

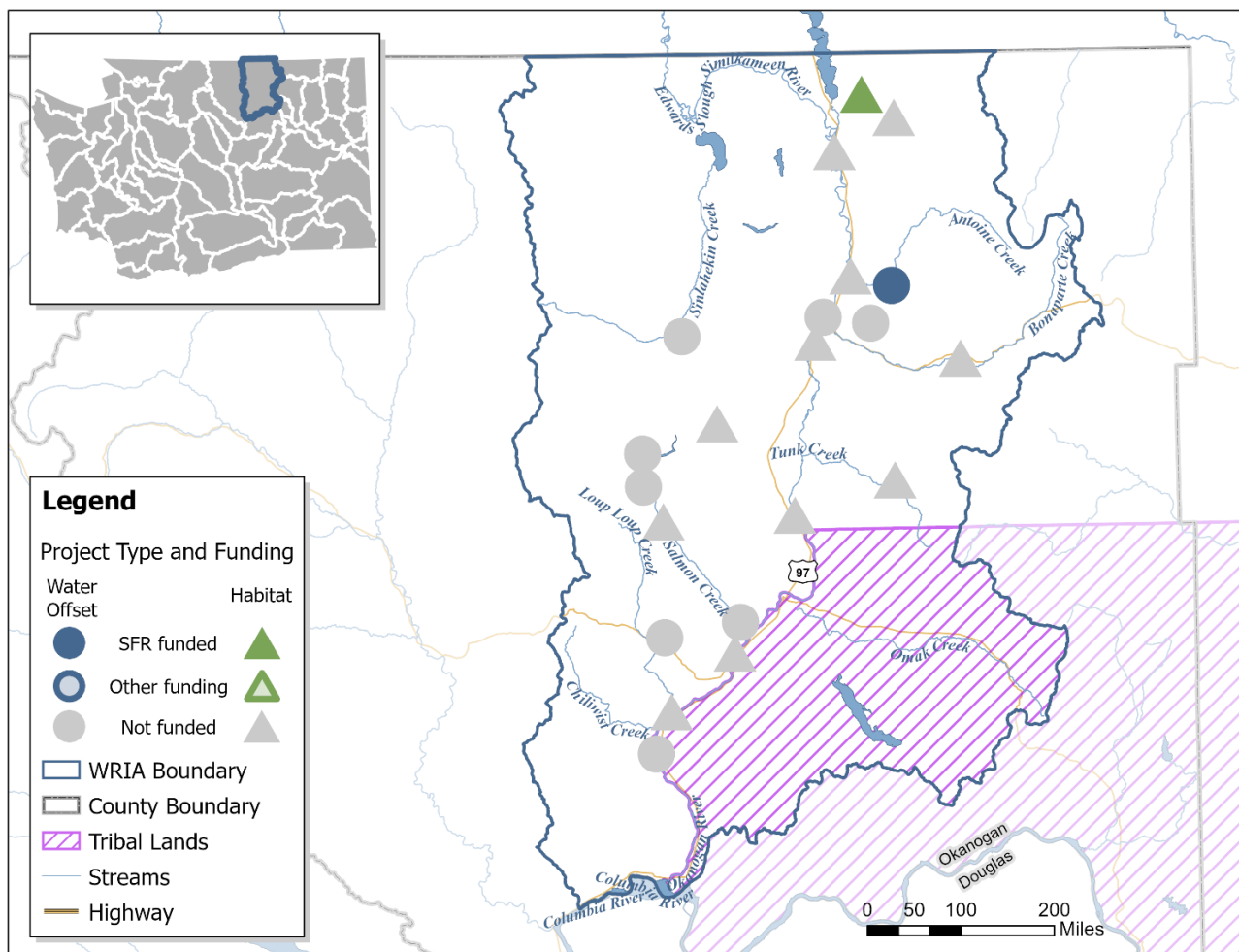
# Watershed Plan Implementation Assessment for the Okanogan Watershed

The Washington Department of Ecology adopted the Okanogan River Basin Watershed Plan Addendum on January 28, 2021. Plan implementation is ongoing as local entities develop their projects and secure funding. The Okanogan Watershed is also known as Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 49.

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.

## Projects in WRIA 49 (Okanogan Watershed)

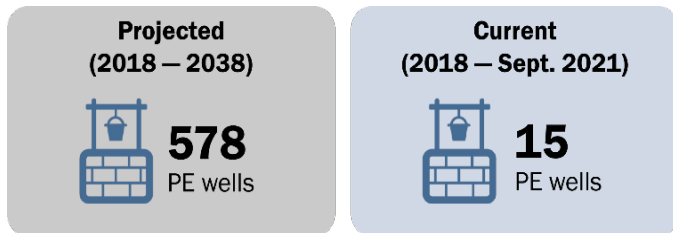


Approximate locations of projects in WRIA 49 from the adopted plan addendum. Projects contribute to the anticipated net ecological benefit and offset the impacts from new PE wells. Projects are funded through either Ecology’s Streamflow Restoration (SFR) grant or other funding sources.

