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**Ex-WSU president named interim director of Ruckelshaus Center**

**Cookson Beecher**  
 Capital Press

Former Washington State University President V. Lane Rawlins has been selected to serve as interim director of the William D. Ruckelshaus Center.

A joint enterprise of the University of Washington and Washington State University, the center serves as a neutral resource for collaborative problem-solving.

Founded in 2003 as the Policy Consensus Center, it was renamed last fall in honor of Ruckelshaus, who served as director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency during the Nixon and Reagan administrations.

Now a Seattle-area resident, Ruckelshaus was instrumental in founding the center and is chairman of its advisory board.

During the 2007 legislative session, state lawmakers assigned the Ruckelshaus Center the challenge of helping to resolve conflicts between agricultural and environmental interests.

UW President Mark Emmert pointed to Rawlins' broad experience as a leader of a research university and his proven ability to bring people together as qualities that make him well-suited to lead the center through "this pivotal time" and help address some of the most complex challenges facing the state.

Elson Floyd, the new president of WSU, agreed, saying Rawlins has an in-depth understanding of the state of Washington and of the mission of the Ruckelshaus Center.

"His problem-solving skills were instrumental to the success of WSU under his leadership, and this role at the Ruckelshaus Center will again put those skills to use for the good of our state," Floyd said.

Rawlins said he is eager to tackle the challenge before him.

"This is a tremendously difficult and important issue for the state and for all parties involved," he said, referring to the conflicts between agricultural landowners and environmentalists. "I see my interim role as helping the center solve problems that these and similar issues present."

Rawlins said he agreed to take this challenge on because of the clear public value of promoting collaboration among parties on a variety of issues of great public concern.

"The center is a primary example of the two research universities leveraging their value by combining skills," he said.

Rawlins, who retired from WSU on June 30, will not receive compensation for his work with the center.

Staff writer Cookson Beecher is based in Sedro-Woolley, Wash. E-mail: cbeecher@capitalpress.com.

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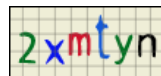
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