

Watershed Plan Implementation Assessment for the Chehalis Basin (Chehalis Watershed)

The Washington Department of Ecology adopted the Chehalis Basin Watershed Plan Addendum on January 28, 2021. Plan implementation is ongoing as local entities develop their projects and secure funding. The Chehalis Watershed is also known as Water Resource Inventory Areas (WRIA) 22 and 23.

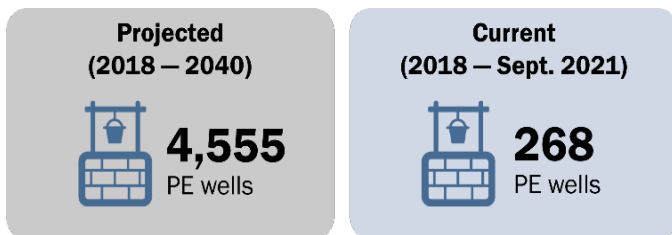
This plan implementation assessment provides an update based on the best currently available information:

- Local water offset and net ecological benefit 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.
- Current and projected new domestic PE wells.
- Current estimated and projected consumptive water use impacts from these new wells.

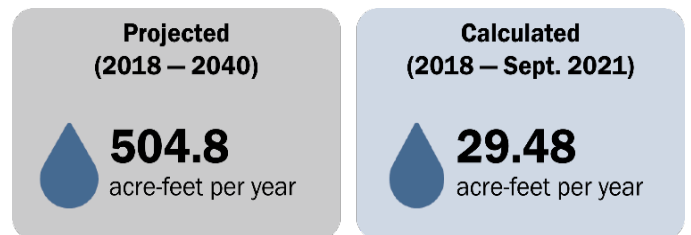
Watershed plan implementation

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

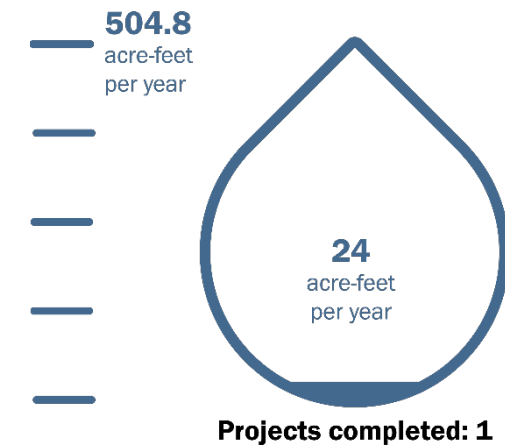


Consumptive water use from PE wells



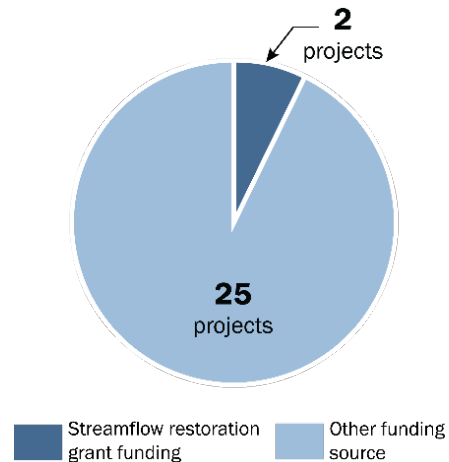
Water offset from plan implementation

Projects are currently underway to offset the projected consumptive water use in WRIA 22/23.



