

THE WILLIAM D. RUCKELSHAUS CENTER

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

Post-Project Evaluation: The Walla Walla Water Management Initiative

Project Purpose: This Post-Project Evaluation fulfills two purposes. First, the evaluation will investigate the effectiveness and applicability of the Ruckelshaus Center's previous contributions to the Walla Walla Water Management Initiative. Second, the evaluation will explore the outcomes, challenges, and opportunities that have emerged during the implementation of this Initiative and the resultant Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership. The results of this evaluation will be useful for the Center and for entities within the Walla Walla Basin.

Project Background & Overview: The Ruckelshaus Center (a joint effort of WSU and UW that helps parties develop collaborative, durable and effective solutions to complex public policy challenges) participated in the development of the Initiative as a neutral and independent project consultant. From late 2006 through early 2007, the Center conducted an assessment of conditions in the Walla Walla Basin and carried out a review of comparable management initiatives in other locations. These efforts culminated in the publication of two report documents. The first report, published in January 2007, contained a selection of insights and lessons learned from water management efforts in other jurisdictions. The second report, published in July 2007, summarized conditions in the Walla Walla Basin and provided a set of considerations for establishing a shared governance mechanism for managing water issues.

Ten years later, the Center is revisiting these earlier efforts, in order to explore the subsequent accomplishments of the Walla Walla Watershed Management Initiative. The Center is also interested in assessing the effectiveness of its involvement with the process. The Center believes that the timing of this evaluation is favorable, given that the time elapsed since the beginning of the Initiative is sufficient to reach conclusions about implementation, and pending legislative reauthorization of the statute enabling the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership (RCW 90.92) will make those conclusions timely and relevant.

During the course of the evaluation, the Center is seeking to answer the following questions:

1. What are the tangible impacts associated with the Walla Walla Water Management Initiative (impacts may pertain to basin-scale water management, local governance capacities, or other areas of interest)?
2. What recommendations have been most helpful for Initiative participants?
3. What opportunities and challenges exist for the future of the Initiative's work?
4. How have the Ruckelshaus Center's recommendations been incorporated into the activities and structure of the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership (the collaborative entity that arose from the Initiative)?
5. How can the Ruckelshaus Center improve its services for future clients?

Project Outline: The Post-Project Assessment will consist of the following major activities:

1. Conduct background research on the Walla Walla Basin, the Water Management Initiative, the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership, and the Ruckelshaus Center's involvement with the project.
2. Carry out one-on-one interviews with a representative set of participants.
3. Analyze interview findings in order to identify key themes and lessons learned.
4. Present evaluation findings in a formal report that is available to the public.

Project Timeline:

June 2016: Contact potential interviewees to introduce project and request participation

June-July 2016: Conduct interviews in person or via telephone

August 2016: Analyze interview results, prepare draft project report

September 2016: Make draft report available to interviewees for fact check, revise and finalize project report

October 28, 2016: Present project report at the Ruckelshaus Center Advisory Board Meeting in Walla Walla

Additional Information: For more information about the Ruckelshaus Center and its services, please visit us at <http://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu/about/>. For more information about the evaluation, contact Project Coordinator, Molly Stenovec at molly.stenovec@wsu.edu, 206-219-2411, or via the Center's main number, 206-428-3021.