla and College Place are both growing, so there will likely be more grass/turf.
 - Milton-Freewater is considering applying for another grant for Heritage Gardens on the Oregon side, so the timing of this would be good.
 - This project would provide outreach opportunities, especially for field trips and tours in urban areas. These could also be combined with the tours hosted by the Native Plant Society.
 - However, one BAC member noted that this project wasn't well-ranked by the Water sub-workgroup, so it probably shouldn't be included here, considering the funds are low.
 - Amanda responded, adding that the process the project team used was heavily reliant on the rankings, but to give the BAC some discretion.
 - Another BAC member agreed with Travis, noting that there are severe restrictions and the group is spending a lot of time focusing on a lower-cost project when substantive consideration needs to be given to the most expensive projects.
 - Another BAC member jumped in to ask if a poll could be created for the full BAC and then present the rankings/survey results.
- A couple of BAC members asked further about the rankings:
 - One BAC member initiated this discussion, asking for confirmation that the rankings were from the sub-workgroups, and this was confirmed.
 - Another BAC member asked for further clarity, and Amanda explained that the BAC considered the workgroup rankings, then approved a final list of projects based on their discussion.
 - A BAC member asked if timing or the availability of external or other funds were considered in the ranking.
- One BAC member noted that the group should check with the City of College Place on the Garrison and Stone Creek project since they did relinquishments on that property.
- Another BAC member mentioned that Mill Creek work is close to completion, so in terms of prioritization and sequencing, getting fish up Mill Creek as soon as possible is most important.
- A BAC member appreciated these comments since Mill Creek is one of the most important areas for steelhead recovery and asked for an update on Hofer Dam, since they usually prioritize fish passage.

- A BAC member responded, saying that they are working on flow improvements tied to the Touchet MOA. The project will not move forward without the MOA (expected end of year).
- Another BAC member followed up to gain clarity on whether this was an assessment of restructuring the intake at the dam, rather than trying to increase water flow down the dam. It was clarified that the project is examining funding for intake redesign, which requires some kind of environmental benefit or impact.
- A BAC member asked how the list of priority projects compares to the Upper Walla Walla River Assessment presented at the Implementation Workgroup meeting's priority list in their assessment.
 - Amanda responded that the Walla Walla Upper Watershed Assessment has been completed , but it doesn't cover many of these projects since only habitat projects were eligible for funding in on the WA side of the Basin.
- A BAC member commented that if the group selects Package 2, it could add roughly \$100,000, and Bridge to Bridge from TSS could be added.
- Another BAC member recalled that the last time the BAC did this prioritization, the committee talked a lot about technical expertise and relying on that expertise from the sub-workgroups.
- Another BAC member noted that they wanted to hear from the sponsors of the 2.33, wondering if funding could be split or adjusted, and what it would take to move the needle.
 - Others responded, saying that \$350,000 to CTUIR keeps the base project going, but that project implementers should be asked about the minimum needed and any match limitations.
- A BAC member commented that it seems like the group is struggling with objectives to evaluate and suggested considering the potential for loss of match funding and whether a project builds upon past efforts or completes an area or connection. Also, what projects provide the most benefits versus cost.
- A BAC member brought up the Touchet River Mile 42 project and added that if they did not receive the \$250,000, the project would be scaled back.
- Another BAC member suggested prioritizing projects that help the group finish a body of work, such as Mill Creek, which could be split up to allow full completion of one part of the system.
 - A BAC member followed up, stating that Mill Creek is compromising fisheries health beyond the Walla Walla, but they now have funding for an assessment that will begin this fall and depends on these three projects being completed and the ability for fish to travel up Mill Creek.
- A BAC member stated that, assuming Package 2 is passed, there would be an extra \$100,000, which could go to Bridge to Bridge or the 6th Avenue bridge.
 - Another member responded, saying that Bridge to Bridge is less important because it's habitat, not fish passage.
 - A BAC member added that they would like Hofer Dam or the 6th Avenue Bridge to be prioritized.
 - A BAC member noted that all of these projects have value, and they hope the BAC can continue advocating for them to the legislature and looking for other funding options.
- **Next Steps:**
 - Amanda will summarize conclusions from this discussion and share them with the BAC.
 - Jeremiah will follow up with project sponsors to confirm minimum funding needs and scoring criteria.

