# DRAFT BAC DISCUSSION GUIDE

### 2025-2027 Biennium Office of Columbia River Capital Projects

Prepared for the June 26, 2025 BAC Meeting

### Background

Ecology's Office of Columbia River (OCR) requested funding for capital projects in the Washington (WA) State Legislative 2025-2027 biennium budget and unfortunately received less funding than requested. The total amount of available capital project funding for the 2025-2027 Biennium is \$1.3 million (m). There is also some additional funding available from the current biennium which is detailed below.

Amount	Source
\$1,300,000	2025-27 Capital Project- WA Legislature
\$136,184	Remaining from 2023-25 Capital Project- WA Legislature
\$1,436,184	Total

### Table 1. Available Capital Project Funding for Walla Walla Basin Projects from the WA Legislature

The objective of the June 2025 BAC meeting is for the BAC to vote on a recommended list of projects to the Tri-Sovereigns of around \$1.436m.

As a reminder, the BAC recommended a list of projects totaling ~\$2.9m in October of 2024. In advance of that BAC decision, in the spring and summer of 2024, four sub-workgroups (floodplains, habitat and fish passage, water, water quality and monitoring) met multiple times to discuss, consider and prioritize each of the proposed projects. In May the BAC discussed the list of projects and is now charged with narrowing down and recommending an updated list of projects to the Tri-Sovereigns that meets the approximately \$1.436m in funding available. The entire list of projects recommended for funding by the BAC in October 2024 is below.



				Pre	eliminary							Project	Match	Original	Request	Modified \$	
Strategy	Project Name			F	lar	ıki	ng			A	vg.	Sponsor	Funding	\$	Min. \$	Request	
Water	WR Transactions-Water Payments	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3		3	WWT	Yes	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	
F, H & FP	Mill Creek Passage-Gose Street	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3 3	3	3	TSS	Yes*	\$500,000	\$300,000	\$300,000	
Monitoring	Monitor. and Eval. Plan & Support Tool	3	3	3	2					2.	.75	WDFW	Yes	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	
Water	WR Transactions-Project Dev.	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2.	.75	WWT	Yes	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$96,000	
Monitoring	WW Subbasin Salmonid Monitor. & Eval.	3	3	3	2					2.	.75	CTUIR	Yes	\$146,250	\$146,250	\$146,250	
Water	Aquifer Recharge Water Qual. Monitor.	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	.5	WWBWC	Yes	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$7,000	
Water	LWW Irrigation Canals Efficiency Improv.	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	.5	WWRID	Yes	\$350,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	
F, H & FP	Touchet River Mile 42	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	.5	WWCCD	Yes	\$500,000	\$250,000	\$250,000	
Water Quality	Garrison & Stone Creek Stream Gauge	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1	2.	.38	College Place	Yes	\$125,520	\$125,520	\$62,760	
F, H & FP	Bridge to Bridge Phase 3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2 :	1 2.	.33	TSS	Yes	\$90,000	\$65,000	\$65,000	
F, H & FP	Hofer Dam Assessment & Design Study	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1 1	1 2.	.33	WWT	No	\$156,000	\$156,000	\$56,000	
F, H & FP	Mill Creek Passage - 6th Ave Bridge	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1 1	1 2.	.33	TSS	Yes	\$300,000	\$200,000	\$0	
F, H & FP	Túuši Wána Restoration	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2 :	1 2.	.33	CTUIR	Yes	\$5,000,000	\$350,000	\$350,000	
F, H & FP	Mill Creek Passage - Roosevelt to Tausicl	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1 1	1 2.	.22	TSS	Yes	\$1,000,000	\$400,000	\$0	
Water	Heritage Gardens	3	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1.	.88	WWCCD	Yes	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	

# October 2024 List of Projects with Sub-WG Ranking and Match

TOTAL \$8,524,770 \$2,699,770 \$1,713,010

# Project Funding Packages for BAC Consideration

A few updates/notes on specific projects include:

- There is unspent funding for water acquisition transactions from the current 2023-25 biennium of around \$114,000 that OCR can roll over to fund water right acquisition in the future. Therefore, that project request has been omitted from the packages below. The Washington Water Trust request for project development funds was separate from the funding request to support water right acquisition and still is included for consideration.
- Two of the Tri-State Steelheaders fish passage projects have received funding from other sources and have modified their request to include only the match needed (i.e., Gose Street match needed \$300,000; Bridge to Bridge match needed \$65,000).
- Two of the Tri-State Steelheaders fish passage projects: Roosevelt to Tausick (\$400k request) and 6th Ave bridge (\$200k request) have received funding from other sources and no longer need OCR funding
- In May, WDFW elected to withdraw its request for OCR funding for Basin-wide monitoring and is pursuing funding from another source.

