Organizational and Funding Structure Proposal
for the
Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan

SB 5352
“jointly develop with the department”— “a report”— “including a funding approach and
organizational structure, to achieve the desired outcome of improved and sustainable flows
for fish, adequate water supplies for agriculture, municipal, and domestic water users, and
improved habitat and flood plain functionality in the Walla Walla watershed;”

The task for the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership (WWWMP) with the
Department of Ecology in SB5352 is to develop and recommend an organizational structure
and funding strategy to implement the Walla Walla Water 2050 (WWW 2050) strategic
plan. The organizational structure will evolve over the next two years through the WWW
2050 planning process and development of a Programmatic Environmental Impact
Statement.

This paper is a proposal from the Partnership of the issues to consider, and potential options
for an organization/entity and funding strategy to represent the basin as we move forward
together to address water resource issues.

The Partnership will forward the following information to the Walla Walla Water 2050
Planning Group with the understanding that the Washington Department of Ecology and
many others will make the decision on a final organizational structure and funding plan for
presentation to the Washington State Legislature in the fall of 2023.

This proposal was developed from information from the combined Water Resource Panel
/Policy Advisory Group of the Partnership, the Draft Walla Walla Walla 2050 Plan and
information from other organizations working in the region. The committee developing the
information included representatives of the Walla Walla Watershed Management
Partnership Board, and staff from basin partners from Washington and Oregon who have
worked with the Partnership and are participating in the WWW 2050 planning process.

The following components are proposed by the Walla Walla Watershed Management
Partnership for an organizational structure and funding strategy to implement the Walla
Walla Water 2050 Plan.
Mission (example)
The mission of the (organization) is to provide sustainable flows for fish, adequate water supplies for irrigated agriculture, municipal and domestic water users, and restore habitat and flood plain functionality (ecological processes) in the watershed of the Walla Walla River for current and future generations.

Purpose (example)
The purpose of the organization shall be to implement a water resource management plan to integrate goals and solutions from the basin's diverse stakeholders in both Washington and Oregon, including regional tribes, residents, farmers, environmental and conservation groups, local state and federal agencies and governments, and industries to achieve holistic and viable long-term management for water use in the basin.

Goals and Objectives (draft)

**Holistically** address the basin’s longstanding struggle to balance instream and out of stream uses and future demand to ensure enough water for fish, farms, and people.

Critical objectives include:
- Implement the **prioritized** strategies, projects, initiatives, and/or programs needed to address challenges and **achieve the long-term goals** for the watershed.
- Implement an organizational structure that **ensures accountability**.
- Achieve **clarity around legal framework** and regulatory scheme, including **bistate coordination** and **water rights management** by the three sovereigns: Washington State Department of Ecology, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and Oregon Water Resources.
- Obtain adequate/dedicated **funding**.

Membership

*Recommendations assume the structure will include a central committee with bistate representation from subgroups and/or working groups and/or agencies.*

A commitment to transparent participation and dedication to achieving the goals set forth in the Walla Walla Water 2050 Plan

A commitment to cooperation in decision making that may be best achieved through consensus.

Composition of the organization

*Recommendations assume the structure will include a central committee with bistate representation from subgroups and/or working groups and/or agencies.*

1. Representation to ensure a balanced representation of diverse stakeholders in both Washington and Oregon, including regional tribes, residents, farmers,
environmental and conservation groups, industry, and local state and federal agencies and governments.

2. Provide opportunities for and encourage representation from each watershed or sub-watershed to participate in workgroups on teams addressing integrated whole watershed management implementation strategies. (A way to ensure participation from groups to address problems. So that from the beginning to have basin wide voices in the same room.)
   - Organize water communities based on geographic sub-basins or sub-sub-basins to facilitate communication and cooperative water use between entities based on specific characteristics of the area. e.g., levee setbacks in Milton-Freewater or reconstruction of the Mill Creek Flood control channel in Walla Walla, bi-state water management on the Little Walla Walla Rivers.

3. Decision making must be balanced to include local voices from both states, tribes, and federal and state agencies and governments.
   - Emphasis on locally informed decision making.

