



Deer Creek by the Department of Ecology

In January 2018, the Legislature passed the Streamflow Restoration law that helps restore streamflows to levels necessary to support robust, healthy, and sustainable salmon populations while providing water for homes in rural Washington.

The law directs local planning groups to develop watershed plans that offset impacts from new domestic permit-exempt wells and achieve a Net Ecological Benefit (NEB).

The law is codified as Chapter 90.94 RCW.

The Colville planning group updated their watershed management plan to meet the requirements of the law.

Plan Update Summary

The Colville Watershed or Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 59 covers most of Stevens County. It includes 1,000 square miles of land that is divided into 19 subbasins.

As required, the Colville planning group forecasted rural growth in their watershed as well as the impact of permit-exempt wells through 2038. The planning group then identified 16 projects and actions to offset the impacts from new permit-exempt wells on rivers and streams and result in a net ecological benefit.

Ecology adopted the plan update ahead of schedule, after a rigorous review process on June 25, 2020.

Projected rural growth over 20 years (2018 - 2038)



1,118
Permit-exempt wells



0.6 cfs
Water consumption

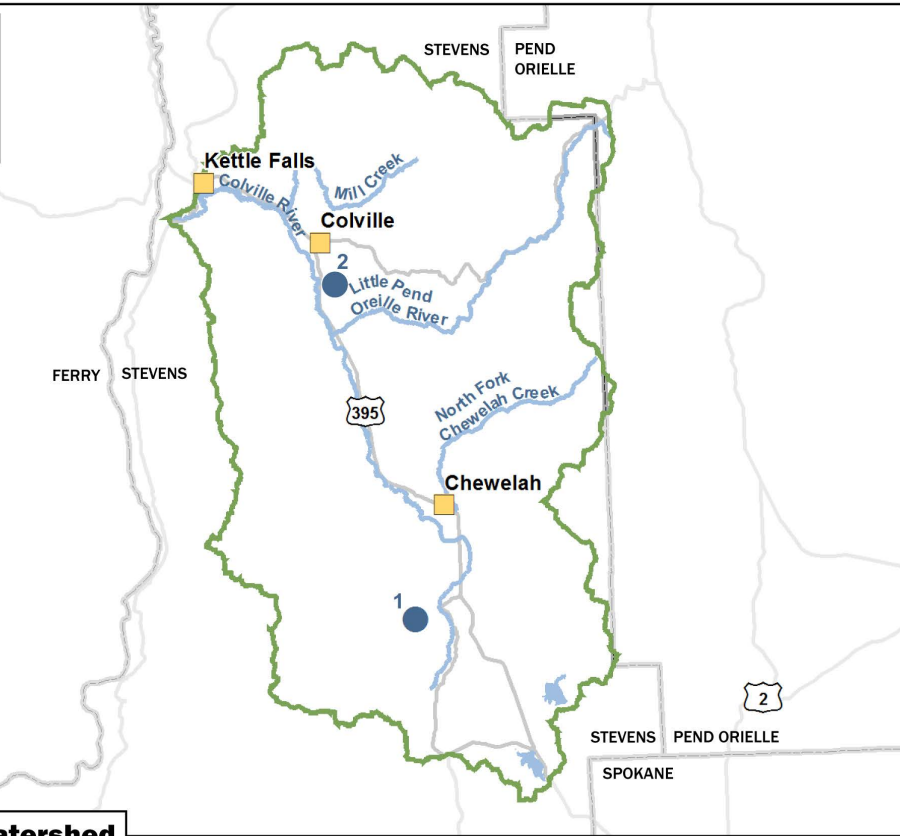
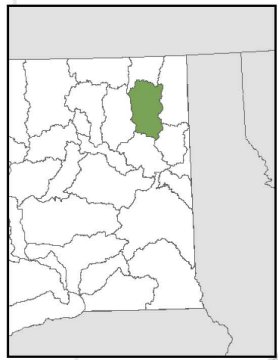
Streamflow benefits from projects



1.87 cfs
Water added from high priority projects

cfs = cubic feet per second

● Projects funded by Ecology's competitive grant program	
1	Waitts Creek Project
2	Stranger Creek water right acquisition



WRIA 59 Colville Watershed

Net Ecological Benefit

The Streamflow Restoration law requires Ecology to determine that projects in the plan will result in a NEB in the WRIA.

The Colville planning group identified 16 projects to achieve NEB. The group completed the Waitts Creek water acquisition project before plan adoption. This project not only offsets, but also far exceeds the forecasted impact from permit-exempt wells. Other projects included are:



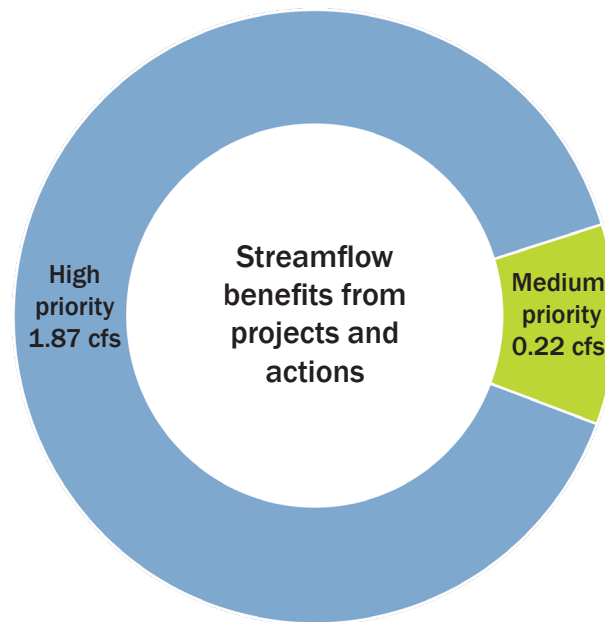
Water acquisition



Water storage



Habitat restoration



The planning unit divided the 16 projects into two categories: 10 high priority and 6 medium priority projects, based on their likelihood to benefit rivers and streams.

To learn more about Streamflow Restoration please visit: ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowRestoration

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