



Public Participation Plan

Spokane International Airport PFAS site

9000 W. Airport Dr., Spokane, Spokane County
Facility Site ID: 6332493, Cleanup Site ID: 16774

Toxics Cleanup Program

Washington Department of Ecology
Spokane, Washington

Publication 26-09-021, Revised April 2026

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's [Spokane International Airport PFAS cleanup site page](#).¹

Related Information

- Cleanup site ID: 16774
- Facility site ID: 6332493

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[Toxics Cleanup Program](#)²

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To request an ADA accommodation, email ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov, call 360-407-6831 or call Ecology through the Washington Telecommunication Relay for services including text telephone (TTY) at 711 or through your preferred relay service provider. Visit [Ecology.wa.gov/ADA](https://ecology.wa.gov/ADA) for more accessibility information.

Language Access

The Department of Ecology offers free translation and interpretation services. If you need help in your preferred language, please call Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 and request an interpreter, or email erika.beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/16774>

² <https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Who-we-are/Our-Programs/Toxics-Cleanup>

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

Map of Counties Served



| | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Southwest Region 360-407-6300 | Northwest Region 206-594-0000 | Central Region 509-575-2490 | Eastern Region 509-329-3400 |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|

| Region | Counties served | Mailing Address | Phone |
|---------------------|--|--|--------------|
| Southwest | Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum | PO Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504 | 360-407-6300 |
| Northwest | Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom | PO Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133 | 206-594-0000 |
| Central | Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima | 1250 W Alder St Union Gap, WA 98903 | 509-575-2490 |
| Eastern | Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman | 4601 N Monroe Spokane, WA 99205 | 509-329-3400 |
| Headquarters | Across Washington | PO Box 47600 Olympia, WA 98504 | 360-407-6000 |

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Figures..... | iii |
| Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup | 1 |
| Site contacts..... | 1 |
| Public Participation Activities | 2 |
| How we share information with the community..... | 2 |
| How you can share information with us..... | 4 |
| Public participation grants..... | 5 |
| Site Information..... | 5 |
| Historical use..... | 5 |
| How the contamination was discovered | 5 |
| Contamination | 6 |
| Health effects..... | 6 |
| Cleanup plans..... | 6 |
| Emergency interim actions to provide safe water | 9 |
| Area community | 10 |
| Groundwater and hydrogeology..... | 12 |
| Tribal engagement | 13 |
| Washington’s Cleanup Laws | 13 |
| Model Toxics Control Act..... | 13 |
| State Environmental Policy Act..... | 13 |
| Plan Amendments | 14 |
| Appendix | 15 |
| Steps in the MTCA cleanup process..... | 15 |

List of Figures

Figures

Figure 1. Areas where soil and groundwater were sampled during the initial investigation, except for Hangar 725 (Area D) where PFAS firefighting foam was stored but no known spills have occurred. Note: This is Figure 1.2 in the Initial PFAS Investigation Work Plan (figure by GSI Environmental). 8

Figure 2. Area where safe water will be provided to people with contaminated private wells. ... 9

Figure 3. West Plains area map 10

Figure 4. Hydrologic model for the West Plains 12

Public Involvement in Contamination Cleanup

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) developed this Public Participation Plan (plan) to promote meaningful community involvement during cleanup of the Spokane International Airport PFAS site (site).

This plan outlines how Ecology will keep the public informed about contamination investigations and cleanup options at each stage of the process. Please review the Appendix for more information about the cleanup process. The plan also details when and how the community can participate in the cleanup process. We encourage the public to engage with the decision-making opportunities and provide input.

Site contacts

To be included in the site record, comments about the cleanup process must be submitted during comment periods. Questions and informal comments or information about the site's history are welcome anytime.

Ecology

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Public Participation Activities

Members of the public may ask questions, submit informal comments, or share site information at any time. Interested parties do not need to wait for a formal public comment period to contact Ecology.

However, to be included in the formal site record, comments about the site investigation, cleanup alternatives, or cleanups must be submitted during formal comment periods. In addition, the public is invited to review site documents before they become final. This is the most direct and influential way to learn more about the site and be involved in the cleanup's decision-making.

How we share information with the community

During specific stages of the cleanup, Ecology will mail notices about public comment periods to addresses surrounding the site. The mailing list area will vary depending on the type of contamination and where it's located. However, the list will at least include addresses within a 1/4-mile radius of the site and other interested organizations and individuals (see the Postal mailing list section below for a description of this site's list). These notices will provide general information about the site, contact information for submitting comments, and times and locations of public meetings or hearings, or how to request one if not yet scheduled.

