



# Integrated Water Resource Planning in the Walla Walla River basin

Oregon Water Resources Commission  
Pendleton, Oregon  
June 13, 2025

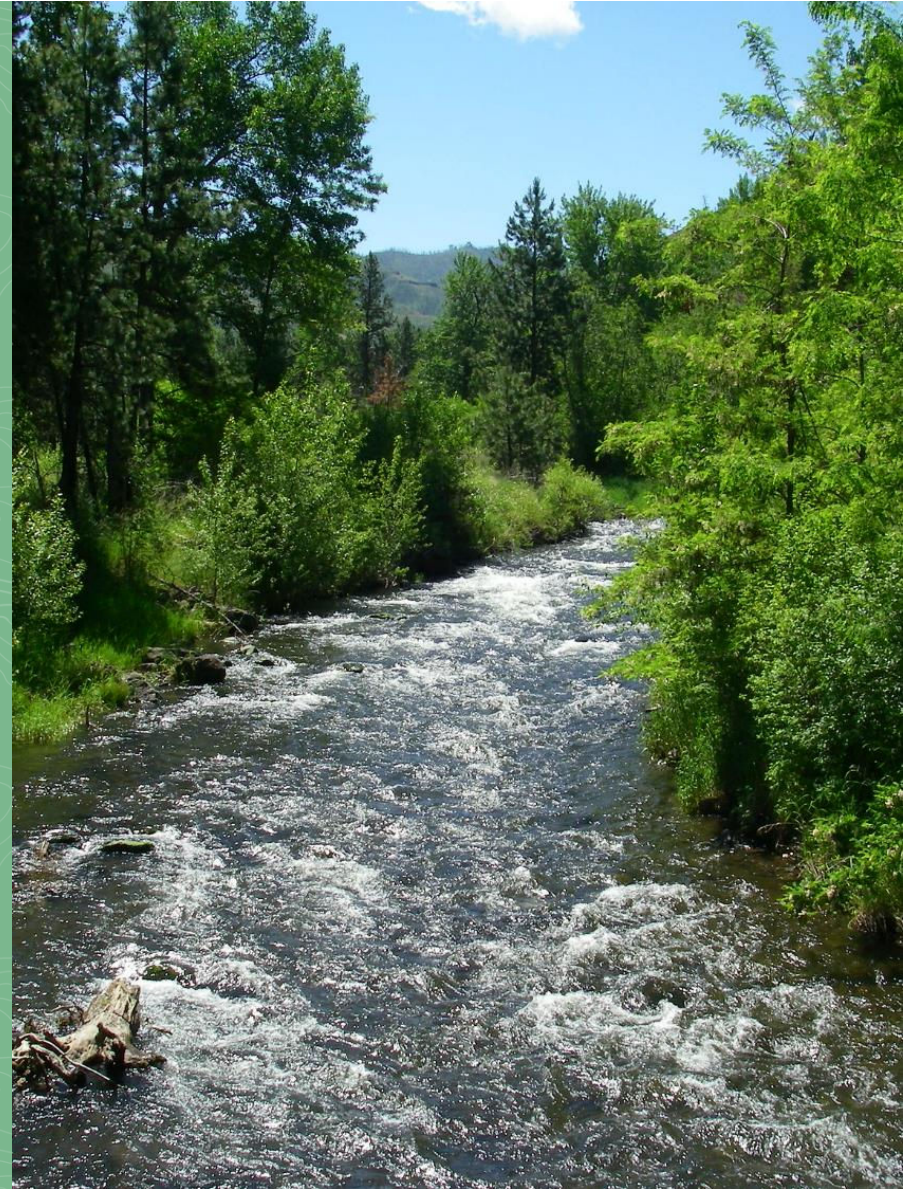
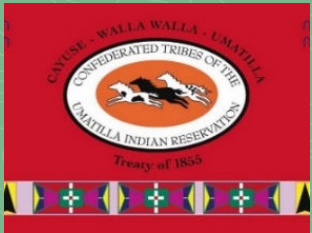




