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DEPARTMENT

Update on Integrated Water Resource  
Planning in the Walla Walla Basin

# Panel Members

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**Chris Kowitz**

North Central Region Manager (OWRD)

**Anton Chiono**

Habitat Conservation Project Leader (CTUIR)



**Tom Tebb**

Director, Office of the Columbia River (WA ECY)



# Overview



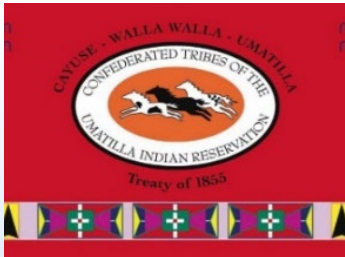
- History of the Walla Walla Basin
- Brief Retrospective of Water Planning
- Developing a 30-year Water Vision
- Tri-Sovereign's Role
- Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee
- Update on Implementation
- Looking Ahead

# History of the Walla Walla Basin

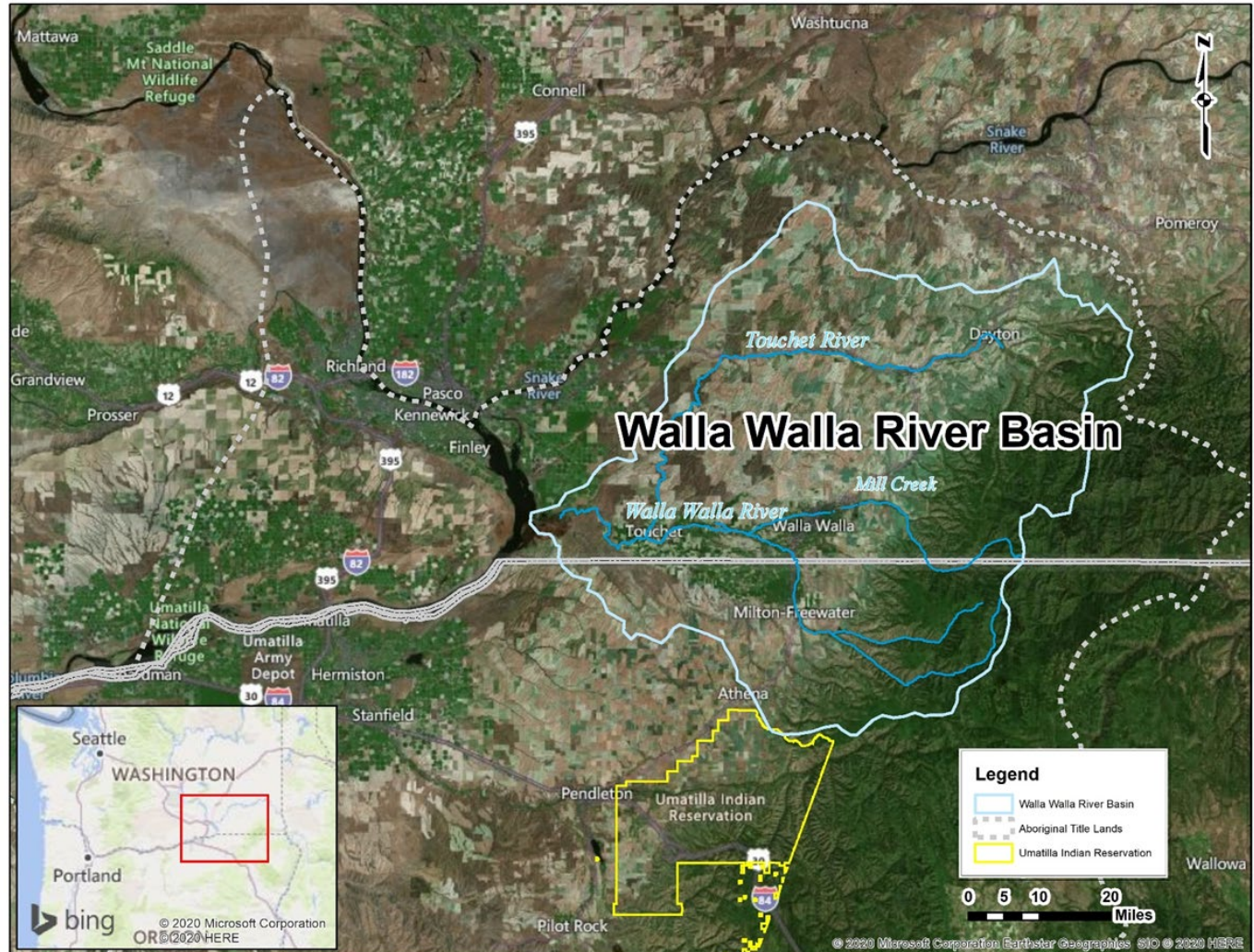
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**ECOLOGY**  
State of Washington