Comment period notices will be available online and at document repositories (for example at the library closest to the site). Notices may also be posted in various locations throughout the community (for

example, local businesses, schools, or post offices).

Ecology may also develop documents outside of comment periods to keep the community updated on the site's status. These informational documents will be available online and print copies may be mailed to the nearby community if we feel the message warrants the associated cost and resources.

Postal mailing list

We maintain a mailing list that includes everyone in the interim action area (Figure 2, page 10). Homes already connected to city water will not need filtration or sampling, as that water is regularly tested and safe. Others outside the area may receive mailed notices because they requested to be on the list or were on the list we originally created before defining the interim action area.

Spokane County's parcel data also provides mailing addresses for property owners who do not receive mail at their physical address and may live elsewhere. If renters are at the physical address, the owner and renter should both receive notification by mail.

These people receive public comment notices in the mail when draft documents are available. These notices are also sent to the West Plains PFAS Updates email list.

We will add individuals, organizations, and other interested parties to the mailing list as requested. If you would like to be added to the mailing list for this site, please contact Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 or Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

West Plains PFAS Updates email list

Ecology maintains the West Plains PFAS Updates email list to share information with interested persons about this site and other PFAS-related topics. If you would like to be added to the West Plains PFAS Updates email list, please [subscribe online](#),³ or contact Erika Beresovoy at Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov or 509-385-2290.

The email list is the best way to stay informed about PFAS in the West Plains, as you receive more updates than you do through the mail.

Ecology's website and social media platforms

We maintain a webpage for the [Spokane International Airport PFAS cleanup site](#).⁴ The website provides site information, and you may download cleanup documents.

We may also share information through [news releases, our blog, and social media](#).⁵

Automatic site updates

You can subscribe to this site from our Spokane International Airport PFAS webpage. You'll receive a weekly email if we change the site's status, add documents to the site's webpage, or open a comment period.

Newspaper legal notices

We announce public comment periods and events in legal notices published in the



Scan to join the email list.



Spokesman Review. We will also publish notice on our [Public Input & Events Listing](#).⁶

Where to see print documents

Washington Department of Ecology
Eastern Regional Office
4601 N. Monroe St.
Spokane, WA 99205

To schedule an appointment, please contact Miriam Robbins at 509-329-3415 or Miriam.Robbins@ecy.wa.gov.

If you would like to be mailed print documents, please contact Erika Beresovoy at 509-385-2290 or Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov.

Contaminated Site Register

Public comment periods, events, and other cleanup notices are published in Ecology's [Contaminated Site Register](#).⁷ To receive the *Contaminated Site Register* by email, please [subscribe online](#),⁸ or contact Sarah Kellington at sarah.kellington@ecy.wa.gov or 360-280-3167.

³ <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/WestPlainsPFASupdates>

⁴ <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/SIA-PFAS>

⁵ <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/who-we-are/news>

⁶ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Events/Search/Listing>

⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Regulations-Permits/Guidance-technical-assistance/Site-Register-lists-and-data>

⁸ <https://ecology.wa.gov/site-register>

How you can share information with us

We hold public comment periods and sometimes public events to learn your thoughts, opinions, and concerns about cleanup at a site. We may also identify public concerns and cleanup goals by meeting with and soliciting information from interested community members and organizations. To collaborate with us about this site, please contact Erika Beresovoy at Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov or 509-385-2290.

Public comment periods

At a minimum, the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA, see page 11 for more information) requires 30-day comment periods to allow interested members of the public to comment on draft documents, legal agreements, and proposed cleanup actions. If there is significant interest, Ecology may extend the public comment period.

When Ecology oversees State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) determinations (see page 12 for more information), we hold comment periods for at least two weeks and may extend to 30 days or more when other cleanup documents are concurrently available for review.

Following a comment period, we publish all the input we received and respond to significant comments and questions, as appropriate. If the comments result in significant changes to the cleanup documents, then the documents will be revised and re-issued for public review. If the comments do not result in significant changes, the documents will become final.

Public events

We hold public meetings, workshops, open houses, and hearings based on community interest. At meetings, workshops, and open houses, attendees can ask questions, learn more about the site, and submit written comments when a comment period is open. At a public hearing, verbal comments are transcribed for the record, and Ecology responds to them after the comment period in our response to comments.