**Chris Kowitz**  
North Central Region Manager (OWRD)

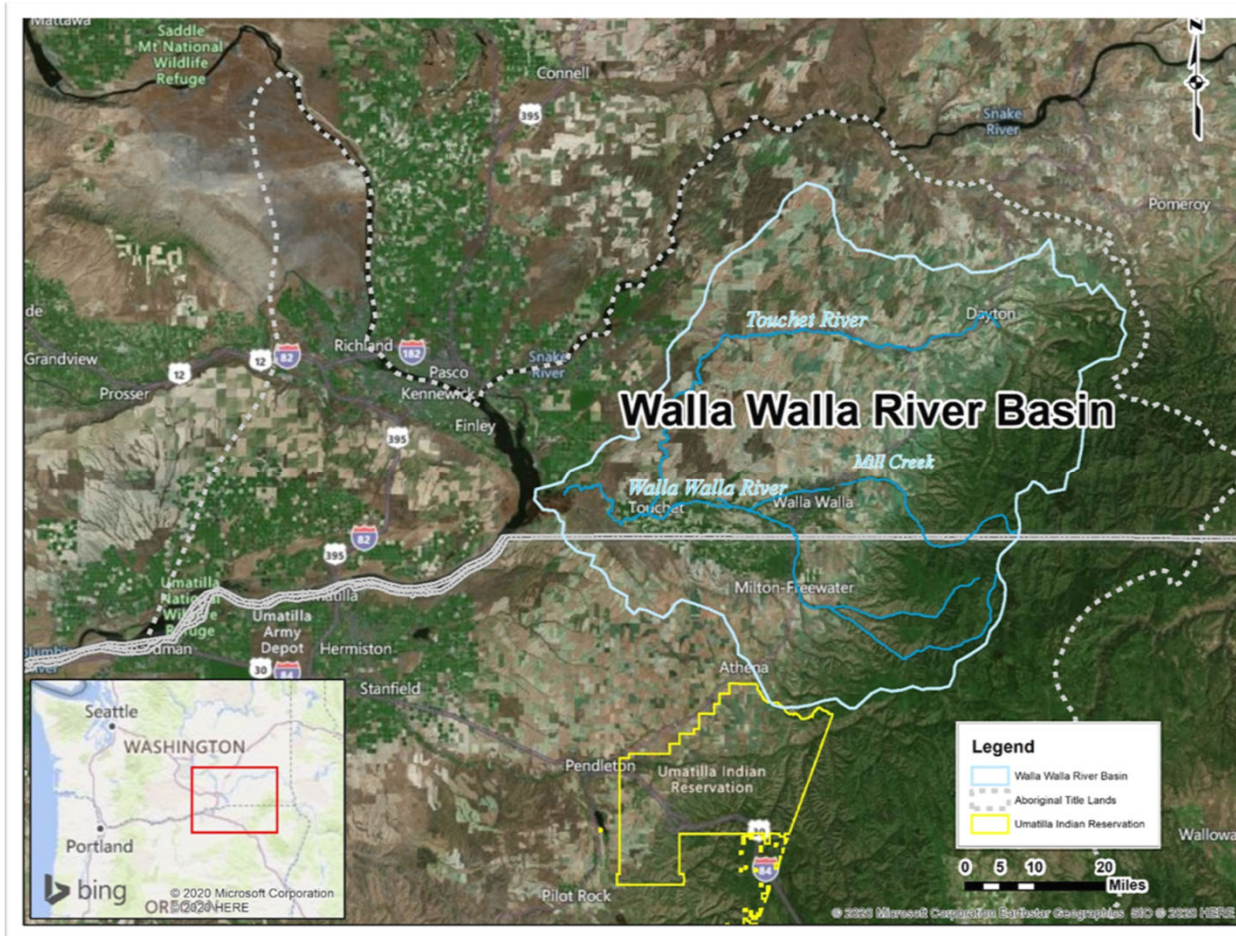
**Anton Chiono**  
Habitat Conservation Project Leader (CTUIR)

**Brook Beeler**  
Director, Eastern Region (WA ECY)





# Brief History of the Walla Walla River basin



# History of the Walla Walla River basin



- 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.





