

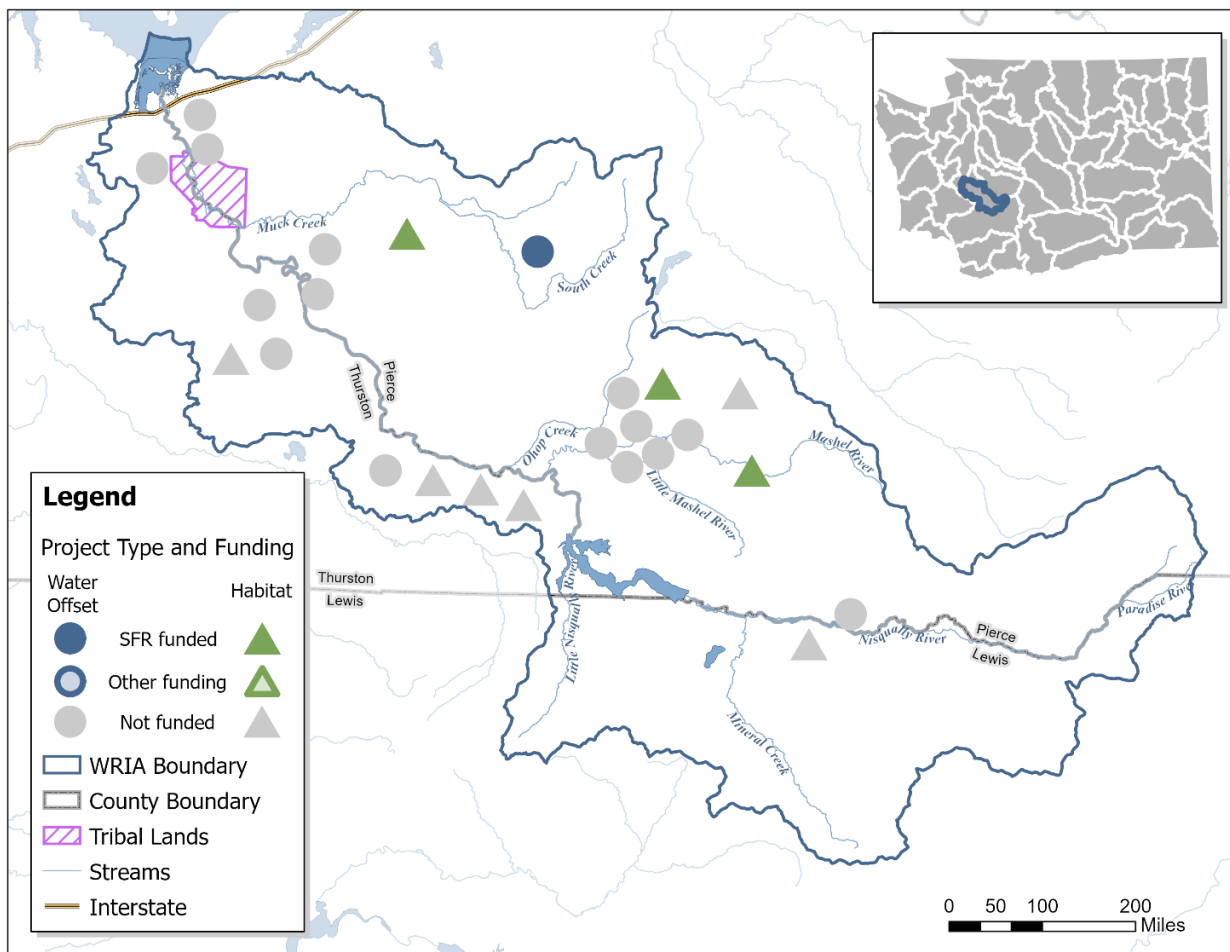
Watershed Plan Implementation Assessment for the Nisqually Watershed

The Washington Department of Ecology adopted the Addendum to the Nisqually Watershed Management Plan on February 1, 2019. Plan implementation is ongoing as local entities develop their projects and secure funding. The Nisqually Watershed is also known as Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 11.