If we have not scheduled an event, we will hold one if 10 people request it. This may cause us to extend a public comment period, so the event occurs during it.

Events are held at locations close to the site that meet Americans with Disabilities Act standards. Public events are always announced in advance using a variety of methods.

Ecology-hosted events about this site are usually held at the following location:

Shriners Event Center
7217 W. Westbow Blvd.
Spokane, WA 99224

Public participation grants

Grants may be available to neighborhood committees, non-profits, and other groups interested in the site. For contaminated sites, these funds can be used to:

- Hire an expert to help interpret technical information.⁹
- Conduct activities that enhance the public's understanding of, and participation in, the cleanup process

Ecology awarded the [West Plains Water Coalition](#)¹⁰ a public participation grant to assist with outreach about the site. Please complete the [form](#)¹¹ on their website to receive their newsletter.

For more information about public participation grants, please contact Laura Busby at 360-280-5088 or Laura.Busby@ecy.wa.gov and Maria Marlin at 360-407-6083 or maria.marlin@ecy.wa.gov. You may also visit the [Public Participation Grant website](#).¹²

Site Information

Historical use

Spokane County purchased two square miles in the West Plains in 1938 to create a new airport called Sunset Field.

In 1941, the War Department purchased the property to be used as a training base

for World War II. The site was renamed Geiger Field after Major Harold Geiger, a U.S. military aviator who was killed in an airplane crash in 1927.

Geiger Field closed in late 1945 when the war ended, and the site was transferred back to Spokane County and replaced Felts Field as the area's municipal airport in 1946. The name changed to Spokane International Airport (SIA) in 1960 when service to Calgary in Canada began.

However, the Air Force continued to use the airport until the early 1960s, along with Fairchild Air Force Base, which was built in 1942 four miles west of the site.

The site continues to operate as a major airport that is jointly owned by the City of Spokane and Spokane County.

How the contamination was discovered

PFAS contamination was found in wells in and around the nearby Fairchild Air Force Base in May 2017. PFAS, a known human health hazard, are in firefighting foam used to control petroleum fires at airports and military installations.

In October 2017, SIA hired an environmental consultant to drill two new groundwater monitoring wells in the northeast part of the airport property. In November, these wells and an existing well were sampled to determine if PFAS were in groundwater. Sample results for all three

⁹ Ecology currently does not have a citizen technical advisor for providing technical assistance to citizens on issues related to the investigation and cleanup of the site.

¹⁰ <https://westplainswater.org/>

¹¹ <https://westplainswater.org/contact/membership/>

¹² <https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/payments-contracts-grants/grants-loans/find-a-grant-or-loan/public-participation-grants>

wells had levels of PFAS above [Washington's State Action Levels](#).¹³

In March 2019, SIA hired another consultant to sample groundwater monitoring wells for PFAS in an area that had been used for fire training drills in the southwest portion of the airport property. Sample results for three wells had levels of PFAS above Washington's recommended health safety levels at that time.

In early 2023, Ecology received the [2017](#)¹⁴ and [2019 groundwater sampling results](#).¹⁵ from a third party who got them through a public records request. We completed an initial investigation, and then added the airport to the Contaminated Sites List.

Contamination

[PFAS](#)¹⁶ are manufactured chemicals that are persistent in the environment and do not break down easily, which is why they are called “forever chemicals.” PFAS are water soluble and highly mobile. They contaminate groundwater. They have been used in a wide variety of personal, consumer, and industrial products since the 1940s, including firefighting foam, furniture, carpet, clothing, electronics, and building insulation.

At the site, the PFAS in groundwater is most likely from firefighting foams, namely [AFFF \(aqueous film-forming foam\)](#).¹⁷

Health effects

PFAS have been found in the blood of people and animals all over the world. Some types of PFAS chemicals can build up in our bodies through a process called “bioaccumulation” when we’re exposed for a long time, such as months to years. This is a problem, because studies show that having higher levels of PFAS chemicals in our bodies could increase our risk for negative health impacts, including:

- Higher [cholesterol levels](#).¹⁸
- [Blood pressure problems during pregnancy](#).¹⁹
- Thyroid disease
- Lower birthweights for babies
- Weaker immune system responses to some vaccinations, like the tetanus vaccines, making them less effective at preventing infections
- Increased risk of some cancers, including kidney and testicular cancer

The good news is, “forever chemicals” does not mean “forever in our bodies.” When we lower our exposure, our bodies can start clearing the chemicals from our system.