# CTUIR's - Walla Walla River Fish Hatchery

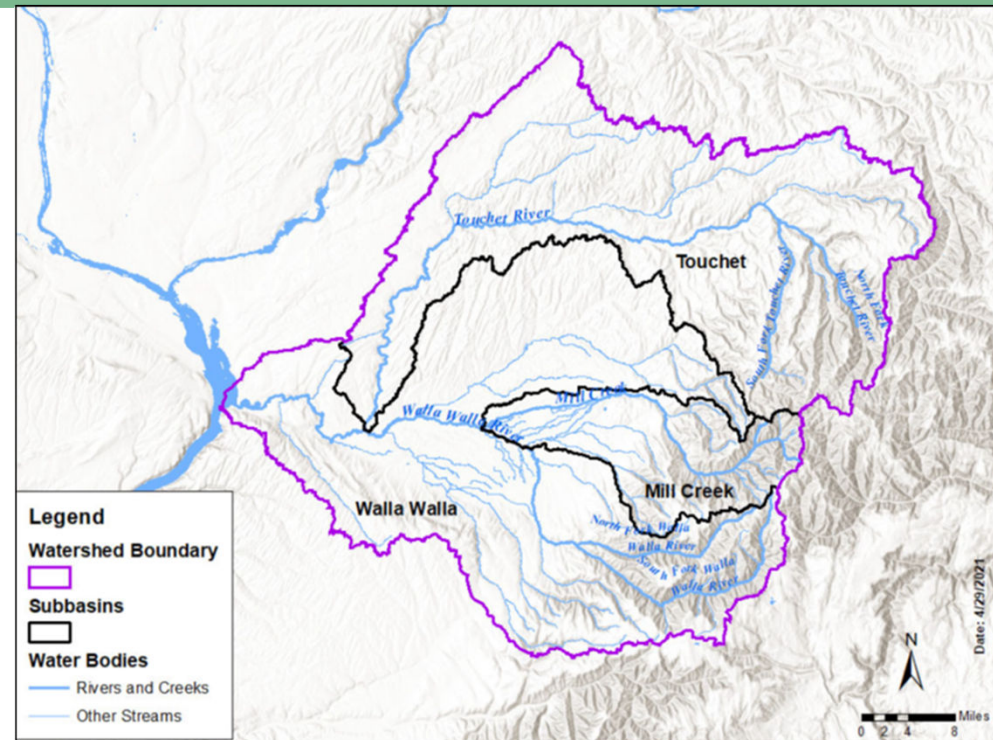


- Construction started in January of 2021, on south fork of the Walla Walla River.
- New hatchery provides egg incubation and juvenile rearing facilities
- Hatchery completed in 2021
- Goal is to have 5000 Spring Chinook annually released into the Walla Walla river basin