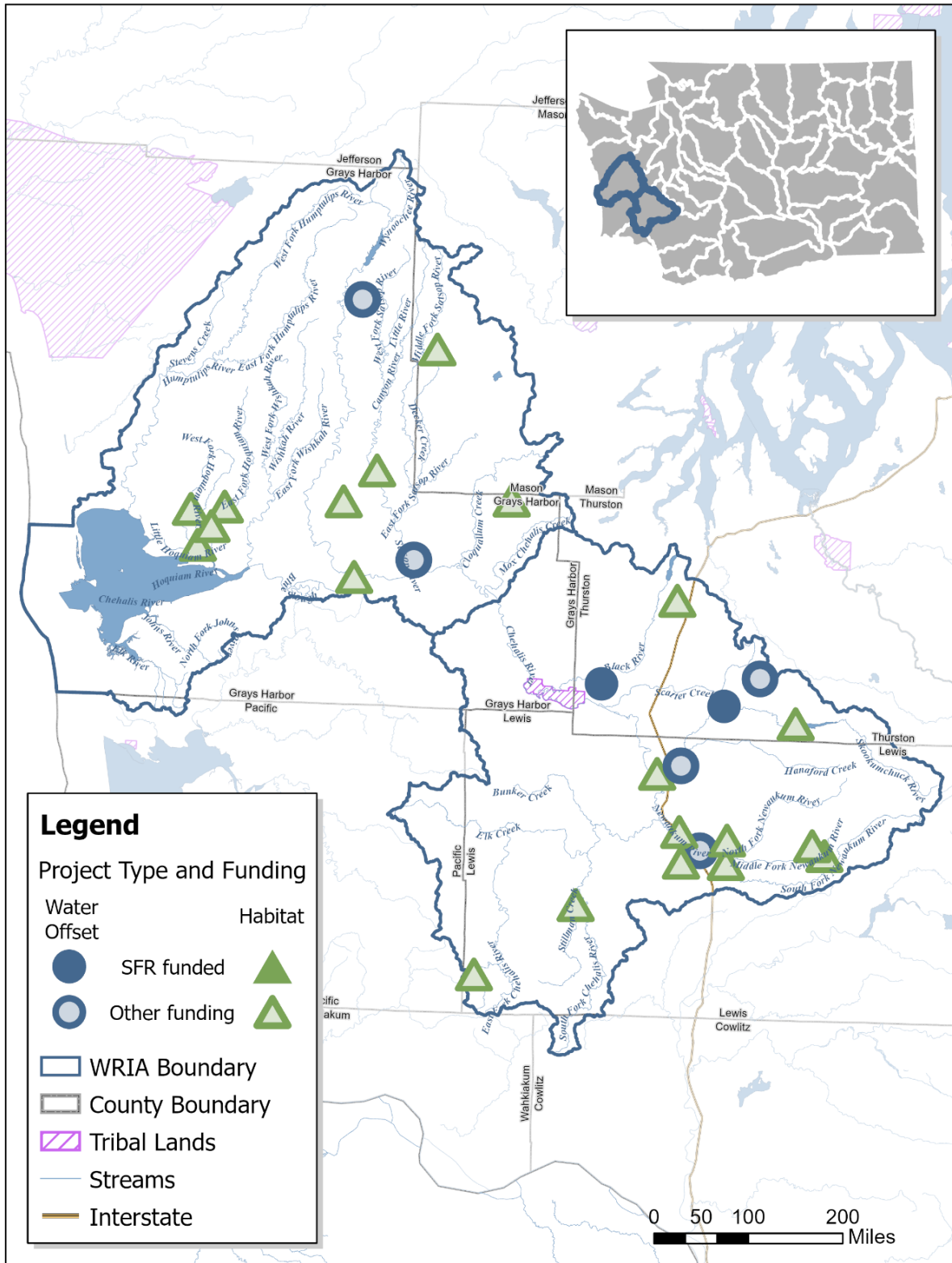
Funding sources

Projects that are underway are funded by Ecology’s streamflow restoration grants or other sources.



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

Funded projects in WRIAs 22 and 23 (Chehalis Watershed)



Implementation snapshot

- Installation of new permit exempt wells in WRIA 22/23 (Chehalis Watershed) is proceeding at a slower rate than the local watershed plan projected (66% below the projected rate). 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 (66% below the projected rate).
- Ecology received 2 applications seeking competitive streamflow restoration grant funding for projects in the Chehalis Basin watershed plan and both projects earned sufficient scores to receive a funding offer.
- Ecology awarded nearly \$1.2 million to Thurston County to complete the Albany Street Stormwater Pond. This project built a new stormwater infiltration pond in Rochester, WA to increase infiltration and reduce localized flooding. The increased recharge replaces consumptive use re-timed to critical low flow period in the Black River basin. This project is expected to have a water offset benefit of 24 acre-feet per year.
- Ecology awarded \$148,500 to the Quinault Indian Nation to complete a feasibility study for the TransAlta water right acquisition. This project will provide an independent determination of water use and Ecology’s ability to permanently dedicate the right to instream flow. This study is intended to be the first phase in placing a portion of this water right into Ecology’s Trust Water Rights Program, with an expected water offset benefit of 2,898 acre-feet per year.
- Twenty-five projects, with a combined total cost of \$27.7 million, were funded by other funding sources which include: Salmon Recovery Funding Board, Thurston County REET, Washington Coast Restoration Resiliency Project, and Ecology’s Office of Chehalis Basin. These projects types include habitat restoration, stream restoration, fish barrier removal, and land acquisition/conservation.

Watershed plan summary

The Chehalis Basin Partnership met from June 2018 – November 2020 to develop a watershed plan addendum that:

- Projected 4,555 new PE wells from years 2018 to 2040.
- Estimated the impact of these wells on rivers and streams at 504.8 acre-feet per year.
- Identified 74 projects to provide water offset¹ and/or [net ecological benefit](#) to streamflows.

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



4,555
PE wells



504.8
acre-feet per year

Projected streamflow benefits from planned projects



3,290
acre-feet per year

A volume of 504.8 acre-feet is about 250 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Benefits of WRIA 22/23 plan implementation



Initiates locally led solutions.



Improves rivers and streams for salmon.



Offsets consumptive water use from rural homes.

¹ From NEB Guidance (Publication number 19-11-079): Offset is the anticipated ability of a project or action to counterbalance some amount of the new consumptive water use over the next 20 years (2018 – 2038). Offsets need to continue beyond the 20-year period for as long as new well pumping continues.

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.

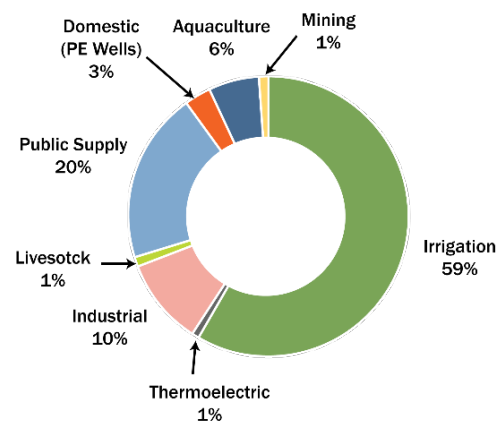
Ecology has been actively implementing this law since its passage. Ecology, in coordination with state and local agencies, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations has funded, led, and supported a range of 15 diverse local watershed plans across the state. Ecology has also implemented a competitive 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.

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](https://ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowRestoration): ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowRestoration
- [Streamflow Restoration Grants](https://ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowGrants): ecology.wa.gov/StreamflowGrants
- [Chehalis Basin Partnership](https://chehalisbasinpartnership.org): chehalisbasinpartnership.org

Publications

- [Streamflow Restoration Program Status](#): Publication number 21-11-016
- [Final Guidance for Determining Net Ecological Benefit](#): Publication number 19-11-079

Other resources

- [WRIA 22/23 Watershed Plan Addendum \(PDF\)](#)²



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/watershed/wria2223/WRIAs22-23ChehalisAddendumFinal-Approved.pdf>