Cleanup plans

Ecology invited SIA to negotiate an agreed order that legally requires them to complete a remedial investigation, feasibility study, and potential interim

¹³ <https://doh.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2023-02/334-473-PFAS-StateActionLevelFactsheet.pdf>

¹⁴ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/123634>

¹⁵ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/125373>

¹⁶ <https://doh.wa.gov/pfas>

¹⁷ <https://ecology.wa.gov/Waste-Toxics/Reducing-toxic-chemicals/Addressing-priority-toxic-chemicals/PFAS/AFFF>

¹⁸ <https://www.cdc.gov/cholesterol/about/index.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/high-blood-pressure/about/high-blood-pressure-during-pregnancy.html>

cleanup actions. The 60-day negotiation period began on October 11, 2023. SIA requested three extensions to the negotiation period. We granted the first 60-day extension, then granted a partial 30-day extension, and denied the final request. Negotiations ended March 11, 2024, and the next day, we sent them a draft enforcement order and requested they sign the agreed order by March 29. They did not sign the agreed order by the deadline, so we issued the enforcement order on March 29, 2024. The enforcement order is the legal document Ecology uses when a responsible party will not sign an agreed order.

In August 2025, we named the City of Spokane and Spokane County as parties responsible for cleanup because the airport is jointly owned by the two local governments. We negotiated an agreed order for a remedial investigation, feasibility study, and potential interim cleanup actions with the City of Spokane and Spokane County December 3, 2025, through January 5, 2026. The order includes a scope of work and schedule for completing the investigation and study, excluding any work SIA will do or has already done. We held a public comment period for the agreed order and this updated plan February 6 through March 9, 2026, and [responded to 27 comments](#).²⁰

The city, county, and SIA are responsible for investigation and cleanup costs.

The remedial investigation will determine the full extent and locations of contamination, regardless of property boundaries. The feasibility study will evaluate cleanup options. The enforcement order includes a scope of work for the remedial investigation and feasibility study and a schedule for completing it. Interim actions could include cleaning up areas of high concern or providing safe drinking water if off-property impacts are found. See the Appendix for an overview of all the steps in the cleanup process.

Before beginning work on the remedial investigation work plan, SIA completed the [Site Assessment Report for PFAS](#)²¹ in August 2024. The report overviews the site, includes a records review, and lists areas that could be PFAS sources where firefighting foam was stored or used, and areas where PFAS was previously found in groundwater. They then completed an [Initial Investigation Work Plan](#)²² in December 2024, and the [Initial PFAS Investigation Report](#)²³ in March 2026. Groundwater samples were collected from 50 monitoring wells. Soil samples were collected from 57 locations at multiple depths below the ground surface, focusing on areas with potential or known PFAS releases (Figure 2). The report includes maps and soil and groundwater sampling results. The Joint Fire Training Area had the highest results for soil and groundwater. The results will be used to develop the Remedial Investigation Work Plan, which is due July 2026.