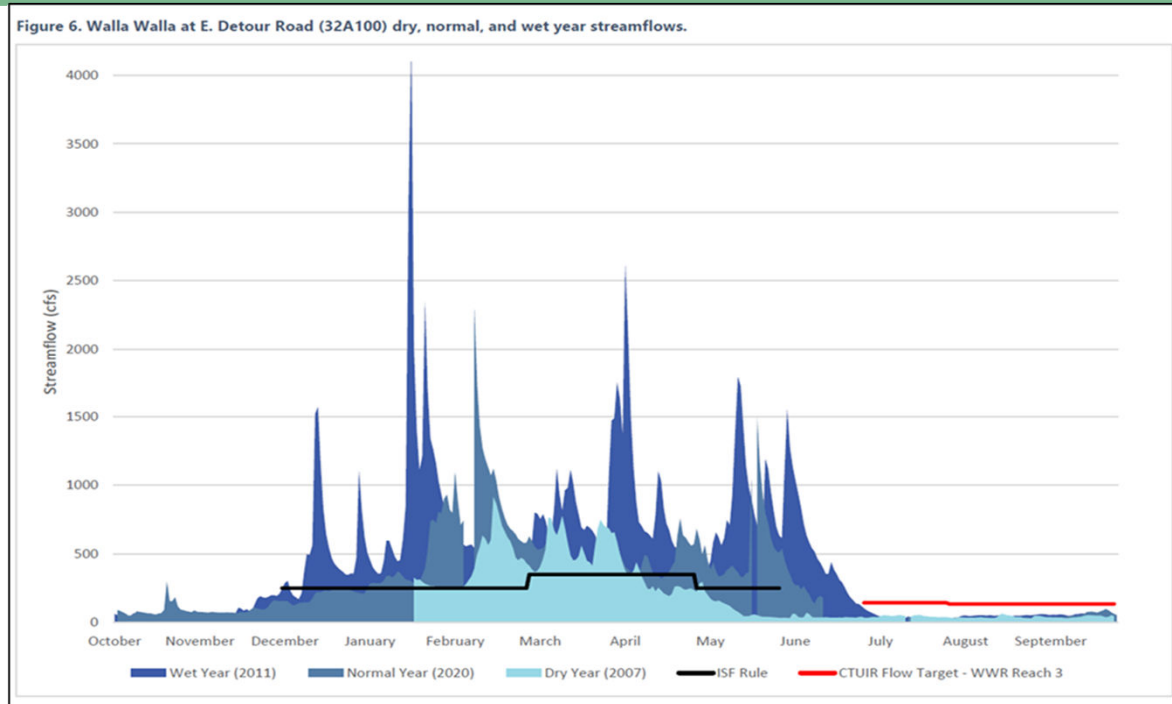
# Water in the Walla Walla Basin

- Bi-state basin
- Over-appropriated; junior water rights are curtailed and instream flows go unmet
- ~85,000 irrigated acres
- Municipal, industrial, and habitat demand
- Unique hydrogeology and hydrology



# Water in the Walla Walla Basin

- Supply and demand imbalance means instream flow need are often not met





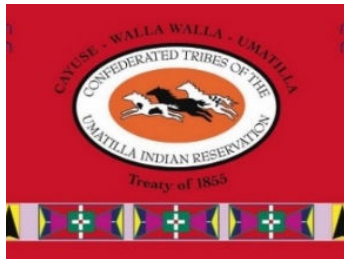
# Strategic Plan Implementation Update



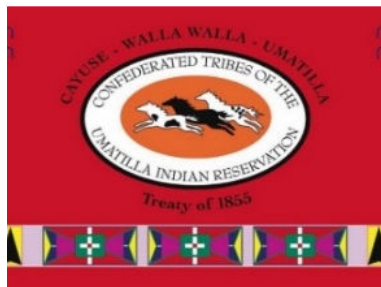


# Tri-Sovereigns Role

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



# Goals for the Basin – Tri Sovereign Perspective



- 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





# Developing a 30-year Water Vision: WWW 2050

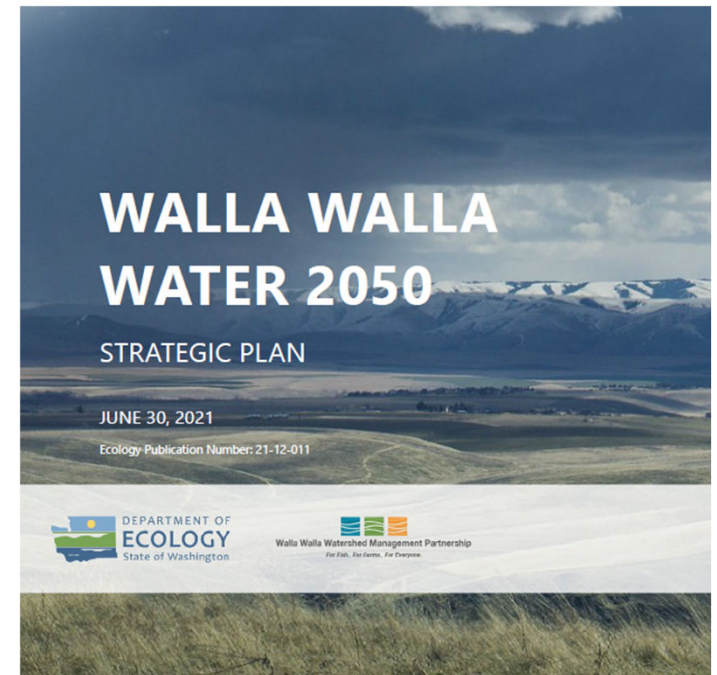


- Build upon past planning and coordination
- Modify based on lessons learned
- Enhance sovereign government coordination
- Improve legally defensible data for decision making
- Link Walla Walla efforts to regional objectives



# Developing a 30-year Water Vision: WWW 2050

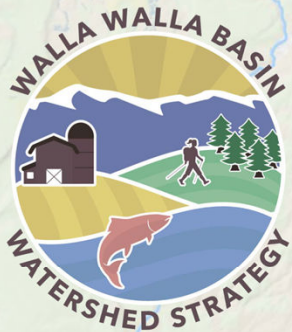
- 30-year effort to improve streamflow and water supplies in the Walla Walla watershed
- Employs an integrated water resource management approach
- Integrates goals and solutions from the basin's diverse stakeholders in both Washington and Oregon
- Developed over 2 years
- Identified 50 strategies in 5 separate focus areas