Port of Walla Walla Project Update

Presentation from Patrick Reay and Jay Hester, Port of Walla Walla

- Port of Walla Walla Background:
 - The Port is a county-wide development organization.
 - Ports were established prior to statehood, and Washington had numerous ports.



- The Port of Walla Walla owns and operates three municipal water systems, a rail system, and various properties and buildings. It also has agricultural water rights and industrial water rights.
- The three public water systems include:
 - 1) The Airport: A single source with a back-up (deep basalt well with a City of Walla Walla intertie).
 - 2) The Burbank Water System: An unincorporated water system that previously had poor water quality, which led the Port to build a water system. The Port is currently building a second water reservoir with ~1 million gallons of storage in the Burbank area, which includes a nitrate treatment center.
 - 3) and the Dodd Water System in Wallula: This system has pretty significant water rights, most of which are in trust, and supports local business parks.
- Tyson Foods is the region's largest water consumer, at 2-3 million gallons per day. Potato processing facilities also have high water demands.
- Water demand forecasting is underway for the Rockwool area to guide future infrastructure planning.
- The Wallula Gap Business Park in Walla Walla County is a growing industrial hub featuring major projects, including data centers, manufacturing, and a sustainable aviation fuel facility.
 - One of the largest publicly owned business parks in the state, but it currently lacks an industrial sewer system and doesn't have a treatment facility. Some of the projects the Port is working on include US Highway 12 Phase 8 and a data center, a \$4.5 billion investment that will use 300,000-400,000 gallons of water per day.

BAC Discussion

- A BAC member asked if there is a wastewater treatment plant, and the presenters confirmed they don't have an industrial wastewater facility, which limits who they can recruit to the area.
- A BAC member asked what happens to the water used by the data center, and Patrick responded that it helps cool the warehouse space.
- Another BAC member asked about AI-related uses in the area and what criteria would be used to evaluate them.
 - Patrick responded, noting that the data center will have computing capabilities so AI will be housed there. This facility is permitted outright within the industrial zone.
 - Others added that the water is used for building cooling, but that there is some consumptive use of water. Patrick noted that there will be no water discharge, and Amanda clarified that water for the data center comes from a combination of water sources.
- A BAC member asked if the Port encourages and incentivizes water conservation on its properties, and another followed up to ask more specifically about businesses at the airport.
 - The speakers noted that they establish water use agreements and that the Port has a lot of interruptible rights, which can be a challenge for industry. The Port is always looking to acquire additional water rights to protect the industry, and the industry itself has conservation methods.
 - Regarding the airport, Patrick stated that there are no conservation methods or incentives in place. However, the Port has tried to separate irrigation from potable water.
- A BAC member asked if there are any concerns with the electricity grid and power.
 - The speakers responded, saying that there are ongoing power issues.
- Another BAC member asked how the Port is funded, and the speakers told them that their funding comes from a county-wide tax levy, and they have income from leases. They also go after state and federal funding.

Fall Open House Discussion

Presentation from Alle Brown-Law and Carson Brock, Cascadia Consulting Group

- The 2023 WW2050 Open House aimed to raise public awareness about the Walla Walla 2050 strategy, the challenges it addresses, and current solutions. The format included opening remarks from BAC members, followed by open time for attendees to visit informational stations hosted by Basin organizations.
 - Feedback highlighted a need for stronger foundational context about WW2050, appreciation for the station/table format, a desire to spread out speakers across the event, and a call for more storytelling to better engage participants.
- The 2024 WW2050 Open House featured four presentations spaced throughout the evening, including a “WW2050 101” overview to help attendees understand the strategy, as well as informational stations.
 - Feedback from attendees included interest in finding larger or alternative venues, a desire to share progress on what’s been achieved so far, and suggestions to incorporate a site visit or tour (either in person or as a virtual or pre-recorded experience).