²⁰ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/168785>

²¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/145583>

²² <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/149715>

²³ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/169127>

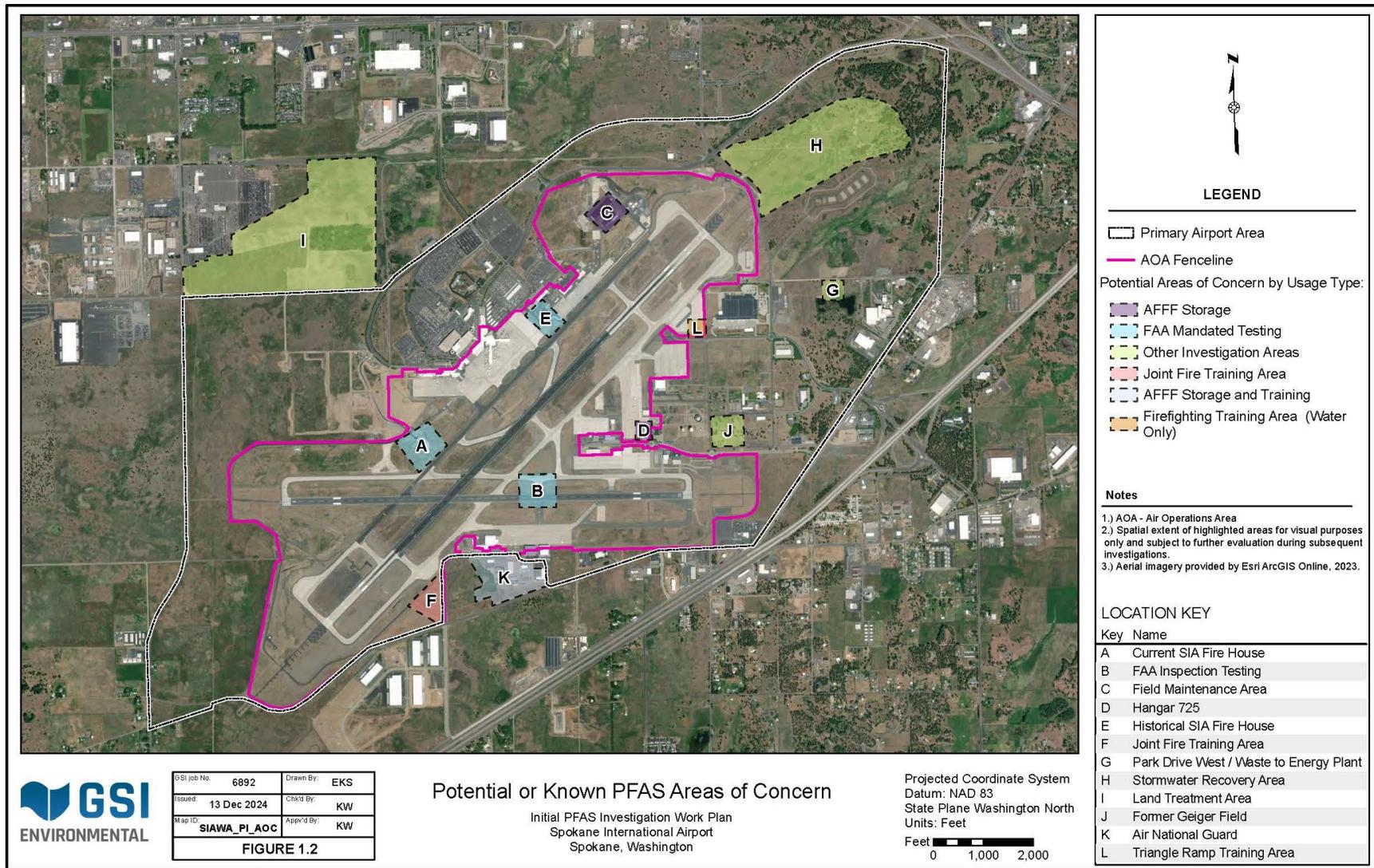


Figure 1. Areas where soil and groundwater were sampled during the initial investigation, except for Hangar 725 (Area D) where PFAS firefighting foam was stored but no known spills have occurred. Note: This is Figure 1.2 in the Initial PFAS Investigation Work Plan (figure by GSI Environmental).

Emergency interim actions to provide safe water

We are requiring SIA, the city, and the county to provide safe drinking water to residents and businesses with PFAS-contaminated private wells in the interim action area (Figure 2). Homes already connected to city water are excluded, as that water is regularly tested and safe.

We notified the responsible parties Feb. 10, 2026, and included a scope of work and schedule for providing:

- Bottled water and/or point-of-use (POU) filtration systems (short-term interim action)
- Private well testing and treatment system maintenance
- Point-of-entry treatment (POET) systems or connection to city water where possible (long-term interim action)



Figure 2. Area where safe water will be provided to people with contaminated private wells.

Short-term plan to provide POU filters and offer private well testing

This [plan](#) details how SIA, the city, and the county propose to supply one 12-cup pitcher and one 22-cup countertop filter to everyone in the interim action area. In addition, the drinking water fill station at 4821 W. Garden Springs Road is available and two food-grade, 5-gallon bottles will be supplied at no cost to you. The responsible parties will be offering PFAS testing to all private wells in the affected area. Your participation is voluntary, but we encourage you to respond when services are offered.

Long-term plan to provide POETs or city water, periodic private well testing, and treatment system maintenance

The responsible parties will submit a draft long-term interim action work plan by May 11. This plan will detail how the responsible parties will supply POETs to people with contaminated private wells or connect them to city water where possible. The work will include maintaining the treatment systems and periodically testing private wells and filtered water.