# WALLA WALLA BASIN WATERSHED STRATEGY

## 2020-2050



### Near-Term Priority Strategies

#### FLOODPLAINS AND HABITAT

- Reconnect floodplain and restore channel complexity
- Improve fish passage in Mill Creek
- Protect and improve fish passage at Nursery Bridge on the WW river
- Improve flow and timing of fish passage through Hofer Dam on the Touchet

#### MONITORING AND METERING

- Develop an overarching monitoring strategy and adaptive management plan
- Expand and fund streamflow gages
- Improve water use metering and reporting

#### WATER POLICY

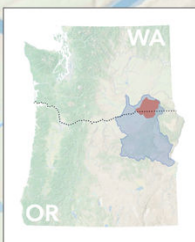
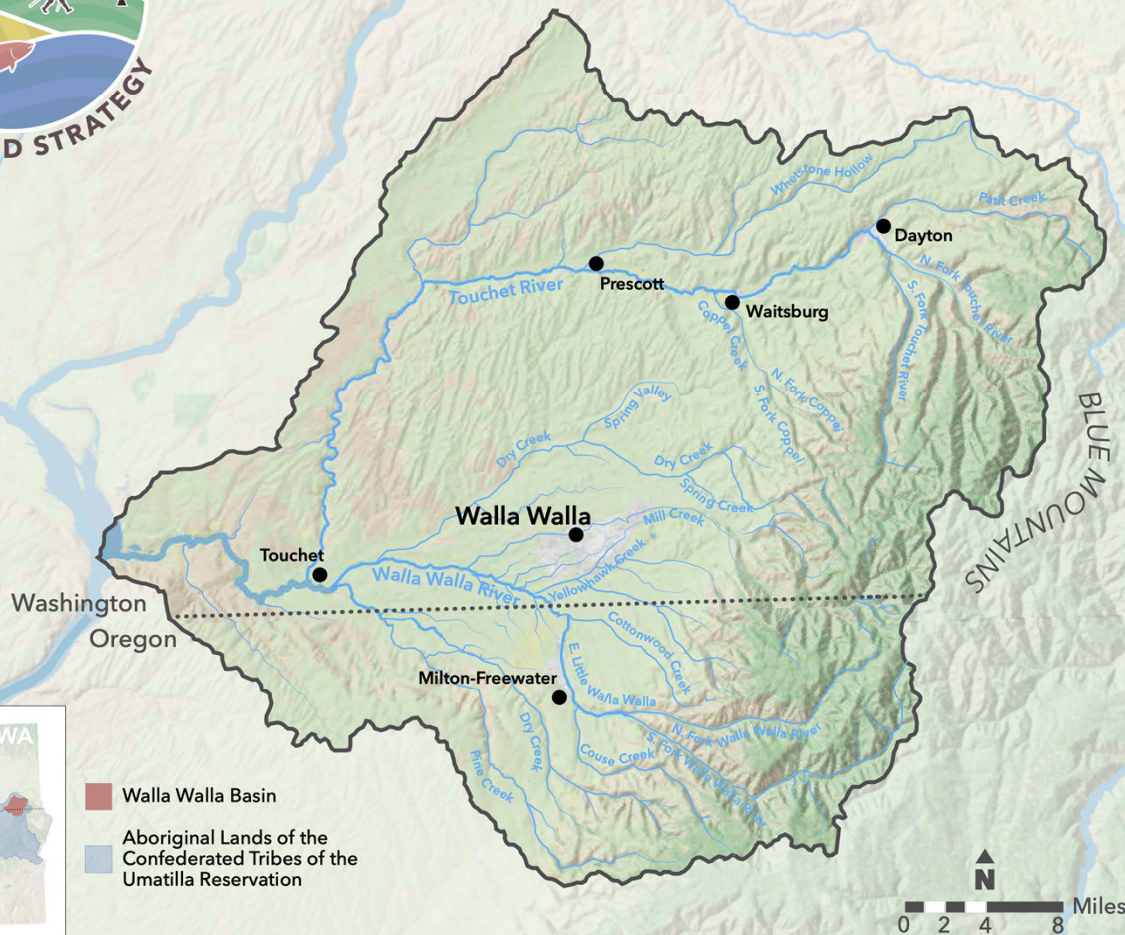
- Improve drought management
- Increase coordination of regulation and management
- Additional Bi-State coordination on water management