At the May 2025 BAC meeting, the BAC discussed funding projects based on weighted average rankings established by the sub-workgroups. Potential groupings of projects (packages) were developed by sorting projects by weighted average ranking and using minimum/modified funding amounts. Presented on the next page are three potential packages developed using this process for the BAC to discuss and consider during the June 2025 BAC meeting.



**Package 1:** Includes Bridge to Bridge and Hofer Dam fully funded and Túuši Wána Restoration funded at \$103,000 (original minimum request - \$350,000).

		Preliminary							′			Project	Match	Modified \$
Strategy Project Name						nk	in	g			Avg.	Sponsor	Funding	Request
F, H & FP	Mill Creek Passage - Gose Street	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	TSS	Yes	\$300,000
Water	WR Transactions-Project Dev.	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2		2.75	WWT	Yes	\$96,000
Monitoring	WW Subbasin Salmonid Monitor. & Eval.	3	3	3	2						2.75	CTUIR	Yes	\$146,250
Water	Aquifer Recharge Water Qual. Monitor.	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1		2.5	WWCCD	Yes	\$7,000
F, H & FP	Touchet River Mile 42	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		2.5	WWCCD	Yes	\$250,000
Water	LWW Irrigation Canals Efficiency Improv.	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		2.5	WWRID	Yes	\$350,000
Water Quality	Garrison & Stone Creek Stream Gauge	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1		2.38	College Place	Yes	\$62,760
F, H & FP	Bridge to Bridge Phase 3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2.33	TSS	Yes	\$65,000
F, H & FP	Hofer Dam Assessment & Design Study	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	2.33	WWT	No	\$56,000
F, H & FP	Túuši Wána Restoration	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2.33	CTUIR	Yes	\$103,000
													TOTAL	\$1.436.010

**Package 2:** Túuši Wána Restoration funded at \$224,000 (original minimum request - \$350,000) and Bridge to Bridge (\$65,000) and Hofer Dam (\$56,000) not funded.

		Preliminary							1			Project	Match	Modified \$
Strategy	Project Name				Ra	nk	in	g			Avg.	Sponsor	Funding	Request
F, H & FP	Mill Creek Passage - Gose Street	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	TSS	Yes	\$300,000
Water	WR Transactions-Project Dev.	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2		2.75	WWT	Yes	\$96,000
Monitoring	WW Subbasin Salmonid Monitor. & Eval.	3	3	3	2						2.75	CTUIR	Yes	\$146,250
Water	Aquifer Recharge Water Qual. Monitor.	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1		2.5	WWBWC	Yes	\$7,000
F, H & FP	Touchet River Mile 42	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		2.5	WWCCD	Yes	\$250,000
Water	LWW Irrigation Canals Efficiency Improv.	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		2.5	WWRID	Yes	\$350,000
Water Quality	Garrison & Stone Creek Stream Gauge	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1		2.38	College Place	Yes	\$62,760
F, H & FP	Túuši Wána Restoration	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2.33	CTUIR	Yes	\$224,000
F, H & FP	Bridge to Bridge Phase 3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2.33	TSS	Yes	_
F, H & FP	Hofer Dam Assessment & Design Study	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	2.33	wwt	No	_
	* * *											-	TOTAL	\$1,436,010

**Package 3:** Bridge to Bridge fully funded, Túuši Wána Restoration funded at \$159,000 (original request \$350,000) and Hofer Dam (\$56,000) not funded.