This plan implementation assessment provides an update based on the best currently available information:

- Local water offset and habitat projects (as defined in the watershed plan) implemented to offset the consumptive water use impacts from new domestic permit-exempt (PE) wells and achieve a net ecological benefit (NEB).
- Current and projected new domestic PE wells.
- Current estimated and projected consumptive water use impacts from these new wells.

Projects in WRIA 11 (Nisqually Watershed)

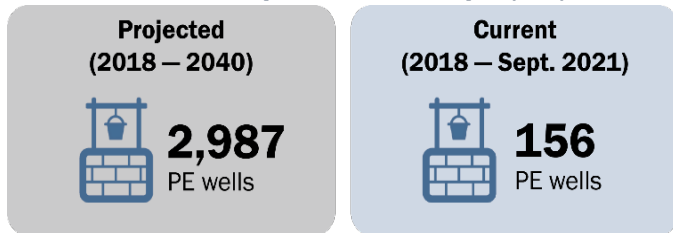


Approximate locations of projects in WRIA 11 from the adopted plan. Projects contribute to the anticipated net ecological benefit and to offsetting the impacts from new PE wells. Projects are funded through either Ecology’s Streamflow Restoration (SFR) grants or other funding sources. Two funded projects are both phases of the Ohop Phase IV Floodplain Restoration and Protection project from the plan, so they each appear as only a single point.

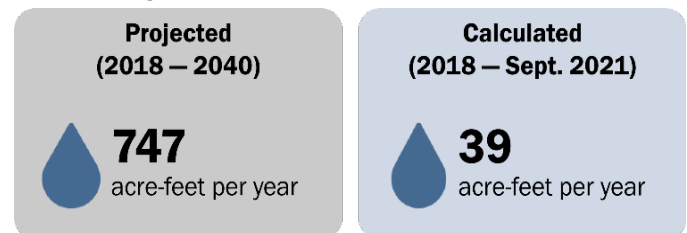
Watershed plan implementation

Ecology is using the following parameters to track progress on plan implementation. We will update these parameters in future versions of the publication.

Number of new permit-exempt (PE) wells

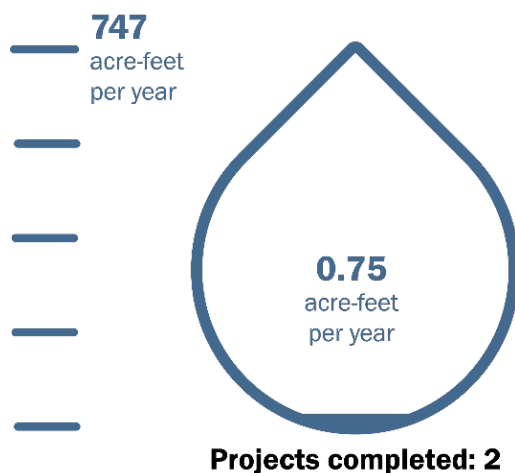


Consumptive water use from PE wells



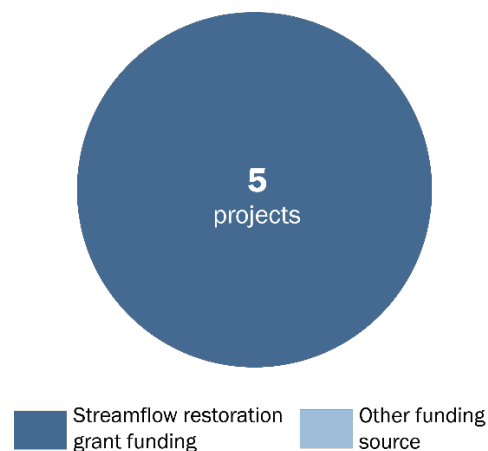
Water offset from plan implementation

Projects are underway and have resulted in a small water offset.



Funding sources

Projects that are underway are funded by Ecology’s Streamflow restoration competitive grants.