#### STREAMFLOW, GROUNDWATER AND WATER SUPPLY

- Ongoing analyses of the Bi-State Flow Study toward a preferred alternative
- Substitute for basalt wells during low flow periods
- Water rights acquisitions to restore streamflows
- Improve and expand managed aquifer recharge
- Expand and support aquifer storage and recovery

#### WATER QUALITY

- Increase infiltration of stormwater
- Upgrade Dayton wastewater treatment plant
- Implement conservation tillage and soil erosion Best Management Practices



■ Walla Walla Basin  
■ Aboriginal Lands of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation

# Update on Plan Implementation

## Funding update

- 2023/2025
  - ECY/OCR: \$4.5 million
    - \$2.5 million for operations and studies
    - \$2.0 million for pass through funds
  - OWRD: \$2.3 million
    - All for operations and studies
- 2025/2027
  - ECY/OCR: \$2.5 million
    - \$1.0 million for operations and studies
    - \$1.5 million for pass through funds
  - OWRD: \$1.9 million
    - All for operations and studies





# Update on Plan Implementation



## Funding update

- Funding process developed in 2022; further refinement planned in late 2025
- Need to identify long-term funding for continued plan implementation, communications and outreach, and USBOR planning processes
- Draft legislation to provide funds proposed in the Oregon 2025 legislative session; outcome unknown



# Walla Walla Basin Advisory Committee

- 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





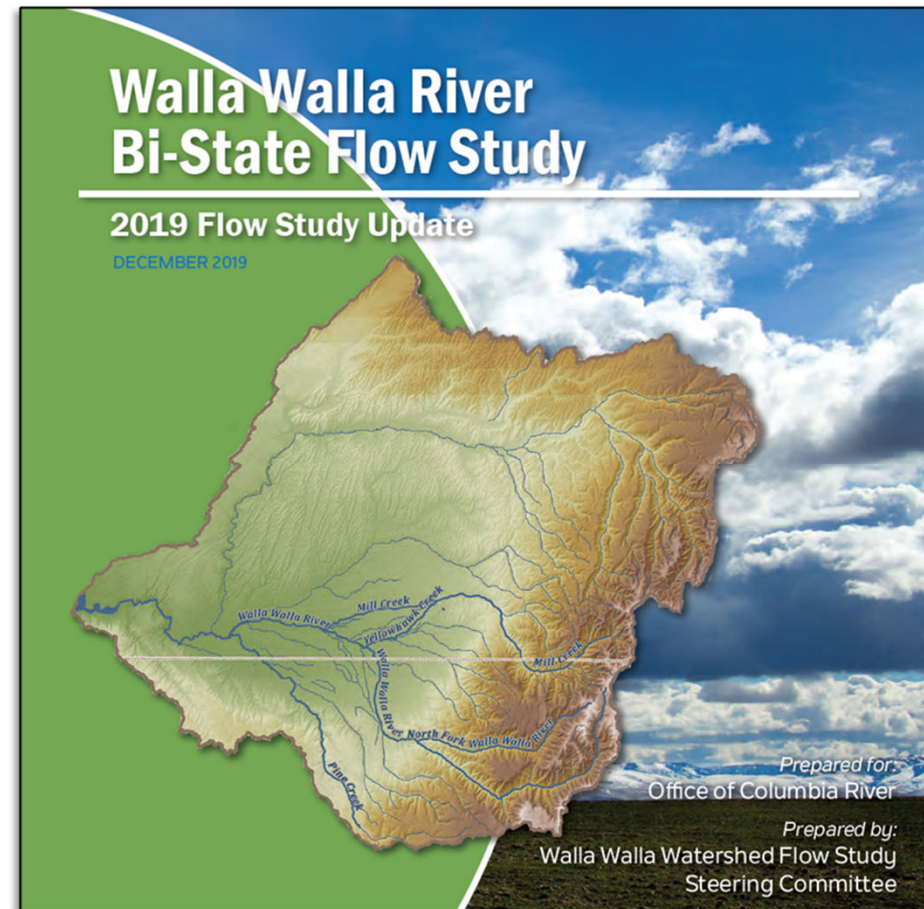
# Community Outreach

- Community Watershed Tour
- Fall Open House (~200 attendees)
- Field Trips- Spring 2024 Smolt Release