Discussion

- A BAC member shared that salmon came back to Mill Creek, so this could be a great theme.
 - Multiple BAC members seconded this and added that Return to River has been a good way to draw in kids and demonstrate the importance of fish. EnviroScape model for hands-on activity.
 - A BAC member who seconded this also noted that the open house should showcase what it takes to achieve the successes we’ve seen, which wouldn’t be possible without all of the stakeholders doing the work.
- A BAC member shared that the format and venue should stay the same but were curious about cost.
 - A BAC member agreed that Whitman College format was good, but that it’s less conducive for smaller kids.
- Other BAC members added that ODEQ and OWRD may have models and supplies that can be used for kids.
- A BAC member shared that emphasizing unity between Washington and Oregon while highlighting the work the group has done would be good, too. There were particular issues that attendees were passionate about, which signaled that we should provide an environment of “we want you to be part of this.”
 - At least one BAC member supported this.
- A BAC member offered the idea of having a session focusing on “bring your hard questions”, hear what’s really going on, and learn the considerations behind our decisions to help combat misinformation.
- A BAC member also suggested having a booth or display to preview proposed projects, showing how they reflect the basin and the BAC membership.

Fill Caucus Vacancy

The BAC did have a quorum of BAC members present.



State Government Caucus

- **Nominee:** Trea Nance, Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality, as alternate to Taylor McCroskey.
 - Trea introduced herself. She is a TMDL Basin Coordinator for ODEQ. ODEQ had an internal discussion and wanted to shift its focus to a more water quality-oriented approach, which is why she is being put forward.
- **Approved by consensus, no opposition.**
- Colleen Fagan informed the group that Justin Yeager has retired from NMFS, creating a new vacancy.

Confirm 2025 BAC Meetings

BAC Discussion

- A BAC member commented that three months between meetings seems long and was worried about losing momentum, noting that it's helpful to learn the seasonal flow of what's happening in the basin.
- A member suggested keeping meetings on the calendar and canceling if there are no agenda topics or doing a short virtual meeting to share updates.
 - Another member also suggested asking BAC members for summer email updates, and then the facilitation team could send one large email to the full group.
- Amanda shared that AMP and Cascadia aren't scoped for BAC meetings every month, so they are trying to plan for a natural break.
- A BAC member noted that it would be good to have a meeting in August since waiting until September doesn't leave a lot of time before the Open House.
 - Another BAC member added that the BAC could have a combined meeting in early August to help with planning.

Updates

Fisheries Update

- Starting to see peak Spring Chinook returns. These are the adults from the first hatchery releases in 2020, and they are close to their goal of 350 broodstock.
- The fisheries are well above the 10-year average, and also above the 5-year average.
- This is the second largest adult count since 2002, and if the fisheries get over 1000 returns, they will start to look at tribal harvest.
- A BAC member asked if there is an estimate of how many fish are going up Mill Creek.
 - Based on tags, about 100 fish are going into Mill Creek and about 108 fish going up into the Touchet.
- Another BAC member asked about fish in the Snake Basin, and Jeremiah responded, saying that they are seeing some spring chinook straying into the Snake, but historically about 70% return to the Walla Walla basin, and they will have a better estimate at the end of the season.
- A BAC member asked for a distinction between Yellowhawk and Mill Creek and the returns.
 - **Action Item:** Jeremiah will follow up on this.
- A BAC member added that a PFO meeting will have a presentation on making PIT Tag more publicly available, and a second member added that this could be a great item to add to a future BAC meeting agenda.



Return to River

- A BAC member shared that the passport activity was a hit—a lot of kids interacted with the various organizations through this. This could be a good activity for the Open House too.
- A BAC member added that it was really meaningful to have good activities for kids, and then the staff were able to have meaningful conversations with the parents.
- The Tribes and WEC were recognized for the amount of work they did for the event.
- The event was rainy but still had good crowds.

