

# WALLA WALLA BASIN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (BAC) MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 26, 2022

1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

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

Hybrid Meeting

| Time*  | Agenda Item (Action items are marked with "!")   | Reference Materials            | Presenter(s)  |
|--|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>1:00</b><br>(15 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>Brook Beeler, on behalf of Tri-Sovereigns</li> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul>  |
| <b>1:15*</b><br>(60 mins)                          | <b>Mill Creek Panel Discussion</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ASR work to help instream flows (City of WW)</li> <li>Floodplain restoration work (WWCD)</li> <li>Bennington Dam fish ladder (ACOE)</li> <li>Mill Creek fish passage work (TSS)</li> <li>Mill Creek fish ladder adult intake (CTUIR)</li> <li>BAC Member Questions/Discussion</li> </ul> |                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Frank Nicholson, City of WW</li> <li>Renee Hadley, WWCD</li> <li>Cindy Boen, ACOE</li> <li>Brian Burns, TSS</li> <li>Gary James, CTUIR</li> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul> |
| <b>2:15*</b><br>(30 mins)                          | <b>Funding Strategy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Update on PFO Working Group efforts</li> <li>What can we learn from the Mill Creek example?</li> <li>Identify potential options to fill funding gaps?</li> </ul>  | <a href="#">Funding Matrix</a> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Andrew Purkey, AMP</li> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> <li>BAC Members</li> </ul>  |
| <i>There will be a 15-minute BREAK around 2:30</i> |  |                                |   |
| <b>3:00*</b><br>(20 mins)                          | <b>Near-Term Priority Projects in WA</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review criteria current list of projects from Implementation Working Group</li> <li>BAC Member Questions/Discussion</li> </ul>   | Project list                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amanda Cronin, Proj. Mgr.</li> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> <li>BAC Members</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3:20*</b><br>(30 mins)                          | <b>Updates</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>BOR Basin Study</li> <li>WA Legislation</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>Facilitation Team</li> <li>BAC Members</li> </ul>  |
| <b>3:50*</b><br>(5 mins)                           | <b>Public Comment</b>  |                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3:55*</b><br>(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, Proj. Mgr.</li> <li>Chris Marks, for Tri-Sovereigns</li> </ul>  |
| <b>4:00*</b>                                       | <b>Adjourn</b>   |                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Susan Gulick, Facilitator</li> </ul>   |

\*All times are approximate and may change



## Welcome, Introductions, Review Agenda

Brook Beeler, Ecology, welcomed everyone to the October Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting, commenting that she was looking forward to a productive meeting.

Susan Gulick, facilitator, reviewed the agenda and led roll call. Attendees are listed in [Appendix A. Attendees](#).

## Mill Creek Panel Discussion

### WW Conservation District's Floodplain Restoration: Renee Hadley, WWCD

- They are working in the Mill Creek Basin, and are currently in Phase 2, which focuses on Blue Creek down to 7 Mile.
- These projects are based on geomorphic assessments. CTUIR did extensive work on a lower Mill Creek report, and the Conservation District is piggybacking on this effort. They are collaborating where they can and are working closely with landowners.
- Although funding is limited, they have 8 projects going on, and 9 streamflow restoration projects.

### Bennington Dam Fish Ladder: Cindy Boen, Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

- The USACE will be constructing a new fish ladder on the right bank of Mill Creek at the Diversion Dam to meet current NOAA fish passage criteria.
- Currently in design, with complete design expected in Federal Fiscal Year 2023, and construction expected to start in 2024.
- The USACE found a groundwater-related risk to scope, schedule, and budget. They are doing a groundwater survey now.