		Preliminary										Project	Match	Modified \$
Strategy	Project Name	Ranking						3			Avg.	Sponsor	Funding	Request
F, H & FP	Mill Creek Passage - Gose Street	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	TSS	Yes	\$300,000
Water	WR Transactions-Project Dev.	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2		2.75	WWT	Yes	\$96,000
Monitoring	WW Subbasin Salmonid Monitor. & Eval.	3	3	3	2						2.75	CTUIR	Yes	\$146,250
Water	Aquifer Recharge Water Qual. Monitor.	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1		2.5	WWBWC	Yes	\$7,000
F, H & FP	Touchet River Mile 42	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		2.5	WWCCD	Yes	\$250,000
Water	LWW Irrigation Canals Efficiency Improv.	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2		2.5	WWRID	Yes	\$350,000
Water Quality	Garrison & Stone Creek Stream Gauge	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	1		2.38	College Place	Yes	\$62,760
F, H & FP	Bridge to Bridge Phase 3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2.33	TSS	Yes	\$65,000
F, H & FP	Túuši Wána Restoration	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2.33	CTUIR	Yes	\$159,000
F, H & FP	Hofer Dam Assessment & Design Study	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	1	1	2.33	WWT	No	_
													TOTAL	\$1,436,010



# **Reference: Project Descriptions**

#### Floodplains, Habitat & Fish Passage

#### Project: Mill Creek Passage - Gose Street (WA)

Sponsor: Tri-State Steelheaders

Funding Request: \$500,000 Revised to \$300,000

Description: In 2020, flood flow in Mill Creek created a new fish passage barrier below a fishway that transitions the flood control channel to the natural channel. An alternatives assessment has identified a preferred alternative - a 1,100 ft. nature-like fishway. The funding requested below is the full project budget. We are applying to other funders, and expect to share project costs among multiple funders, but have not yet secured funding.

#### Project: Hofer Dam Assessment and Design Study (WA)

Sponsor: WWT

#### Funding Request: \$156,000 Revised to \$56,000

Description: WWT is seeking funds in partnership with Touchet Westside Irrigation District (TWID), who holds the largest water right and therefore effectively the most senior water right on the Touchet River. Their water right, in combination with upstream diversions, allowed TWID to legally decrease flows to the point of impairing adult fish passage during critical fall adult in-migration window and in some years to essentially dewater the river below the diversion structure at Hofer Dam (~RM 4). The historic syphon and diversion dam were fish passage barriers for migrating ESA-listed steelhead, bull trout, and reintroduced spring Chinook, included an ESA non-compliant fish screen, and utilized an unlined gravity fed canal system to deliver water. In 2009, the Walla Walla County Conservation District (WWCCD), Washington Department of Ecology (DOE), and TWID completed the Hofer-Eastside-Westside Complex: Fish Passage, Fish Screening, Pump Station Construction, Pipeline Construction Project to address these items.

While the 2009 project improved water use efficiency at TWID and improved fish passage, the modified water circulation pattern in this area causes significant sediment accumulation during certain flows in the Touchet River, resulting in the new diversion infrastructure and pool and chute fish ladder not functioning as intended (BPA Statement of Work Report 5/14/2021). This sediment impacts TWID's ability to divert their full water right and affects the function of the four fish screens. One of the screens is fully blocked by sediment and weeds, causing the need to excavate the area in front of the screen regularly. In times of low flows, the sediment build-up also impacts the flow rate going towards the diversion infrastructure and through the fish ladder. TWID has had to install flash boards along the dam during these low flows to raise the water level above the sediment bar. In 2014, the WWCCD completed a project funded by Bonneville Power Administration to develop a stamped construction-ready design to rectify sediment accumulation, provide fish passage and screening benefits as intended by the 2009 project, and allow TWID to divert their legal water right at Hofer Dam. Although a preferred alternative was selected, the design was not constructed and since 2014, no further work has been completed, but fish passage is still a recognized problem.

WWT's proposed assessment and design study seeks to build off of previous efforts to find a solution for these remaining challenges. A qualified engineering firm will be hired to complete an alternatives assessment, analyzing the effects of flow on sedimentation and fish passage at Hofer Dam. This project will incorporate any strategies discussed by partners in the years after the 2009 construction occurred, and design lessons learned from the placement of the screens and sweeping flows to make sure they function correctly in any future design. It will also incorporate lessons learned from the modified flow pattern, taking into account that flows are actually higher near the spillway, rather than the fish ladder, when choosing a preferred fish passage alternative. A preferred alternative will be identified in collaboration with stakeholders to improve passage for ESA-listed Mid-Columbia Steelhead and Bull Trout, and reintroduced spring Chinook and allow TWID to meet their diversion needs. Conceptual design plans will be produced for the preferred alternative.



