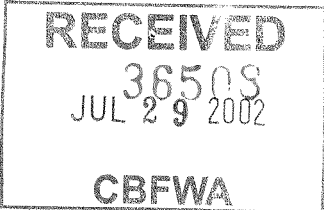


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July 26, 2002

To: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Public Partnerships for Restoration

Re: Support for the Watershed Legacy Learning Community

The Walla Walla valley is creating a new atmosphere for collaborative problem solving. We refer to it as the "Walla Walla Way" as we wrestle with what could be and has been a highly contentious issue of limited flows for fish and agriculture. The Klamath and the Methow valleys could learn from our example.

Our last year cycle of Community "Confluences" was a success as we brought together various interest groups, tribes, states, and federal agencies for two and a half days each season to informally discuss issues and solutions in a casual non-confrontational setting established through the skilled facilitation of Peter Donaldson.

If we don't get landowner buy in then we won't see improvements in this watershed with its 80 percent private land ownership. Watershed Legacy will expand the existing Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council's work to the whole watershed, not just Oregon, by providing the outreach, forum for input, and solution development that this valley needs.

The tools of Watershed Legacy have begun to be applied through our confluence symposium and planning partner communications. But we need further support to be able to expand the participation, the audience, the face-to-face frequency, the between gathering planning and exchanges, and the overall effectiveness of our collaborative process. The on-line component will allow us to store what we learn, document progress, and share with interested onlookers from other watersheds. By training local leaders, outside support will become obsolete, like a salmon hatchery that restocks a river to a locally driven, self-sustaining run.

The Walla Walla subbasin, as a bi-state, multi-county watershed, is an ideal test case and will model for other basins how to overcome political and organizational boundaries. With "The Walla Walla Way" we are helping to expand the horizons of different bureaucracies as they learn how to work with new partners and the citizens themselves. Help us on our quest.

Sincerely,

Brian Wolcott
Coordinator, Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council