### Mill Creek Fish Passage Work: Brian Burns, Tri-State Steelheaders (TSS)

- This presentation summarizes about 12 years of work. There is ~5,800 feet of completed fish passage work (in yellow on slide). are changing the concrete in channels, to make it better for fish.
- There are two segments that are funded and in the permit application phase, including Spokane to Park and 6<sup>th</sup> Ave Extension (in green on slide).
- There are two additional segments that have applied for funding. Only one of these two is not yet designed (in blue on slide).
- They are undertaking an alternative assessment at Gose St bridge to identify a preferred alternative to take to preliminary design. This site was particularly impacted by the drought, so their goal is to come up with a low maintenance solution that will not be as severely impacted by each flood.
  - Anyone who is interested in participating as a stakeholder should reach out to Brian.

### Mill Creek Fish Passage Improvement at WW Water Intake Dam: Gary James, CTUIR

- The original dam and fishway were constructed in the 1920s and the fishway was reconstructed in 1988, so the reconstructed ladder did not meet NOAA fish passage criteria. Spring Chinook, Steelhead, and Bull Trout passage was impacted to the upper Mill Creek Watershed.
- To solve the above issues, they added maintenance features, increased the size of the fishway exit, increased flow through, and increased attraction flows.
- While we are currently improving flows and fish passage, these short-term changes do not necessarily result in an ecologically healthy Mill Creek channel in the long-term. We could prioritize developing a Mill Creek Long Term Floodplain Restoration Plan – if we had a vision and roadmap, we would have a better idea of near-term actions.

### ASR Work to Help Instream Flows: Frank Nicholson, City of WW

- The Walla Walla Water System serves 7,000 water customers. It includes a 14.5-mile transmission main that is 30" wide, which runs to the Water Treatment Plant, and then to the distribution system.
- CTUIR funded intake and brought chinook salmon.



- Why ASR? They run treated water from the watershed backwards, down City Wells for storage in the deep basalt aquifer. The water levels in the basalt aquifer were declining in the 1980s-1990s. By storing water in the basalt aquifer, we are better equipped to handle floods, fire, and drought, and enhance stream flow.
- They are currently working on Well 5. When Well 1 was put in, it was the first ASR well in the country (in the 1990s). With just one well, we've seen a 400% improvement in the driest year (2021).

## Discussion

- BAC members asked about Yellowhawk Creek compared to Mill Creek – does Mill Creek get fish from Yellowhawk?
  - There are potentially more steelhead in Yellowhawk than in Mill Creek, though they both have issues. There is more riparian area and higher water quality in Yellowhawk than in Mill Creek.
- BAC members asked if we have fish passage or movement survey technology in place to understand where fish are currently using the system?
  - Cindy Boen responded that the new fish ladder will have a tag.
  - There is a need in Mill Creek for more survey technology to track fish passage trends. Currently, there is a juvenile smolt trap in Mill Creek, and we can figure out how many fish are in Mill Creek based on what is tagged.
  - Could the Mill Creek Work Group tackle this issue? There are funding requests for tagging/monitoring in the basin, including the OCR budget request.
- BAC members asked what is being done to add shade/trees to the channelized area of Mill Creek?
  - Changes to riparian vegetation have not been implemented on the east side.
  - Colleen Fagan recommended this be a topic of discussion in 2023.
- John Foltz agreed with Gary James' comments about the need for a long-term vision/plan for Mill Creek. However, any long-term plan for Mill Creek would need stakeholder buy-off on actions, so we have clear priorities. Currently, we are focused on fish passage-related projects, but there are many other issues that need to be addressed (like floodplain restoration) and may require acquisitions.
- BAC members asked how much water is in Mill Creek.
  - Frank answered that Mill Creek gains 10 cubic feet per second (cfs) going through the city.
  - Gary noted that the increased flow is encouraging, but questioned how we protect water in the mainstream, not just the mouth of Mill Creek.
  - The improvement that Frank presented on was from one well – and the City of Walla Walla is working on adding another well (Well 5). This could be online as soon as summer 2024.
  - Gary mentioned that we can address flows and fish passage, but we cannot establish riparian health, stream connectivity, or geomorphology the way the channel is currently set up.
- Chris Marks noted that this panel was a great example of where we need to be – lots of implementers working towards similar objectives.
- BAC members asked where the funding for each panelist's project came from.
  - **ASR Work (City of Walla Walla):** \$500,000 grant from Ecology; \$800,000 well repairs from city. Funding gap of \$3M, so they have applied to Bureau of Reclamation. Funding for the lease of instream flow came from NFWF Columbia Basin Water Transaction Program.
  - **Floodplain Restoration (Conservation District):** Three different funding sources from Ecology, plus funding from NOAA and WDFW as well.
  - **Bennington Dam Fish Ladder (Army Corps of Engineers):** Funding came through a federal USACE budget request. They can make stronger budget requests if they are able to point to collaborators and similar work happening!
  - **Mill Creek Fish Passage (Tri-State Steelheaders):** Funding came from WA Recreation and Conservation Office, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and matching funds from BPA.
  - **Mill Creek Fish Passage at WW Intake Dam (CTUIR):** Funding came from BPA and NOAA.