#### Project: Touchet River Mile 42 (WA)

#### Sponsor: WWCCD

#### Funding Request: \$500,000 (Min. Amount \$250,000)

Description: WWCCD will restore a 1.4-mile stretch of the Touchet River starting at RM 42. This project area is located west of the town of Waitsburg, Washington. This project is located downstream of the levees and confluence with Coppei Creek. This reach of the Touchet River has high velocities of water due to the restriction by the upstream levees (located 0.6 miles upstream). The project is divided into project element groups. This funding will go towards the implementation of Element groups 5 & 6. Element groups 1-4 are funded through state and federal sources.

Project restoration activities include installing engineered log jams (ELJ) and other large woody material (LWM); completing 2,200 feet of side channel pilot cuts; and planting bank vegetation. These restoration activities will increase floodplain inundation during one-year and two-year flow events; channel complexity at low flows; off-channel rearing, foraging, and overwintering habitat for native salmonids; shade on the river; sediment deposition in over-straightened and transport reaches; and stabilization of gravel bars to encourage riparian growth. Completion of these activities will also address TMDLs for the Touchet RM 42 reach. Together, the improvements will reduce suspended sediment in the water column, shade the river, and deepen and increase the reach's pool count, all of which help decrease water temperatures. Lower water temperatures help balance pH and increase dissolved oxygen.

The installation of ELJ and other LWM, and the creation of side channel cuts will promote geomorphic and habitat complexity, increase hydraulic connectivity within the floodplain, and help gather and retain woody debris and sediment. As a result, turbidity levels, sedimentation, and flow rates should decrease while bank stability and habitat diversity increase.

#### Project: Bridge to Bridge Phase 3 (WA)

#### Sponsor: Tri-State Steelheaders

#### Funding Request: \$90,000 Revised to \$65,000

Description: The Bridge-to-Bridge project reach is nearly two miles of the Walla Walla River near Lowden, WA. This project, Phase 3A, will address limiting factors by placing logs and log structures along 1,000 feet of the Walla Walla River to improve channel complexity, maintain pools, create off-channel areas, and encourage side channels. Riparian plantings will address limiting factors by increasing shade and improving riparian function.

#### Project: Túuši Wána Floodplain & Fish Habitat Restoration (WA)

#### Sponsor: CTUIR

#### Funding Request: \$5M (Min. Amount \$350,000)

Description: The project is located on the mainstem of the Touchet River from RM 14 - RM 17. The Touchet River is a major tributary to the Walla Walla River which flows to the Columbia River in southeast Washington State. Latitudinal/Longitudinal coordinates for the upstream end of the project are 46°13'26.01""N, 118°35'26.23""W while the downstream extent of the project are 46°12'17.52""N, 118°37'36.61""W. The project lies within the traditional use area of the CTUIR. The project area is approximately 35 miles east of Kennewick, WA and approximately 240 miles east of Portland, Oregon.

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) propose to sponsor a 2.7 mile-long floodplain and fish habitat restoration project on the mainstem Touchet River which lies within the Walla Walla Sub-basin. The CTUIR is a federally recognized Indian Tribe and has its reservation in northeast Oregon, but the aboriginal ceded areas extend well into Washington State where this project occurs. The project area has been negatively impacted by intensive riparian clearing, channelization, bank armoring, floodplain clearing, hillslope clearing, and levee construction. Riparian clearing occurred until at least 1996. The loss of riparian community has resulted in moderated channel erosion rates. Channelization, floodplain grading, and bank armoring appear to have been evident by 1952 and continued to accelerate in scope and scale through the 1970s. These actions are evident by meander scars and channels visible in the 1952 aerial disappearing by the 1964 aerial. These actions likely resulted from a desire to maximize land productivity for agriculture and as a reaction to flooding in the 1960s and early 1970s. The channel has been straightened and its ability to migrate within the floodplain is reduced, which has resulted in increased stream power, leading to widespread channel disconnection from the floodplain. This has significantly reduced floodplain connectivity, contributed to a high load of fine sediments, and reduced channel complexity.