Area community

The [West Plains](#)²⁴ area (Figure 3) is west of the City of Spokane and radiates around the City of Airway Heights, named for its higher elevation relative to Spokane. The Spokane River and associated [Riverside State Park](#)²⁵ and [Palisades Park](#)²⁶ form the northeastern and eastern borders of the area. Surrounding cities include Medical Lake and Cheney, where Eastern Washington University (EWU) is located.

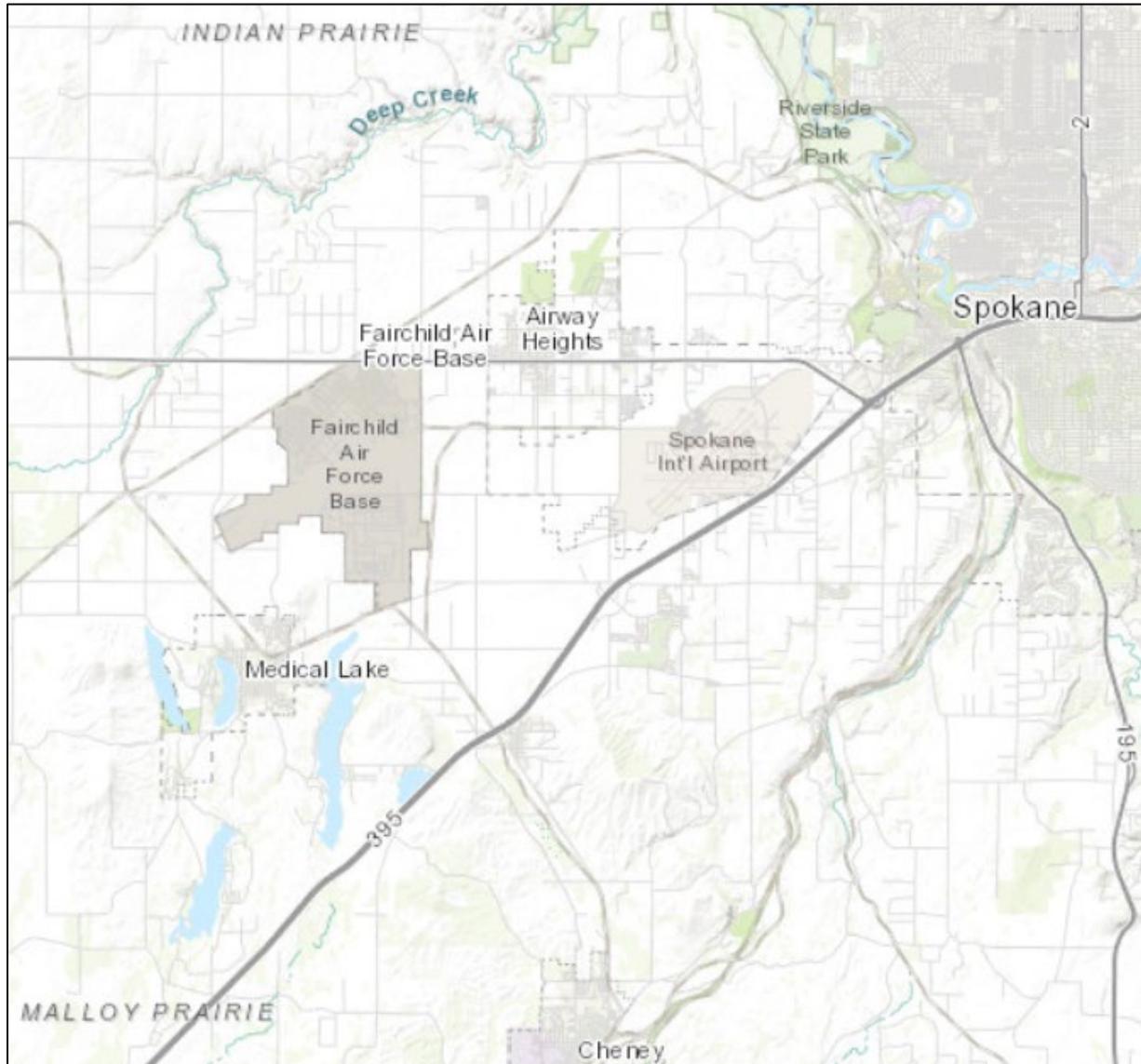


Figure 3. West Plains area map

²⁴ <https://www.westplainschamber.org/>

²⁵ <https://parks.wa.gov/find-parks/state-parks/riverside-state-park>

²⁶ <https://www.wta.org/go-hiking/hikes/palisades-park>

We will provide information in other languages as appropriate following federal guidance.²⁷ The non-English language most widely spoken in the West Plains area is Spanish. When appropriate, Ecology will provide outreach in Spanish.