# History of the Walla Walla Basin



Walla Walla River mainstem in July.

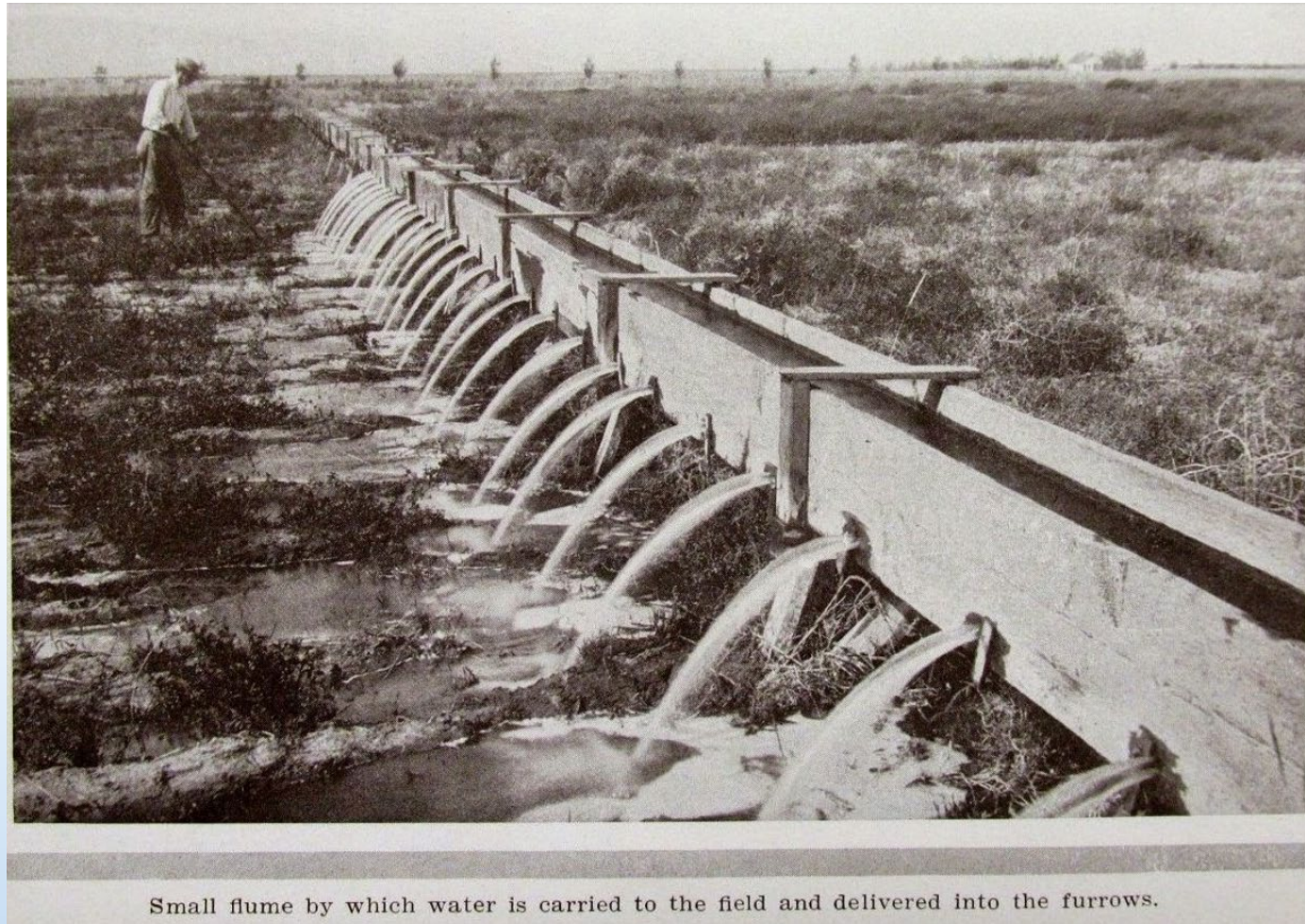
- Homeland of the Umatilla, Cayuse, and Walla Walla Tribes;
- Treaty signed on banks of Mill Creek in 1855;
- Treaty (Article I) reserved Tribes' right to take fish at all ***“usual and accustomed stations”***;
- Since time immemorial, salmon of critical importance to the culture and subsistence of the Tribes;
- By early 1900s, Chinook salmon driven to extinction in the Walla Walla as a result of irrigation diversions.