Based upon site analysis, project goals and objectives, identified habitat limiting factors, site review (stakeholders, funder technical review (BPA, SRFB), external technical review), and anticipated available funding ranges, two complementary strategies are proposed for the project area. The proposed strategies showcase two restoration approaches in two treatment reaches. These two approaches are intended to balance both the desire for more immediate benefit response time as well as ""lighter"" touch approaches that provide longer term benefits. These two provide an attempt to balance potential risks presented by both approaches as well as provide comparative lessons learned for future lower watershed projects in the Walla Walla Basin.

The first approach, the Floodplain Reveal Reach, (RM 16.5 to 17.1) intends to accelerate extensive, frequent, and sustained floodplain engagement. This more direct approach is expected to realize project benefits on the more immediate (immediately post construction) and near-term (1 to 3 year) benefits. These benefits will be achieved through excavation (floodplain reveals) by exposing a floodplain surface compatible with and just above the established long profile of the Touchet River's gravel bed channel that has been found to sustain the river's base-level elevation profile. The floodplain reveals also target relative surface elevations that will encourage and sustain passive revegetation. This approach will be paired with channel and floodplain structural elements (e.g., large wood structures (LWS)) which will be placed along the channel margins and across the floodplain. The placement of these LWS is intended to promote moderate to long-term (60 to 150 years (Beechie et al. 2008)) channel aggradation and enhanced floodplain-forming and riparian processes. The second approach, the Large Wood Treatment Reach (RM 14.9 to 16.5), will utilize aggressively positioned main channel LWS to initiate lateral channel migration and drive moderate- to long-term (60 to 150 years (Beechie et al. 2008)) channel aggradation. This downstream treatment approach is proposed to be paired with active vegetation stewardship, such as a regenerative agriculture or permaculture approach, targeted to successively rebuild soil structure and ultimately support the return of active agricultural areas towards more naturalized floodplain forest and uplands.

#### Monitoring

#### Project: Walla Walla Subbasin Salmonid Monitoring & Evaluation (OR & WA)

Sponsor: CTUIR

Funding Request: \$146,250

Description: CTUIR currently operates and maintains seven PIT tag interrogation arrays in the Walla Walla Basin. Three arrays are located along the mainstem Walla Walla River: 1) Nursery Bridge Dam, 2) Burlingame Dam, and 3) RM 3 near the Walla Walla River Mouth. Four arrays are located along Mill Creek and its distributary Yellowhawk Creek: 1) Bennington Diversion Dam, 2) Division Works Dam, 3) Upper Yellowhawk Creek, and 4) Lower Yellowhawk Creek. CTUIR plans to install a temporary PIT array at the Gose Street fish ladder when WDFW reinstalls concrete eco blocks to temporarily maintain pool depths, and WDFW plans to install Mill Creek PIT arrays at Roosevelt Street and below the Whitman Mission. These PIT tag infrastructure improvements should allow us to monitor both juvenile and adult migrations through the Walla Walla Basin.

The one ingredient that we are lacking for efficient adult monitoring is the sheer number of PIT tags released. CTUIR began releasing hatchery-origin smolts reared from the new îImtwaha Fish Hatchery at full production (500,000 smolts) in 2022. We propose implanting 45,000 PIT tags into brood year 2024 juveniles to be released as smolts in 2026 to monitor and evaluate migration performance. Theoretically, at a smolt-to-adult return rate of 1%, we would expect 450 PIT tags to return as adults. This number of returning adult PIT tags will allow for effective monitoring of adult migration performance.

#### Water

#### Project: Water Right Transactions - Water Payments (OR & WA)

Sponsor: Washington Water Trust (WWT)

Funding Request: \$100,000

Description: WWT is seeking funds to support landowner payments for water right transactions benefitting ESA-listed populations of summer steelhead and bull trout, and reintroduced spring Chinook in both Washington and Oregon. These funds will be cost-share with WWT's main transaction funder, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP). Water Right Transactions are a method to improve and protect streamflows through voluntary, market-based projects with water right holders. WWT prioritizes transactions in river and stream reaches where flow is a limiting factor to critical life stages of listed species, as defined by the 2004



Northwest Power and Conservation Council Walla Walla Subbasin Plan and the 2011 ESA-Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan. WWT is increasingly focused on transactions that add resilience to streams in the face of climate change, including developing new tools such as floodplain optimization and upland forest management.

