

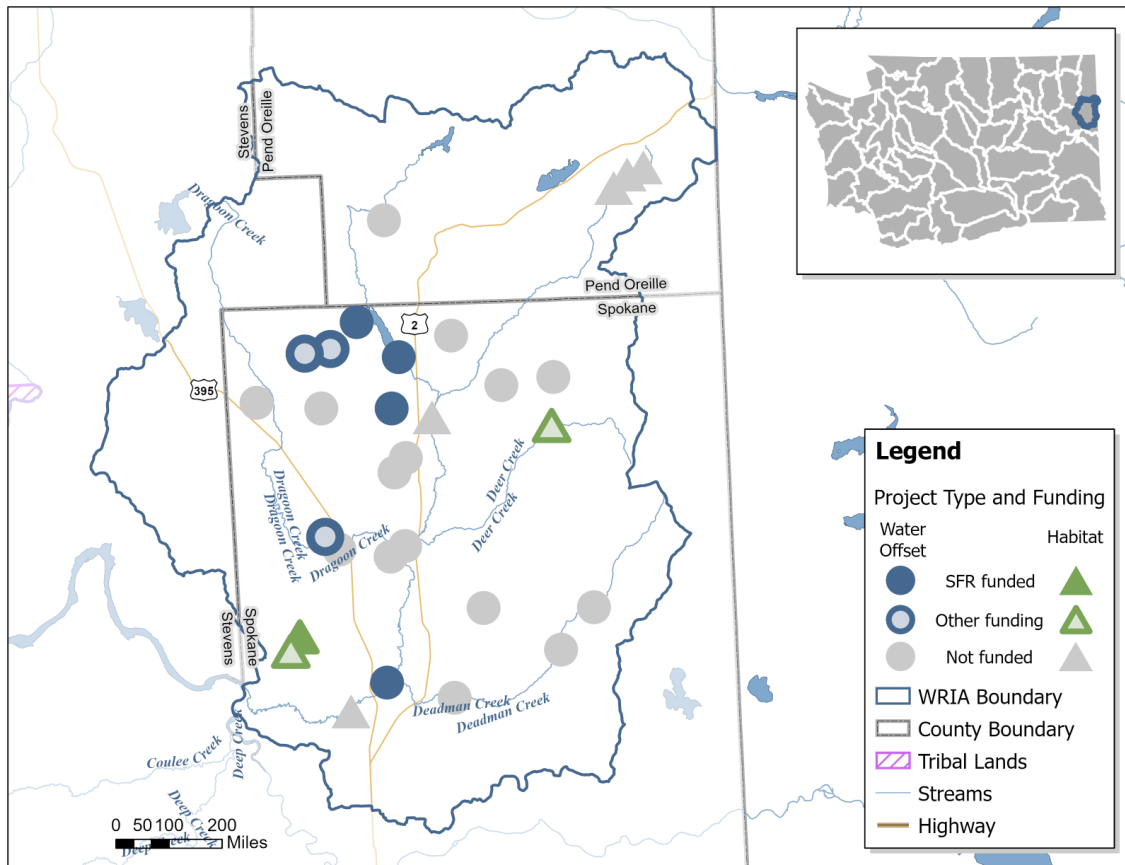
Watershed Plan Implementation Assessment for the Little Spokane Watershed

The Washington Department of Ecology adopted the Little Spokane Watershed Plan Addendum on January 28, 2021, as a part of the Streamflow Restoration law (RCW 90.94.020). The Little Spokane Watershed is also known as Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 55. Plan implementation is ongoing as local entities secure funding and develop their projects intended to offset the impacts on streamflows from new domestic permit-exempt (PE) wells and achieve a net ecological benefit (NEB).

Ecology assesses plan implementation periodically and conducts outreach to WRIA 55 partners and project sponsors to present information to the best of our ability. This assessment provides an update on:

- Local water offset and habitat projects (as defined in the watershed plan).
- Current and projected new domestic PE wells.
- Current estimated and projected consumptive water use impacts from these new wells.

Projects in WRIA 55 (Little Spokane Watershed)

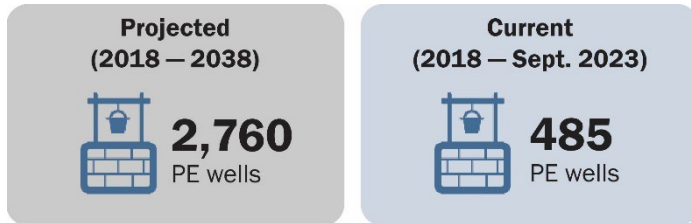


Approximate locations of projects in WRIA 55 from the adopted plan and streamflow restoration grants offered to date. Projects contribute to the anticipated net ecological benefit and offset the impacts from new PE wells. Projects are funded through either Ecology’s Streamflow Restoration (SFR) grant or other funding sources. Basin-wide projects are not shown on the map.

