

Flow from Flexibility—Continued

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HB 1580, which passed the Washington State Legislature in the 2009 session, authorized a pilot local water management program in the Walla Walla Basin. The program approach is not based on regulatory control, but rather on cooperation, local responsibility, and inspiring people to go beyond what regulation can deliver. The authorization of this pilot program is the culmination of 4 years of effort to develop the Water Management Initiative, a collaborative effort among local interests from county, agricultural, municipal, and environmental sectors; state agencies; academia; Oregon interests; and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation.

The pilot program is being developed with the intent of providing local water users with flexibility in exercising their water rights in exchange for increasing stream flows. This includes a basin level governance structure, a local water bank, and the creation of a program that allows “Flow from Flexibility” Local Water Plans, where water right holders are allowed to create performance-based proposals for use of their water rights--so long as stream flows are improved, ground water supplies are sustained, and other water right holders are not affected.

The passage of HB 1580, The Water Management Initiative, represents a new concept in water management, one that will increase agricultural economic vitality while enhancing environmental benefit addressing all of the issues above. For more information see the following web page: <http://www.wallawallawatershed.org/>

Gerald Anhorn

Gerald Anhorn is an instructor in the Water Management Program at Walla Walla Community College (WWCC) and was the past Director of the Water and Environmental Center at WWCC. He has an AAAS in Irrigation Technology from WWCC, a B.S. in Agricultural Mechanization, and an M.S. in Agriculture from Washington State University. He was owner/operator of an irrigation construction firm for 12 years prior to his employment at WWCC. Gerald has been involved in restoration efforts throughout the Walla Walla basin for many years, focusing mainly on water and water management related issues. He is also very active in a local non-profit organization engaged in riparian restoration and protection projects throughout the basin.

Matt Rajnus

Matt Rajnus is the Program Director of the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership. He has worked for the Walla Walla County Watershed Planning Department for the last four years, where he has been involved with watershed planning efforts for the Walla Walla Basin. Since 2007, he has worked on the development of the Water Management Initiative that led to the passage of HB 1580 and creation of the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership. He received a B.S. in Natural Resources from Oregon State University in 2004.