

# Town of Washtucna

## The Little Town that Wouldn't...and Didn't Give Up



Washtucna, WA

### Introduction

The town of Washtucna is located at the crossroads of Washington State Routes 26 and 261. Like most small towns, they struggle to maintain their infrastructure and keep up with changing environmental regulations, while at the same time preserving affordable utility rates for their community.

### Problem

Washtucna's original wastewater system was constructed in 1973. It was an evaporative, two-cell, bentonite lined lagoon system. Within the first year, the liner in the first cell failed. In 1998, an informal seepage test was conducted. It was determined that approximately 17,000 gallons per day of wastewater leaked out of the bottom of the cell. Ecology added a requirement to the town's wastewater discharge permit to conduct a hydrogeologic study to examine potential impacts to ground water from the wastewater leakage. Rather than spend the money on a study to confirm leakage and impact to ground water, the town chose to forego the study and agree that their current system was most likely having an impact to ground water. This option allowed the town to use the money they would have spent on the study towards a plan to upgrade their wastewater plant.

### Project Event Goals

Washtucna hired Anderson-Perry & Associates to prepare a facility plan that explored the different options for upgrading their wastewater plant. A plan was submitted to Ecology in 2005 with the selected option of lining the existing lagoons and obtaining adjacent property for a land application site. To pay for the project, the town needed funding from outside sources. After applying for funding from various agencies, the town was awarded a combination of grant and loan funding from U.S. Rural Development. Construction of the new wastewater plant was completed in 2009.

### Milestones and Outcomes

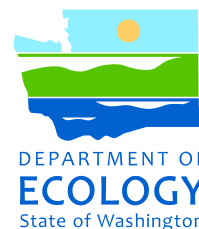
Ground water in the Washtucna area is now protected from contamination from leaking wastewater lagoons. The town has a plant with a backup generator; new lift-stations with confined entry space protection features; the ability to grow and harvest a hay crop; and room for residential growth in the area. Groundwater monitoring wells were installed so the town can monitor to ensure the cells are not leaking and water is being applied to the land at agronomics rates.



Original wastewater lagoons

### Project highlights

A lot transpired between the time Ecology communicated to the town that they needed to make improvements to their wastewater plant to the completion of construction. Throughout this entire process, the community worked cooperatively and positively with the different agencies to provide a finished product. The town's consultant, who worked and met with them regularly for over ten years to complete this project, likes to tell the town that he started meeting with them three kids ago!





*Lined wastewater ponds*

The combination of an affordable wastewater upgrade design, Ecology's understanding that funding such a project can take a number of years, and the town's willingness to take on the indebtedness all contributed to the successful completion of this project.

## **Partners**

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## **Funding**

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development  
Grant: \$453,000  
Loan: \$309,000

## **For more information**

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