Airway Heights has a variety of lodging options, restaurants, retail stores, and a community recreation center. Gaming and events can be found at the Spokane Tribe Casino and the Northern Quest Resort & Casino, owned by the Kalispel Tribe of Indians. The Kalispel Tribe also owns the Qlispé Raceway Park, which is just west of Northern Quest. The only school in Airway Heights is Sunset Elementary, and Great Northern School is about 2 miles northeast of the city limits. Airway Heights has a branch that's part of the Spokane County Library District. The Airway Heights Corrections Center is within city limits and houses 2,258 male inmates.

Ecology is working with the [West Plains Water Coalition](#)²⁸ and [Friends of Palisades](#)²⁹ as part of our outreach.

Local community events to potentially share cleanup information include:

- Airway Heights: Winterfest
- Cheney: Summer concert series, movies in the park, Holiday Hoopla, various events hosted by EWU
- Medical Lake: Founders Day, Farmers Market, Fall and Winter Festivals

We welcome invitations to join local professional and community group meetings, such as Rotary Club, Kiwanis, and League of Women Voters. Per input from the community, we created [PFAS in West Plains private wells: Focus on Real Estate Transactions](#)³⁰ and shared it with the Spokane Association of Realtors. We also created the [PFAS in West Plains private wells webpage](#)³¹ to inform the community about area groundwater contamination.

We strive to make our public participation efforts as inclusive as possible and welcome your input about how to best reach the nearby community.

²⁷ Guidance to Environmental Protection Agency Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons, 69 Fed. Reg. § 35602 (June 15, 2004).

²⁸ <https://westplainswater.org/>

²⁹ <https://www.friendsofpalisades.com/>

³⁰ <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/WestPlainsRE>

³¹ <https://ecology.wa.gov/west-plains>

Groundwater and hydrogeology

The West Plains has hundreds of private groundwater wells, normally drilled into aquifers made up of basalt. An upper basalt layer (about 200 feet thick) is over a lower basalt layer. However, gravel-filled valleys (paleochannels) run in a north-south direction that can increase the groundwater flow rate by up to 500 times and interconnect the basalt aquifers, making for a complex hydrogeologic setting in the West Plains.³²