## Funding Strategy (Andrew Purkey, AMP)

### Presentation by Andrew Purkey, AMP Insights

- Andrew Purkey presented an overview on past PFO Working Group presentations and discussion, shared examples of integrated funding efforts in other basins, and led discussion with BAC members for an integrated fundraising approach in Walla Walla. The objective of this presentation was to gather BAC feedback to integrate into the funding strategy.
- Andrew has met with the PFO Working Group three times, in April, June, and September.
  - In April, they summarized the range of federal and state funding sources potentially applicable to Walla Walla strategies. For example: Bureau of Reclamation's WaterSMART program has 10 distinct programs related to watershed health and water management.
  - In June, they summarized the various federal and state funding sources potentially applicable for each Tier 1 strategy. Andrew mentioned that some strategies had more useful funding sources than others.
  - Andrew began tracking relevant federal and state solicitation deadlines, and noted that maintaining and sharing information on ripe funding opportunities is a potential function to be included in the fundraising strategy.
  - In September, they discussed funding lessons learned in other watershed collaboratives: Deschutes River Basin, OR; Russian River Watershed, CA; and Verde River Watershed, AZ.
- The Deschutes River Basin has substantial collaborative planning, and a Reclamation/OWRD-funded basin study has opened the door to sustained support from a range of Reclamation programs. Stakeholders have also tapped local economic sectors.
- The Russian River Watershed had a coordinated fundraising approach between local conservation districts and Trout Unlimited, and their effort was sustained with funding from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Sonoma Water, and Russian River Valley Winegrowers Association.
- The Verde River Watershed had a close collaboration between local and national groups, plus substantial philanthropic support. Vineyards have purchased water credits to keep river flowing, and The Nature Conservancy funded the development of a local malting house to facilitate conversion to low water-use crop (barley).
- Tom Tebb noted that Ecology applied for a Bureau of Reclamation Basin Study for the Walla Walla Basin and hopes to hear back soon!

### Discussion and Q&A

- What can we learn from the Mill Creek example?
  - BAC members noted that the Mill Creek panel shows we are often working in the same lane, and collaboration would be easy to achieve. We need to take more advantage of the expertise and relationships we all have in the Basin.
- BAC members mentioned potential partners and events to help fill funding gaps, including Microsoft, Amazon, Boeing, a "Salmon-Safe" winery event, and a monthly event series at breweries.
  - Tech and other industry executives who have homes in Walla Walla could be a source of private contributions.
- BAC members discussed not siloing ourselves geographically.
- BAC members discussed how to better coordinate on proposals, noting that time is the most limited resource and the largest barrier to collaboration.
- BAC members pushed for immediate outreach and public education about the 2050 Plan, to generate more public support and engage entities currently missing from this effort. Two priorities for outreach include local, private entities and legislative officials.
  - The WWBWC is currently proposing a monthly workshop series through 2024 – could be a key opportunity for public outreach.
- Working groups are one valuable way to ensure the BAC is informed by collective expertise, and BAC members mentioned that there is the possibility of having subgroups related to different 2050 strategies.