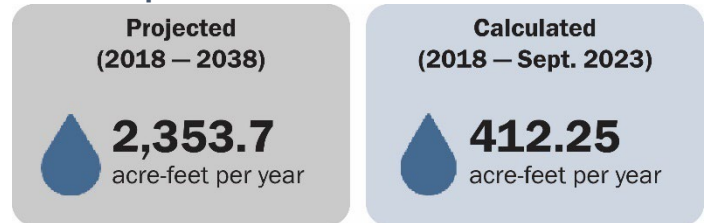
Watershed plan implementation

Ecology is using the following parameters to track progress on plan implementation.

Number of new PE wells installed

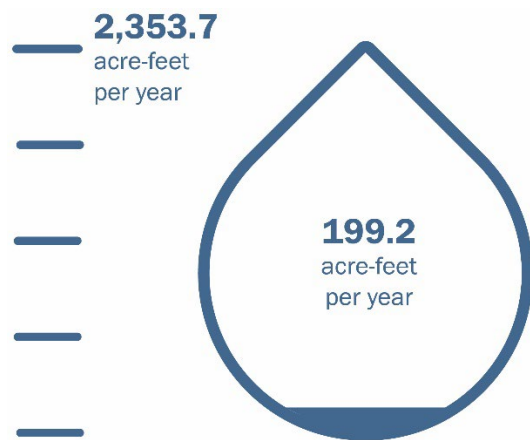


Consumptive water use from PE wells



Water offset from completed projects

We estimate the offset benefit of completed projects is 199.2 acre-feet per year.



Water offset projects completed: 3

Secured funding for projects

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



Implementation snapshot

- Installation of new PE wells in WRIA 55 (Little Spokane Watershed) is proceeding at a slower rate than the local watershed plan projected (36% 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 also 36% below the projected rate.
- In 2019, 2020, and 2022, a total of five projects in the Little Spokane watershed received funding for competitive streamflow restoration grants. Ecology awarded over \$2 million to Spokane County to acquire water rights, restore wetlands, initiate a managed aquifer recharge project, and complete a floodplain reconnection project. Ecology awarded \$1.4 million to the Whitworth Water District source exchange project. Two water right acquisitions not previously identified in the plan were completed through Ecology funding, providing a total of 134.2 acre-feet per year in water offset.
- Spokane County has acquired water right certificates that have an instream flow benefit of 65 acre-feet per year. The Family Forest Fish Passage Program has awarded over \$124,000 for the removal of fish barriers in Deer Creek. The Conservation Commission has funded floodplain and habitat restoration.

Watershed plan summary

The Little Spokane watershed planning committee met from November 2018 to September 2020 to develop a new watershed restoration and enhancement plan that:

- Projected 2,760 new PE wells from years 2018 to 2038.
- Estimated the impact of these wells on rivers and streams at 2,353.7 acre-feet per year.
- Identified 28 projects to provide water offset¹ and/or [net ecological benefit](#) to streamflows.

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



2,760
PE wells



2,353.7
acre-feet per year

Projected streamflow benefits from planned projects



4,262
acre-feet per year

A volume of 2,353.7 acre-feet is equal to about 1176 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Benefits of WRIA 55 plan implementation



Initiates locally led solutions.



Improves rivers and streams in the watershed.



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 new 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.

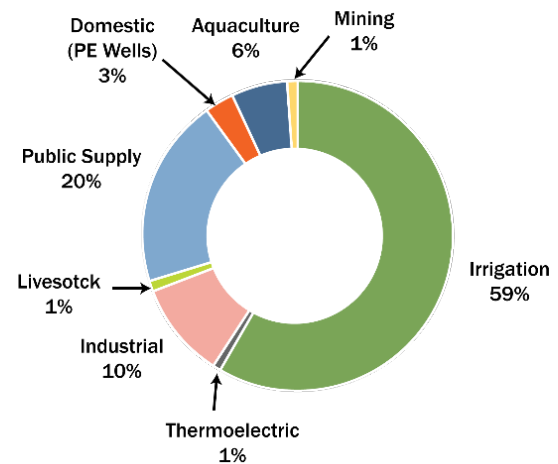
¹ From NEB Guidance (Publication number 19-11-079): Offset is the anticipated ability of a project or action to counterbalance some amount of the new consumptive water use over the next 20 years (2018 – 2038). Offsets need to continue beyond the 20-year period for as long as new well pumping continues.

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 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).

Webpage

- [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 Competitive Grants Status](#): Publication number 22-11-026
- [Streamflow Restoration Planning Update](#): Publication number 21-11-015
- [Final Guidance for Determining Net Ecological Benefit](#): Publication number 19-11-079

Other resources

- [WRIA 55 Watershed Plan Addendum](#) (PDF)²

WRIA partners and project sponsors can update Ecology on the status of plan implementation by emailing WRProjects@ecy.wa.gov.



Streamflow restoration program
WRProjects@ecy.wa.gov
360-688-8928



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 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/wria55/WRIA55WatershedPlanAddendumFinal-110120.pdf>