4. Workgroups or teams to address specific whole watershed issues such as:
   (These categories will change as plan strategy prioritization is developed and as needs arise)

   **Administrative Working Group/Council**

   Provide criteria for project prioritization, with achievable goals and timelines. Provide oversight of staff for proposed organization. Responsible for maintaining adequate funding. Internal and external communication

   **Ecological Function Working Group**

   Implement chapters of strategic plan, focusing on key topic areas, including streamflows and groundwater, floodplains and flood control, surface water quality, habitat, and critical species.

   **Streamflow Improvement & Groundwater Recharge Water Supply & Efficiency Projects**

   Implement chapters of strategic plan, specifically addressing water demand and supply across the agricultural, municipal, rural domestic and industrial sectors.

   **Policy & Regulatory Actions**

   State and local governments provide legal expertise to help guide policy, regulation and advocacy for legislative authority and state and federal funding.
Implement chapters of the strategic plan that specifically address, legal issues, bi-state cooperation, regulatory compliance, and legislative and congressional actions.

Identify other entities such as port authorities that can work across state lines.

**Monitoring & Metering**

Acquire and share data.

Obtain funding to implement long term basin wide monitoring and adaptive management plans.

**Land Use**

Implement chapters of the plan that address upland management, dryland agriculture, forests, and urban/rural planning and when and where appropriate, zoning.

**Climate change**

Embedded within each strategy and considered by each working group as to ways in which actions provide possible mitigation for climate changes.

**Science Team**

Composed of State and federal agencies, tribes, implementing organizations and educational institutions to provide technical support and science to guide project development, implementation, and project monitoring.

**Quality of Life/Education and Outreach**

*(Essential to community involvement for support of funding and implementation of WWW 2050 Plan)*.

Develop and implement projects that involve community participation. Establish relevant and timely communication regarding WW Water 2050 strategies, programs, and projects. Obtain sufficient funding to provide relevant and effective outreach to community members.

**Primary Roles or Functions of the organization to support implementation of the WWW 2050 Plan**. *(This list is not inclusive, and all roles and functions may not be relevant.)*

1. Establish achievable goals and timelines.
2. Support activities which fulfill organization purpose through a strategic management plan
3. Support to specific projects such as an anchor project
4. Provide financial and technical support to basin implementing entities.
5. Promote development of a Bi-State agreement
6. Support bistate cooperation, such as.
   - User to user communication to encourage cooperative management.
   - Bi-State critical aquifer recharge areas
7. Community Relations, Community Outreach, Publicity, Education
8. Coordination between groups to create efficiency and build capacity.
9. Determine implementation entities and capacity for implementation.
10. Evaluate results of project implementation and adaptive management strategies.
11. Support for legal and policy regulation by agencies.
12. Support co-manager data collection and sharing to inform decision making.
13. Continue the commitment to work together to meet the goals of the WW Water Plan implementation
14. Provide opportunities and appropriate meeting times and places to provide access to public.
15. Timely revision of strategic planning (part of administrative roles-needs more emphasis)
16. Long term-organization should be locally based with staff and infrastructure to provide the management, coordination, and outreach.
17. Commitment to participate in an open and fair process to accomplish the goals of the organization.

**Funding** - The expectation is that a funding framework will evolve over the next 5-30 years. *(Evolve to a fully publicly funded entity).*

Implement a diverse and robust funding plan.

1. Consider advantages and disadvantage of a temporary or long-term funding strategy as a project of the Office of the Columbia River.
2. Consider advantages and disadvantages of legislative authority for obtaining organizational funding for local office(s) and staff.
3. Consider advantages and disadvantages of non-profit organizations ability to attract funding from diverse sources.
4. Assess capacity of funding support from cities, counties, and states to fund operations of the organization.
5. Assess capacity for funding through state and federal agencies.
6. Assess capacity of tribal governments and Walla Walla Basin partner organizations for implementation of projects and opportunities to build capacity where needed.
7. Assess efficiencies of collaborative funding and where local entities may provide less expensive services, such as monitoring, than outside basin entities.
8. Assess the economic value of ecosystem services for implementation of the Walla Walla Water 2050 plan and the costs if the plan is not implemented.