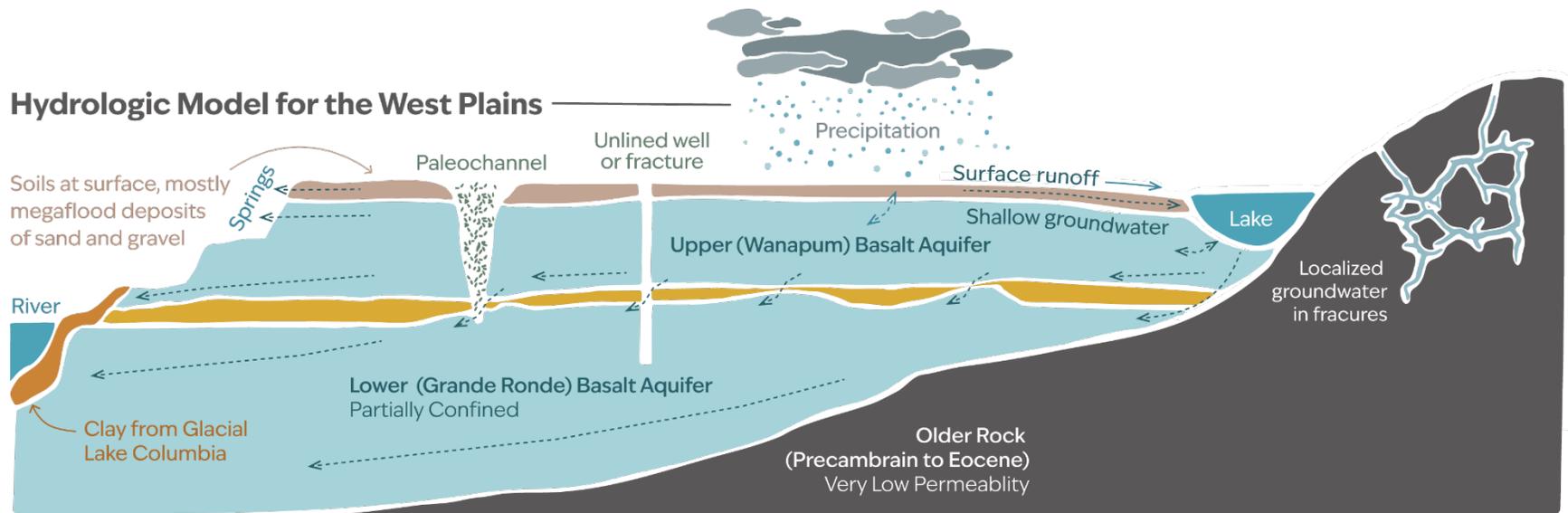


Figure 4. Hydrologic model for the West Plains.³³

³² Information provided by Dr. Chad Pritchard, EWU professor in the Department of Geosciences.

³³ Graphic by Sonja Durr, EWU senior lecturer in the Department of Design.

Tribal engagement

Ecology has invited the federally recognized Coeur d’Alene, Kalispel, and Spokane Tribes to engage with all decision-making processes for this site, and Ecology will ensure these Tribes have ample opportunity to be involved throughout the process on a government-to-government basis.

Washington’s Cleanup Laws

Ecology uses the [Model Toxics Control Act \(MTCA\)](#)³⁴ and accompanying regulations for cleanup activities. Passed in 1989, MTCA provides guidelines for contaminated site cleanup in Washington state. This law sets standards to ensure the cleanup protects people and the environment. MTCA requires the creation of this plan.

Model Toxics Control Act

MTCA began in 1988 as a citizen-led effort to clean up contaminated sites in Washington state. The law holds property owners or operators responsible for cleaning up contamination on, or coming from, their property.

Ecology carries out MTCA, making sure cleanups happen according to state rules and regulations. These rules are found in [Chapter 173-340 Washington Administrative Code \(WAC\)](#).³⁵ Ecology investigates reports of contamination, and the property is placed on the [Contaminated Sites List](#)³⁶ if the pollution is determined to pose a serious risk to human health or the environment. This starts the cleanup process at the site.

The cleanup process under MTCA includes several steps (see the Appendix). Public involvement is a key part of MTCA’s [cleanup process](#).³⁷ Nearby residents, businesses, community groups, and other interested parties can review and comment on documents related to steps that make crucial decisions or plans about the cleanup.

State Environmental Policy Act

MTCA cleanups also require evaluation under the [State Environmental Policy Act \(SEPA\)](#).³⁸ Under SEPA, the potential for significant adverse environmental impacts from a project or action must be evaluated by state and local agencies when making decisions. This evaluation is subject to public review and comment in parallel with cleanup documents.

³⁴ <https://www.ecology.wa.gov/mtca>

³⁵ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=173-340>

³⁶ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/reports/cleanup/contaminated>

³⁷ <http://www.ecology.wa.gov/MTCA-process>

³⁸ <https://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=197-11>

Plan Amendments

Ecology developed this plan following MTCA regulations (WAC 173-340-600). We review it as the cleanup progresses and amend it as necessary. You may suggest amendments to Erika Beresovoy at Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov or 509-385-2290.

We intend for this plan to provide the public with information on opportunities for public involvement and comment. The outreach activities discussed reflect Ecology's current plans to keep the public informed. It also provides ways for those interested in the site to communicate their concerns and questions to us.

If you feel the planned outreach activities and mechanisms found in this plan are insufficient or would like to modify them in some way, please contact us. We will work to find solutions. We can implement new activities or outreach tools right away, with or without amending this plan.

Appendix

Steps in the MTCA cleanup process

The cleanup process is defined in the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA), Washington's cleanup law. See the accessible PDF on the next page for details.

Washington's Cleanup Process



Public participation plans and comment periods are only required for cleanups under a legal agreement with Ecology. Otherwise, all cleanups follow the same steps. The steps are defined by Washington's cleanup law, the Model Toxics Control Act.