Implementation snapshot

- Installation of new permit exempt wells in WRIA 11 (Nisqually Watershed) is proceeding at a slower rate (67% below the projected rate) than the local watershed plan projected. Using the plan’s assumption of consumptive water use per new PE well, Ecology estimates the consumptive water use impacts from these new wells is likewise proceeding at a slower rate (67% below the projected rate).
- In the 2019 and 2020 grant rounds, Ecology received 10 applications seeking competitive streamflow restoration grant funding for projects in the Nisqually watershed plan. Five of these projects earned sufficient scores to receive a funding offer. Two of the funded projects are part of the Ohop Phase IV Floodplain Restoration and Protection. To date, these projects have purchased 1,410 acres of land for permanent protection and restoration which contribute to a NEB in the WRIA. Beyond those habitat projects, one project decommissioned 3 PE wells, resulting in a 0.75 acre-feet per year offset.

Project sponsors can update Ecology on the status of project implementation by emailing WRProjects@ecy.wa.gov.

Watershed plan summary

The Nisqually watershed planning committee met from June 2018 to January 2018 to develop a Watershed Plan Addendum that:

- Projected 2,987 new PE wells from years 2018 to 2040.
- Estimated the impact of these wells on rivers and streams at 746.8 acre-feet per year.
- Identified 36 projects to provide a water offset¹ and achieve a [net ecological benefit](#) to streamflows.

Projected PE well growth and consumptive water use (years 2018 - 2040)



2,987
PE wells



747
acre-feet per year

Projected streamflow benefits from planned projects



1,530
acre-feet per year

A volume of 747 acre-feet is about 374 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Benefits of WRIA 11 plan implementation



Initiates locally led solutions.



Improves rivers and streams for salmon.



Offsets consumptive water use from rural homes.

Streamflow Restoration Law (RCW 90.94)

In January 2018, the Washington State Legislature passed the Streamflow Restoration law (RCW 90.94) to help restore streamflows to levels necessary to support robust, healthy, and sustainable salmon populations while providing water for homes in rural Washington.

Ecology has been actively implementing this law since its passage. Ecology, in coordination with state and local agencies, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations has funded, led, and supported a range of 15 diverse local watershed plans across the state. Ecology, with generous support from the Legislature has also implemented a competitive grant offering to help state and local agencies, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations implement projects in their local watershed plans required by this law.

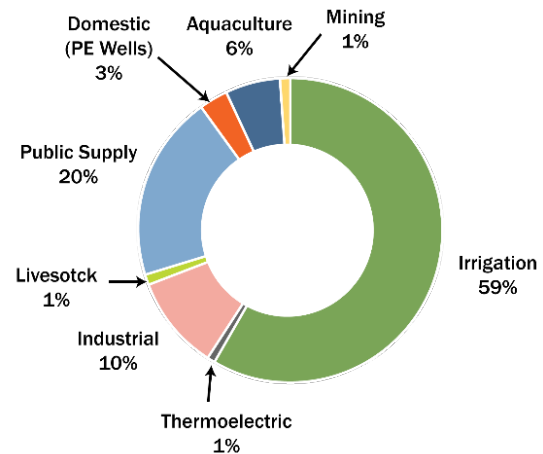
¹ The WRIA 11 addendum was evaluated under the interim NEB Guidance (Publication number 18-11-009): Water offset projects include water right acquisition projects and other projects that provide flow benefits.

Consumptive water use in Washington State

Significant resources and collaboration went into statewide and local planning and ongoing local plan implementation to offset water use from domestic permit-exempt (private) wells in Washington State.

Consumptive water use from these wells accounts for about 3% of water use in Washington, a small portion compared with other consumptive water uses.

Consumptive Water Use in Washington State (2015)



Data adapted from U.S. Geological Survey’s report on Water Use in Washington (2015).

Webpages

- [Streamflow Restoration](http://ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowRestoration): ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowRestoration
- [Streamflow Restoration Grants](http://ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowGrants): ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowGrants

Publications

- [Streamflow Restoration Program Status](#): Publication number 21-11-016
- [Interim Guidance for Determining Net Ecological Benefit](#): Publication number 18-11-009

Other sources

- [Addendum to the Nisqually Watershed Management Plan²](#)(PDF)



Streamflow restoration program
 WRProjects@ecy.wa.gov
 360-407-6757



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6872 or email at WRPubs@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341

² <https://apps.wa.gov/ecology/docs/WaterRights/wrwebpdf/wria11/WRIA11-AddendumNisquallyWatershedManagementPlan-01162019.pdf>