- Andrew mentioned that the Russian River case study found it effective to organize themselves around the different strategies. They prioritized their list of strategies, developed a timeline, undertook implementation planning, and then secured funding.
- BAC members recalled an example where the irrigation districts put a plan together, and private landowners applied to NRCS. Private landowner buy-in is another strategy we could employ.

## Near-Term Priority Projects in WA

### Presentation by Amanda Cronin, AMP Insights

- Amanda Cronin introduced the list of near-term priority projects in Washington, noting that this is not an entire list of projects in the Basin. The Implementation Working Group prioritized these projects based on the criteria of project type eligibility and project urgency.
- Amanda reviewed the current list of projects from Implementation Working Group but noted that these categories could still shift as the Working Group is finalizing this list in November. The largest number of projects are in the floodplains/habitat category (i.e., fish passage projects)

### Discussion and Q&A

- BAC members asked: is the Mill Creek Gose Street Passage project incorrect in the table?
  - That includes the engineering design costs. Amanda will follow up on the funding needed columns.
- BAC members mentioned there was nothing from the irrigation districts on this list, and that having an irrigator project could be good. Potentially, that could be fixing Gardena Farms' pipe/channel before it breaks.
- BAC members asked if there was an equivalent effort on the Oregon side? Is there a potential for a provision to also cover Oregon projects?
  - David Haire mentioned projects that were recently funded:
    - Irrigation efficiency project for the Little Walla Walla River
    - USBR Drought funding
- During discussion on the criteria, BAC members asked if more criteria could be developed, including whether a project has a high probability of alternative funding.
  - Amanda answered that this list is a living document, and more criteria and projects can be added. This is a starting point, and we need to get projects ready for implementation, including getting projects to the design stage.
- John Foltz mentioned that this is the most flexible funding we have on the table right now, and it will be important to implement some of these short-term projects to have success stories to share. He asked the Conservation District if the proposal they submitted is eligible for this funding.

## Updates, Agenda Requests

### Project and Funding Updates

- No word on the USBR Basin Study yet, but Ecology will update via email if they hear something.
- The WA Legislation has been submitted to the Governor's Office, and we are awaiting approval. If we get approved, we will need local sponsors.
  - Judith Johnson said that we all need to focus on getting this legislation passed, and BAC members should utilize their connections and talk to contacts as soon as possible.
- The EPA Columbia River Toxics Working Group (which includes MO, ID, WA, and OR) is looking for projects that are specific to toxic reductions. There will be three RFPs out in the next month, and the Milton stormwater project could be a good fit. Brook will send the details to Amanda for distribution.
- The City of Walla Walla's agreement with the BPA expires in November and but will be renewed for three years (fish passage, streamflows). The City has secured NOAA funds (\$250,000) for the city's ASR work.

### Upcoming Meetings and Working Group Updates



- **PFO Working Group: No more meetings in 2022**
  - The PFO Working Group has been discussing the funding strategy that we covered today. They are also examining the Tier 1 strategies and asking what outreach efforts are needed (if any) to ensure successful implementation.
- **Bi-State Flow Study Working Group: Mid-November meeting (date to be decided)**
  - This Working Group will replace the old Steering Committee. Consulting team is meeting with Jacobs/Aspect team and the Tri-Sovereigns, but we are shooting for a mid-November first meeting.
  - The Bi-State Flow Working Group will function as a third Working Group of this project (in addition to the Implementation and Policy, Funding & Outreach Working Groups).
- **Implementation Working Group: Thursday, 11/10 from 1 – 3 PM; Remote via WebEx**
- **BAC Meetings:**
  - November: No BAC meeting in November
  - December: Wednesday, 12/7; Water and Environment Center, WWCC

## Future Agenda Requests

- Big picture visioning for Mill Creek, and fundraising (how to get community involved)
- Update on vital sign indicators- metric and monitoring
- More panels to show how folks are collaborating!
- Update on the Yakima Basin Plan: where is it at, how has strategy evolved? How are you seeing success?
- Gary James thanked everyone for getting out to the hatchery during the September meeting

## Public Comment

- Mary Verner announced her retirement and will officially retire on December 1. It has been a privilege to work with this committee and see the great work being done. She will be cheering on this group.
- The community garden at WWCC has been replanted and is stormwater friendly, with other low impact development aspects.