# Brief Retrospective of Water Planning in the Basin

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Small flume by which water is carried to the field and delivered into the furrows.

# Retrospective of Water Planning



- **USACE Feasibility Study (2002 - 2014)**
  - Studied water alternatives to address supply needs;
  - Unsuccessful due to a lack of state engagement and the inability to protect flows across state line
- **Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership (2008 - 2020)**
  - Studied water alternatives to address supply needs;
  - Unsuccessful due to a lack of state engagement and the inability to protect flows across state line
- **Walla Walla Water 2050 Plan (2020 - )**
  - Studied water alternatives to address supply needs;
  - Succeeds due to state engagement and the ability to protect flows across state line



# Developing a 30-year Water Vision: WWW 2050

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# Developing a 30-year Water Vision: WWW 2050



- 30-year effort to improve streamflow and water supplies in the Walla Walla watershed
- Employs an integrated water resource management approach
- Integrates goals and solutions from the basin's diverse stakeholders in both Washington and Oregon



# Developing a 30-year Water Vision: WWW 2050

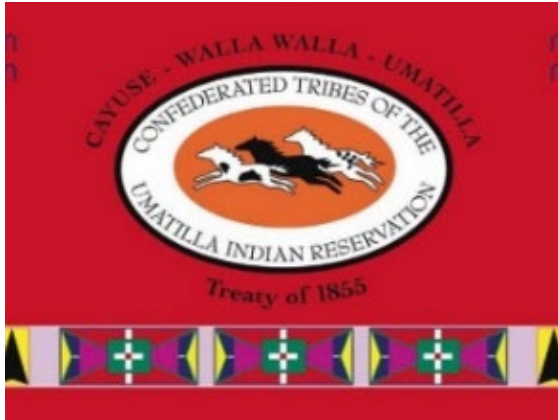
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# Goals for the Basin – Tri Sovereign Perspective



Eric Quaempts  
Director, Natural Resources

## Executive Leadership

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Doug Woodcock  
Acting Director



Brook Beeler  
Director, Eastern Region

Tom Tebb  
Director, OCR

# Goals for the Basin – Tri Sovereign Perspective

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- Long-term commitment to Walla Walla Basin watershed health
- Retain quality of “The Land of Many Waters”
- Achieve meaningful fish recovery
- Balance public water resources and public funding for both instream and out-of-stream needs
- Manage surface water & groundwater conjunctively and consistently across the bi-state Walla Walla Basin
- Plan for climate change and water reliability now and for future basin inhabitants

# Tri-Sovereigns Role



- Make decisions on issues/recommendations provided by advisory committee
- Coordinate with CTUIR Board of Trustees and/or Governors' Offices
- Develop Bi-state water management options
- Provide guidance to their technical staff



# Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee

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# Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee

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- Led by the states of WA and OR, and the CTUIR, with participation by local government, agriculture and environmental representatives.
- Advisory Committee & working groups comprised of diverse representation
- Consensus based governance
- Work to build partnerships & connections
- Provides policy and project development advice to implement the strategic plan

# Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee





# Update on Plan Implementation and other Priorities

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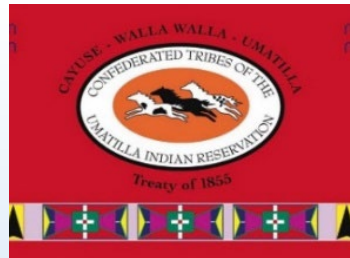


# Update on Plan Implementation and other Priorities

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- Legislation in 2023
  - Washington 2<sup>nd</sup> Substitute HB 1322

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**SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1322**

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Passed Legislature - 2023 Regular Session

**State of Washington          68th Legislature          2023 Regular Session**

**By** House Capital Budget (originally sponsored by Representatives Rude, Chapman, Klicker, Lekanoff, and Reeves; by request of Department of Ecology)

READ FIRST TIME 02/22/23.

1            AN ACT Relating to the Walla Walla water 2050 plan; amending RCW  
2            90.90.020; and adding a new section to chapter 90.90 RCW.

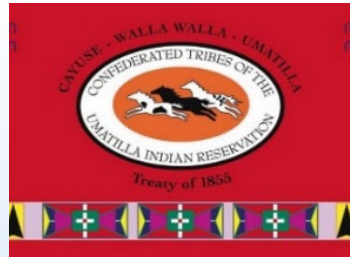
3            BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

# Update on Plan Implementation and other Priorities

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- Legislation in 2024
  - Oregon SB 1567

82nd OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY--2024 Regular Session

## Senate Bill 1567

Sponsored by Senators HANSELL, MANNING JR, Representatives LEVY B, HELM, SMITH G; Senators FINDLEY, WAGNER, Representatives ANDERSEN, CONRAD, GAMBA, HARTMAN, MCINTIRE, OWENS, WRIGHT (Pre-session filed.)

### SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure **as introduced**. The statement includes a measure digest written in compliance with applicable readability standards.

Digest: The Act tells an agency to take actions on water in the Walla Walla River Basin. (Flesch Readability Score: 63.6).

Directs the Water Resources Department to take certain actions related to the Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan.

### A BILL FOR AN ACT

1

2 Relating to the Walla Walla River Basin.

3 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

4 **SECTION 1.** (1) Consistent with all other Oregon laws, the Water Resources Department

5 shall collaborate with the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the

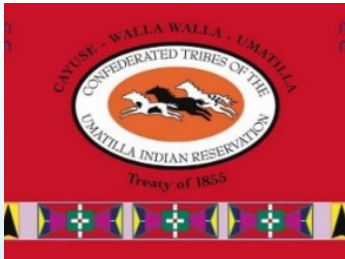
6 State of Washington to implement and guide cooperative, bi-state water management in the

# Update on Plan Implementation and other Priorities

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- Bi-state water management framework – legal options analysis
  - Required to develop under HB 1322 (WA) and SB 1567 (OR)
  - WA Legislative report currently being drafted
- USGS Groundwater Basin Study
  - Data collection nearly complete
  - Final report scheduled to be published in late 2025/early 2026

# Update on Plan Implementation and other Priorities

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- Bi-State Flow Study
  - Evaluating water supply projects
  - Primary focus on restoring flow in the Walla Walla River
  - Anchor project selection in 2024
- US Bureau of Reclamation Basin Study
  - Calculate basin surface water supply and demand
  - Development of a Riverware model
  - Evaluate water supply projects to ensure goals are met

# Update on Plan Implementation and other Priorities

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- Public Engagement
  - USGS Groundwater Study Workshops
    - 2 held in 2023
    - 2 planned for 2024
  - Walla Walla Basin Strategy Open Houses
    - 2 held in 2023
    - 2 planned for 2024
  - Outreach and engagement with local implementors
  - Continued coordination with water user sectors

# Future Action



- Continued focus on plan implementation
- Develop legislative reports
- Implementation of HB 1322
- Refine water needs for the Bi-State Flow Study selected alternative
- Continue outreach in partnership with basin partners
- Update the WRC on the Department's progress

# Thank you!

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## Questions or Feedback?