Contracted transactions often result in water payments to the landowner contingent on final agency approval of water right quantities available for instream flow and continued evidence of those quantities remaining instream for the duration of the transaction. Water payments are based on the market value of water in the Walla Walla Basin in Washington and Oregon, and are negotiated with the water right holder and the CBWTP during the project development process. Payment for temporary leases can be on an annual basis or lump sum. Payment for permanent transactions occurs as a lump sum payment after a formal closing process (similar to a real estate transaction).

Between 2025 and 2027, funds will be used as cost-share for annual lease payments to the City of Walla Walla for Mill Creek instream flow (about \$40,000 per year, subject to future negotiations) and a lease or acquisition payment for a project on the Touchet River (\$13,000 - \$39,000 depending on transaction type).

#### Project: Water Right Transactions - Project Development (OR & WA)

Sponsor: Washington Water Trust (WWT)

Funding Request: \$120,000 Revised to \$96,000

Description: WWT is seeking funding to develop and implement water right transactions benefitting ESA-listed populations of summer steelhead and bull trout, and reintroduced spring Chinook in both Washington and Oregon. Water Right Transactions are a method to improve and protect streamflows through voluntary, market-based projects with water right holders. WWT prioritizes senior water right transactions in river and stream reaches where flow is a limiting factor to critical life stages of listed species, as defined by the 2004 Northwest Power and Conservation Council Walla Subbasin Plan and the 2011 ESA-Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan, to maximize the protectability instream for the benefit of as many river miles as possible. WWT is increasingly focused on transactions that add resilience to streams in the face of climate change, including developing new tools such as floodplain optimization and upland forest management.

Water transactions can take a considerable amount of time to develop, varying from less than a year for temporary leases to one or more years for permanent acquisitions depending on landowner willingness, project complexity, and change application processing time. Project development begins with in-person outreach in the form of water right workshops, basin event participation, newspaper op-eds, and other engagement methods. This outreach is critical to develop new relationships and build trust with water right holders over time. Other aspects of transaction development and implementation include water right due diligence to determine instream flow quantities, contract negotiation (lease, acquisition, water quantities, price, etc.), water right change process to protect water instream, agency approval, through to landowner payment distribution.

WWT's main funder of this work is National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) Columbia Basin Water Transactions Program (CBWTP). Historically, WWT had State support through the Department of Ecology's Water Acquisition Program as cost-share support for transaction development and implementation, but has been missing this additional funding since 2021. OCR funds will act as cost-share to advance projects through these various stages. Between 2025 and 2027, WWT aims to develop 6 new water transactions and continue to develop an ongoing lease transaction on Mill Creek (City of Walla Walla) and two ongoing leases on the Touchet River. WWT has a goal to protect about 4-7 cfs in the Touchet River with 3 projects, 3-5 cfs in the Walla Walla River with 3 projects, and 8-10 cfs in Mill Creek.

#### Project: Aquifer Recharge Water Quality Monitoring Project (WA) (Updated May 2025)

#### Sponsor: WWCCD

#### Funding Request: \$7,000

Description: The Walla Walla County Conservation District is seeking funding to conduct comprehensive water quality monitoring, as required by the Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE) at 1 alluvial aquifer recharge site within the Walla Walla Valley.

Background: Distinct from many aquifer recharge projects globally that aim for aquifer storage and recovery (ASR), this aquifer recharge (AR) project is primarily designed for the public and regional benefit. It seeks to restore the aquifer and boost groundwater contributions to instream flow, optimizing the resource's utility across various sectors.



These include supporting aquatic life, enabling recreational water activities, providing for domestic use, and fulfilling irrigation needs, which are vital for our community's sustainability and ecological balance.

Project Location and Scope: Located in the heart of the Walla Walla Valley, our project encompasses the monitoring of Stiller Pond located in Washington. This recharge site is working towards addressing the challenges posed by the Walla Walla Valley's declining and over-allocated groundwater and surface water systems.

Project Objective: The requested funding will be utilized specifically to conduct the water quality monitoring required for operating 1 AR site, including pumping and testing costs at Stiller Pond, and annual reporting.

Water Quality Monitoring: Staying in compliance with the WDOE regulations, the project requests funding for two recharge sampling seasons. The Washington recharge sampling frequency, type, and reporting requirements approved by WDOE (Report of Examination for S3-30674, Aug 2021; Groundwater Memo, May 2021, and others) will be the basis of the sampling plan in Washington.