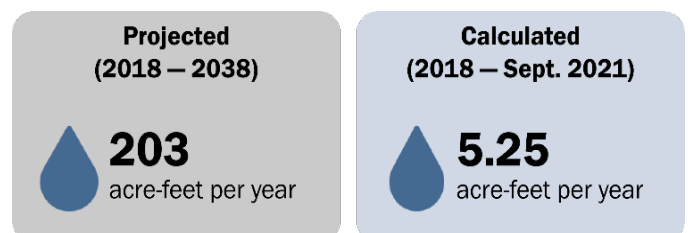
## Watershed plan implementation

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

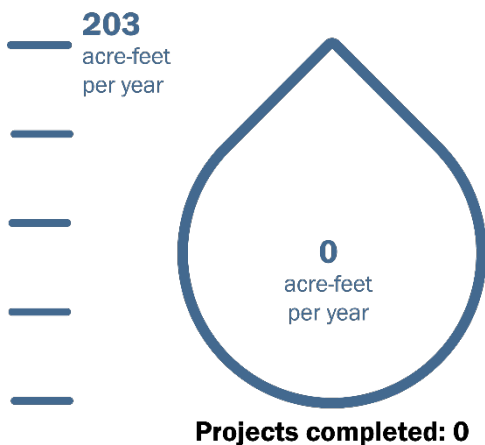


### Consumptive water use from PE wells



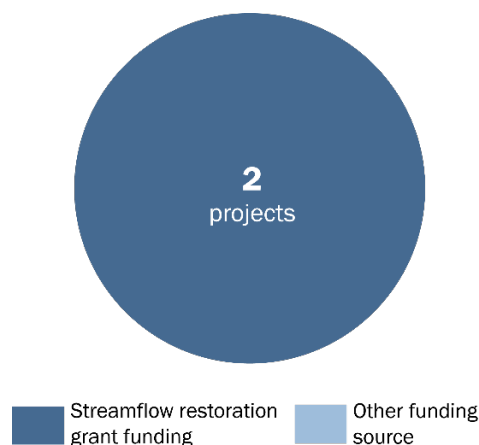
### Water offset from plan implementation

Projects are currently underway to offset the projected consumptive water use in WRIA 49.



### Funding sources

Two ongoing projects have been funded by Ecology’s streamflow restoration grants.



## Implementation snapshot

- Installation of new permit exempt wells in WRIA 49 (Okanogan Watershed) is proceeding at a slower rate than the local watershed plan projected (85% 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 (85% below the projected rate).
- Implementation of projects identified in the plan is ongoing. In 2019 and 2020, Ecology received five applications seeking competitive streamflow restoration grant funding for projects in the watershed plan. Two of these projects earned sufficient scores to receive a funding offer.
- Ecology awarded over \$4 million to Western Rivers Conservancy, in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and Trout Unlimited, to acquire Antoine Valley Ranch and its associated water rights. This report will be updated to reflect the water offset achieved from this project once the water rights are transferred into the Trust Water Right Program.

Project sponsors can update Ecology on the status of project implementation by emailing [WRProjects@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:WRProjects@ecy.wa.gov).

## Watershed plan summary

The Okanogan watershed planning committee met from October 2018 to October 2020 to develop a new watershed restoration and enhancement plan that:

- Projected 578 new PE wells from years 2018 to 2038.
- Estimated the impact of these wells on rivers and streams at 203 acre-feet per year.
- Identified 21 projects to provide water offset<sup>1</sup> and/or [net ecological benefit](#) to streamflows.

Projected PE well growth and consumptive water use (years 2018 - 2038)



**578**  
PE wells



**203**  
acre-feet per year

Projected streamflow benefits from planned projects



**2,786**  
acre-feet per year

A volume of 203 acre-feet is about 100 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

## Benefits of WRIA 49 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.

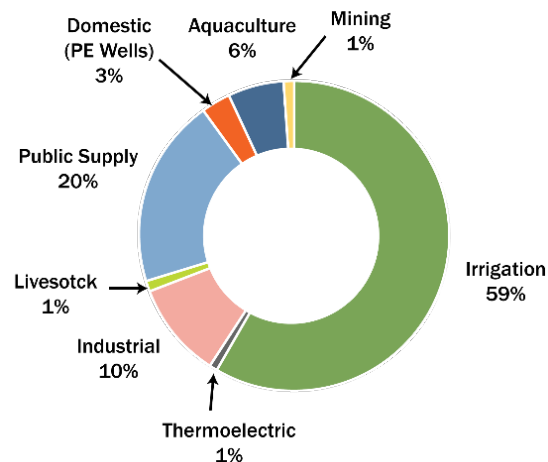
<sup>1</sup> From NEB Guidance (Publication number 19-11-079): Offset is the anticipated ability of a project or action to counterbalance some amount of the new consumptive water use over the next 20 years (2018 – 2038). Offsets need to continue beyond the 20-year period for as long as new well pumping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

## 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

## 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 49 Watershed Plan Addendum](#) (PDF)<sup>2</sup>
- [WRIA 49 Watershed Plan Addendum – Appendices](#) (PDF)<sup>3</sup>



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](mailto:WRPubs@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341

<sup>2</sup> <https://apps.wa.gov/ecology/docs/WaterRights/wrwebpdf/watershed/wria49/WRIA49WatershedPlanAddendum-Final-100120.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://apps.wa.gov/ecology/docs/WaterRights/wrwebpdf/watershed/wria49/WRIA49AppendicesA-D.pdf>