## Closing Comments

Chris Marks thanked Mary Verner for her service, mentioning that we've learned many lessons in the past two decades, and we know it will take many hands to move this effort forward. He mentioned that the Tribe feels this work is not moving fast enough, but despite this, they acknowledge the process is working and want to stick with it to see great things come to the Basin. He thanked everyone for their work and commitment, and thanked the Mill Creek panelists for presenting.

Chris announced his departure from CTUIR in mid-November and stated that it has been a privilege to work with the CTUIR and all the Basin partners.

## Appendix A. Attendees

### WWBAC Members & Alternates

| First Name | Last Name    | Affiliation                                 |
|------------|--------------|---|
| Annie      | Byerley      | WA Agriculture                              |
| Brook      | Beeler       | Ecology                                     |
| Chris      | Marks        | CTUIR                                       |
| Cindy      | Boen         | USACE                                       |
| Colleen    | Fagan        | NMFS, NOAA                                  |
| David      | Haire        | CTUIR                                       |
| Frank      | Nicholson    | City of Walla Walla                         |
| Gary       | James        | CTUIR                                       |
| Jerry      | Norquist     | Blue Mountain Land Trust / Community Member |
| John       | Foltz        | Snake River Salmon Recovery Board           |
| Judith     | Johnson      | Kooskooskie Commons                         |
| Justin     | Yeager       | NOAA NMFS                                   |
| Linda      | Herbert      | Blue Mountain Land Trust                    |
| Mark       | Wagoner      | Gardena Farms Irrigation District           |
| Marty      | Hall         | Columbia County                             |
| Mike       | Frederickson | Port of Walla Walla                         |
| Mike       | Ingham       | Gardena Farms Irrigation District           |
| Nicholas   | Velluzzi     | Walla Walla Community College               |
| Randy      | Jones        | ODEQ  |
| Ralph      | Perkins      | WWBWC                                       |
| Renee      | Hadley       | Walla Walla County Conservation District    |
| Sarah      | Dymecki      | Washington Water Trust                      |
| Steve      | Martin       | WDFW  |
| Taylor     | McCroskey    | ODFW  |
| Todd       | Kimball      | Walla Walla County                          |

### WWBAC Members Not in Attendance

| First Name | Last Name | Affiliation              |
|------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| Allie      | Newhouse  | OR Agriculture           |
| Chris      | Kowitz    | OWRD                     |
| Dan        | Dorran    | Umatilla County          |
| Steven     | Patten    | City of Milton-Freewater |
| Travis     | Trumbull  | WWRID                    |

### Other Attendees

| First Name | Last Name | Affiliation            |
|------------|-----------|------------------------|
| Amanda     | Cronin    | Amp Insights           |
| Brian      | Burns     | Tri-State Steelheaders |
| Dan        | Haller    | Aspect Consulting      |
| Eric       | Hartwig   | Ecology                |



|           |           |                           |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------------|
| Ilene     | Le Vee    | Community Member          |
| Jack      | Mitchell  |                           |
| Jaime     | Short     | Ecology                   |
| Janna     | Stevens   | ODFW                      |
| Jen       | Woody     | OWRD                      |
| Mary      | Verner    | Ecology                   |
| Nicole    | Gutierrez | Cascadia Consulting Group |
| Patrick   | Cabbage   | Ecology                   |
| Scott     | Tarbutton | Ecology                   |
| Stephanie | May       | Ecology                   |
| Stuart    | Crane     | Yakama Nation             |
| Susan     | Gulick    | Sound Resolutions         |
| Tim       | Poppleton | Ecology                   |
| Tim       | Seymour   | OWRD                      |
| Tom       | Tebb      | Ecology                   |
| Troy      | Baker     | WWBWC                     |