Aquifer Recharge Volume: Annually, the Stiller Pond site can recharge 991 acre-feet of water into the alluvial aquifer. The diversion rate for this recharge is 4.5 cfs with a period of use from 12/1 through 5/31 annually.

#### Project: Irrigation Canal Improvement Modernization Project (IMP) (OR) (Updated May 2025)

Sponsor: WWRID

Funding Request: \$350,000

Description: The WWRID IMP has identified several branches of the distribution system that when operated in the fashion as it currently is, excessive/wasteful end-spill is realized. This project intends to build a closed system which then will allow irrigation water to be utilized on the farm ground in an "on-demand" method.

The design of the IMP is to pipe several branches of the distribution system that includes sections the south, middle, north Pleasant View ditches and the YellowJacket ditch. The design will also re-route and pipe the Lower Powell system.

The IMP will incorporate management tools to direct water via telemetry where and when is it is actually needed rather than a continual flow throughout the above mentions systems regardless of the demand.

The IMP is estimated to save .35 cfs (.7 af per day/255 af per year) by way of water management tools afforded by the build out of the project. The one-time cost of this IMP is approximately .004 cents per gallon. The benefit of the water conserved is immeasurable. This water will be converted to a permanent in-stream water right (Developed Water) that benefits CTUIR Chinook re-introduction as well as ESA Listed Steelhead and Bull Trout on both sides of the Stateline.

WWRID will cost-share this project 100% by way of in-kind work as well as additional funding from our Capital Improvement account for a full build-out of all of the sections identified in the IMP scope.

#### **Project: Heritage Gardens (WA)**

Sponsor: WWCCD

Funding Request: \$30,000

Description: The Heritage Garden Program is a certification and technical assistance program initiated by the Benton Conservation District. The program promotes residential landscaping that prioritizes native plant diversity, low water usage, and habitat for pollinators and other wildlife. The program has expanded throughout the Columbia Basin and now includes Franklin, Chelan, Grant, Adams, Kittitas, and Yakima Counties.

The Walla Walla County Conservation District receives multiple requests each year from local landowners interested in the program. Without dedicated funding we have not been able to meet these requests. The requested funding would provide for staff time to initiate and establish parameters for the program in Walla Walla County, provide technical assistance to landowners, and purchase signage for local gardens meeting certification requirements.

A water savings calculator tool was created for Benton and Franklin Counties. WWCCD will use this tool to determine the conversion from the conventional lawn to the heritage garden criteria. This tool uses the Washington Irrigation Guide to determine certification needs. These funds are anticipated to fund between 5 and 10 local projects. If each project converts 2500 square feet (0.06 acres) from conventional lawn to meet the Heritage Garden requirements, over 45,000 gallons of water would be saved. On 5 projects, this would be a savings of over 225,000 gallons saved, annually. On 10 projects, 450,000 gallons of water (annually) would be conserved.



### Water Quality

#### Project: Garrison & Stone Creek Stream Gauge Project (WA)

Sponsor: City of College Place

Funding Request: \$125,520 revised to \$62,750

Description: This project entails the development and installation of four river gauges. One on Garrison Creek at Lions Park (801 SE Larch - upstream entry to city) and one at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (420 SW Owens Rd - downstream exit to city). Also, one on Stone Creek at the Larch crossing adjacent to HopThief and one at SW Teal Rd at the exit point to the City.

The City does not have stream gauges. The City wants to accelerate capital investment in the stormwater utility via enrolling into the USDA NRCS PL-566 grant program. The City has over 70 outfalls that need to be redone with treatment facilities. Currently the City has funding to reconstruct one and engineer one a year unless we get grant dollars to accelerate. The USDA NRCS Office out of Spokane paid for a PIFR but this effort reached an impasse where very little data existed about the cost vs. benefit due to lack of stream gauges in the corridor. We really need stream gauges at entry and exist points of the City along Garrison and Stone Creeks to be able to quantify improvements.

The City contacted the local USGS Office to get a quote for gauge system installation. The financial cost is \$22,380 per site. This covers O&M, 6-8 calibration visits a year, surveying for stability, establish a datum, and data collection following national techniques for methods and stage. One-time \$18,000 per site equipment cost installation that USGS would split cost of and then \$5,000 one-time site labor and supply installation cost that the USGS covers. The fiscal cost annually in perpetuity is \$89,520. The City's Stormwater Utility is prepared to absorb this annual cost.