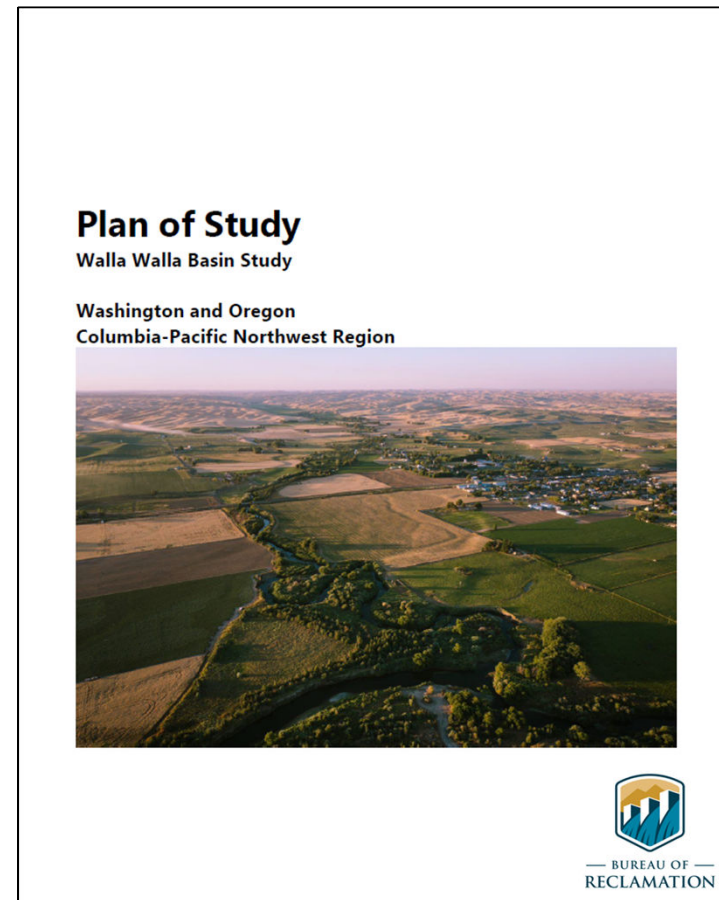
# Update on Water Planning

- Bi-State Flow Study
  - Evaluating water supply projects
  - Primary focus on restoring flow in the Walla Walla River
  - 3 alternatives identified for future evaluation
- Bi-State Flow Study workgroup wrapped up in early 2025; work transitioned to the USBOR Basin Study



# Update on Water Planning

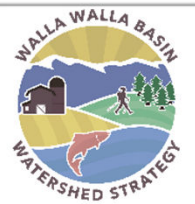
- U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Basin Study
  - MOA initiating \$500k study grant signed by the Tri-Sovereigns in August 2023
  - Study reviews existing work products (Supply and Demand analysis)
  - Develops Riverware model
  - Evaluates supply projects to ensure goals are met
- Basin Study is scheduled to be finalized by mid-2026





# Update on Water Planning

- USGS Groundwater Basin Study
  - Data collection has been completed
  - USGS and OWRD are working on data analysis and reports
  - Final report scheduled to be published in 2026



# Update on Legislation

- Walla Walla Legislation in 23/24/25
  - HB 1322 – Washington (2023)
  - SB 1567 – Oregon (2024)
  - SB 761 – Oregon (2025)
- Bi-state water management framework
- Developed water implementation

CERTIFICATION OF ENROLLMENT  
SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1322

Chapter 239, Laws of 2023

68th Legislature  
2023 Regular Session

WALLA WALLA WATER 2050 PLAN

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 23, 2023

<p>Passed by the House March 2, 2023 Yeas 96 Nays 0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ LAURIE JINKINS Speaker of the House of Representatives</p> <p>Passed by the Senate April 11, 2023 Yeas 49 Nays 0</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ DENNY HECK President of the Senate</p> <p>Approved May 4, 2023 10:07 AM</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CERTIFICATE</p> <p>I, Bernard Dean, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives of the State of Washington, do hereby certify that the attached is <b>SECOND SUBSTITUTE HOUSE BILL 1322</b> as passed by the House of Representatives and the Senate on the dates hereon set forth.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">_____ BERNARD DEAN Chief Clerk</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FILED May 4, 2023</p>
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# Future Action

- Continue planning and feasibility work with the USBOR
- Develop long-term funding options for plan implementation
- Additional outreach and engagement with elected officials, partners, and local communities
- Focused investments to maximize impact





Thank you!

Questions or feedback?