Upcoming Events:

- The Walla Walla Public Schools Foundation is hosting a Field Trip Fundraiser for adults on Friday, May 30 from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM at the Water & Environmental Center. The event includes lunch, hands-on learning stations, video presentations, and more, with proceeds supporting outdoor education. BAC members are invited to share any upcoming or recent events they'd like to highlight.
- Last pub trivia on 5/29!

April 30 Touchet Field Trip Reflections

- A BAC member expressed interest in taking summer field trips – maybe in place of our summer BAC meetings.

Project Funding Updates

- A BAC member shared that the second phase of the weir notching will begin in June, and the Bennington Fish Ladder is almost awarded but will be pushed to the 2026-2027 work windows.
- Another BAC member shared that the Watershed Council recently received funding from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board for more outreach that will include more ArcGIS story maps. The Couse Creek projects all received funding and work will begin on those this summer.

Working Group Updates

- **Implementation WG:**
- **PFO:** The upcoming meeting will feature a presentation from Long Live the Kings, open house planning, political outreach materials, and more.
- **Drought:** Reaching out to the agricultural sector about drought impacts on ag. Please share the survey if you know farmers—this will be open for another month.

Upcoming Meetings

- **BAC:** June 25, 2025
- **PFO:** June 3, 10 – 12
- **City of Walla Walla Watershed Resiliency WG:** Thurs, May 29, 10 – 12

Closing Comments

- Annie Byerley thanked everyone for showing up at this table time and time again. She applauded the people represented here, the diversity of opinions, and working together.



Attendees

WWBAC Members in Attendance

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Agriculture		
Alli	Newhouse	OR Agriculture / Little River Group
Annie	Byerley	WA Agriculture / Walla Walla County Conservation District
Travis	Trumbull	Walla Walla River Irrigation District
Mark	Wagoner	Gardena Farms Irrigation District
Environment		
Judith	Johnson	Kooskooskie Commons
Nina	Lottsfeldt	Washington Water Trust
Ralph	Perkins	Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council
Steve	Martin	Snake River Salmon Recovery Board
Tara	Patten	Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council
Recreation/Quality of Life		
Jerry	Norquist	Community Member
Linda	Herbert	Blue Mountain Land Trust
Economic Development		
Amy	Schwab	Port of Walla Walla
Local Government		
Dan	Dorran	Umatilla County
Frank	Nicholson	City of Walla Walla
Jack	Miller	Columbia County
Steven	Patten	City of Milton-Freewater
State Government		
Shane	Cossel	ODEQ
Mark	Wachtel	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Trea	Nance	ODEQ
Federal Government		
Colleen	Fagan	NOAA NMFS
Cindy	Boen	US Army Corps of Engineers
Tribal Gov		
Jerimiah	Bonifer	CTUIR
Tri-Sovereigns (Ex-Officio/Non-Voting Members)		
Anton	Chiono	CTUIR
Larry	Mattson	Ecology
Melissa	Downes	Ecology

WWBAC Members (Primaries) Not Present

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Agriculture		
Local Government		



First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Todd	Kimball	Walla Walla County
Economic Development		
Nick	Velluzzi	Walla Walla Community College
State Government		
Taylor	McCroskey	OR Department of Fish and Wildlife
Mike	Kuttel, JR.	WA Department of Fish and Wildlife
Federal Government		
Justin	Yeager	NOAA NMFS
Tri-Sovereigns		
Brook	Beeler	WA Department of Ecology
Chris	Kowitz	OR Water Resources Department

Other Attendees Present

First Name	Last Name	Affiliation
Alexandra	Doty	Cascadia Consulting Group
Alle	Brown-Law	Cascadia Consulting Group
Amanda	Cronin	AMP Insights
Charlotte	Whitefield	OWRD
Emily	Tilden	Ecology
Eric	Hartwig	Ecology
Jackie	McCool	WDFW
Jeff	Dengel	WDFW
Randal	Son	Mill Creek Watershed Landowner
Sara	Harris	WWBWC
Sarah	Dymecki	Ecology
Tara	Patten	WWBWC
Adam	Klein	City of Walla Walla
Alison	Crowley	WWCCD
Stephanie	May	Ecology
Kevin	Scribner	