

Focus on: Spokane International Airport PFAS investigation

Initial PFAS Investigation Report

The [Initial PFAS Investigation Report](#)¹ provides groundwater and soil sampling results from Spokane International Airport (SIA) property, focusing on 11 areas where firefighting foam, or aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF), was or may have been used (see page 3). The report includes maps showing where samples were taken and the related results.

Groundwater samples were collected from 50 monitoring wells that already existed for other purposes, and some were not in the 11 areas where AFFF was or may have been used. **The highest PFAS (per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) levels in groundwater were in the Joint Fire Training Area at 12,000 parts per trillion (ppt).** Safe levels range from 4 to 10 ppt, depending on the type of PFAS.

Soil samples were collected from 57 locations at multiple depths below the ground surface in the 11 areas. **The Joint Fire Training Area also had the highest PFAS levels in soil at 1,900,000 ppt.** (Soil levels are usually shown in micrograms per kilogram or parts per billion, but we converted them to match groundwater levels).

See Table 1 for the highest levels found in all areas.

Ecology approved but didn't fully agree

Because we didn't want to slow progress, we approved the report, noting parts we disagree with in a [letter](#).² We asked SIA, the City of Spokane, and Spokane County (parties responsible for cleanup) to remove the summary of Fairchild Air Force Base's on-property soil and groundwater results and related claims that airport property is contaminated by the base through No Name Ditch. SIA has denied the Air Force's requests to sample on their property, so this claim is not confirmed and irrelevant to this report.

Table 1. Highest PFAS levels in groundwater and soil

Area sampled (letters match map, page 3)	Groundwater (ppt)	Soil (ppt)
A. Current Fire House	No well	610,000
B. FAA Inspection Testing	No well	2,800
C. Field Maintenance	No well	22,000
E. Historical Fire House	No well	330,000
F. Joint Fire Training Area	12,000	1,900,000
G. Park Drive West / Waste to Energy Plant	29	440*
H. Stormwater Recovery	1,100	49,000
I. Land Treatment Area	180*	2,800
J. Geiger Correctional / Delivery Facilities	57	Not sampled
L. Triangle Ramp Training Area	No well	Below detection
Other. West Peripheral	7.2*	Not sampled
Detection limit	>1 ppt	>100 ppt

Table notes: Highest levels are for 10 PFAS with cleanup levels. Results above safe levels are in gray cells. Results that meet safe standards are marked with an asterisk.*

Among other issues noted in our letter, we disagree with the responsible parties' claim that PFAS coming from the airport has not affected private wells north and east of their property. **The apparent position of SIA, the City of Spokane, and Spokane County that PFAS freely migrates *only* from Fairchild Air Force Base, while PFAS on SIA property simply disappears or remains in place is not scientifically justifiable.**

We are requiring the responsible parties to provide safe water to contaminated private wells in the emergency interim action area (see page 4).

¹<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/169127>

²<https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/document/168564>

Next steps

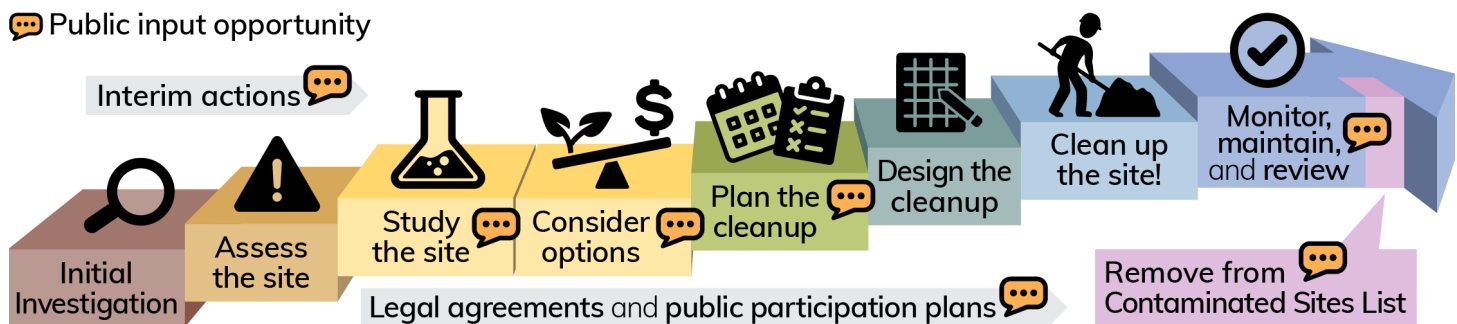
The results will be used to develop the Remedial Investigation Work Plan (see “Study the site” step in the cleanup process below). The draft plan is due in July 2026. This work plan will detail where and how soil and groundwater samples will be taken to fully discover where contamination from SIA is located. The plan will be updated if contamination continues to be found beyond the area identified in the first version.

Site background

In 2023, Ecology issued an enforcement order to SIA requiring investigation and cleanup after receiving sample results that found PFAS in groundwater at SIA. We added the city and county to the investigation under an agreed order in January 2026.

The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) is Washington’s environmental cleanup law. It provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup and sets standards that protect people and the environment. Ecology implements the [MTCA cleanup process](#)³ shown below.

Public input opportunity



About AFFF

AFFF contains PFAS, which can quickly put out jet fuel fires, but last a long time in the environment and affect human health. Until recently, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) required airports to use AFFF to meet safety requirements.

Related information

- **SIA PFAS cleanup site page:** <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/SIA-PFAS>
- **PFAS in West Plains private wells website:** <https://ecology.wa.gov/west-plains>
- **Join the West Plains PFAS updates email list:** <https://go.ecology.wa.gov/WestPlainsPFASupdates>
- **Washington Department of Health’s PFAS website:** <https://doh.wa.gov/PFAS>

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ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, email ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov, call 360-407-6831, or dial 711 to call through the Washington Telecommunications Relay for services like text telephone (TTY). Visit [Ecology.wa.gov/ADA](https://ecology.wa.gov/ADA) for more accessibility information.

³ <https://ecology.wa.gov/MTCA-process>

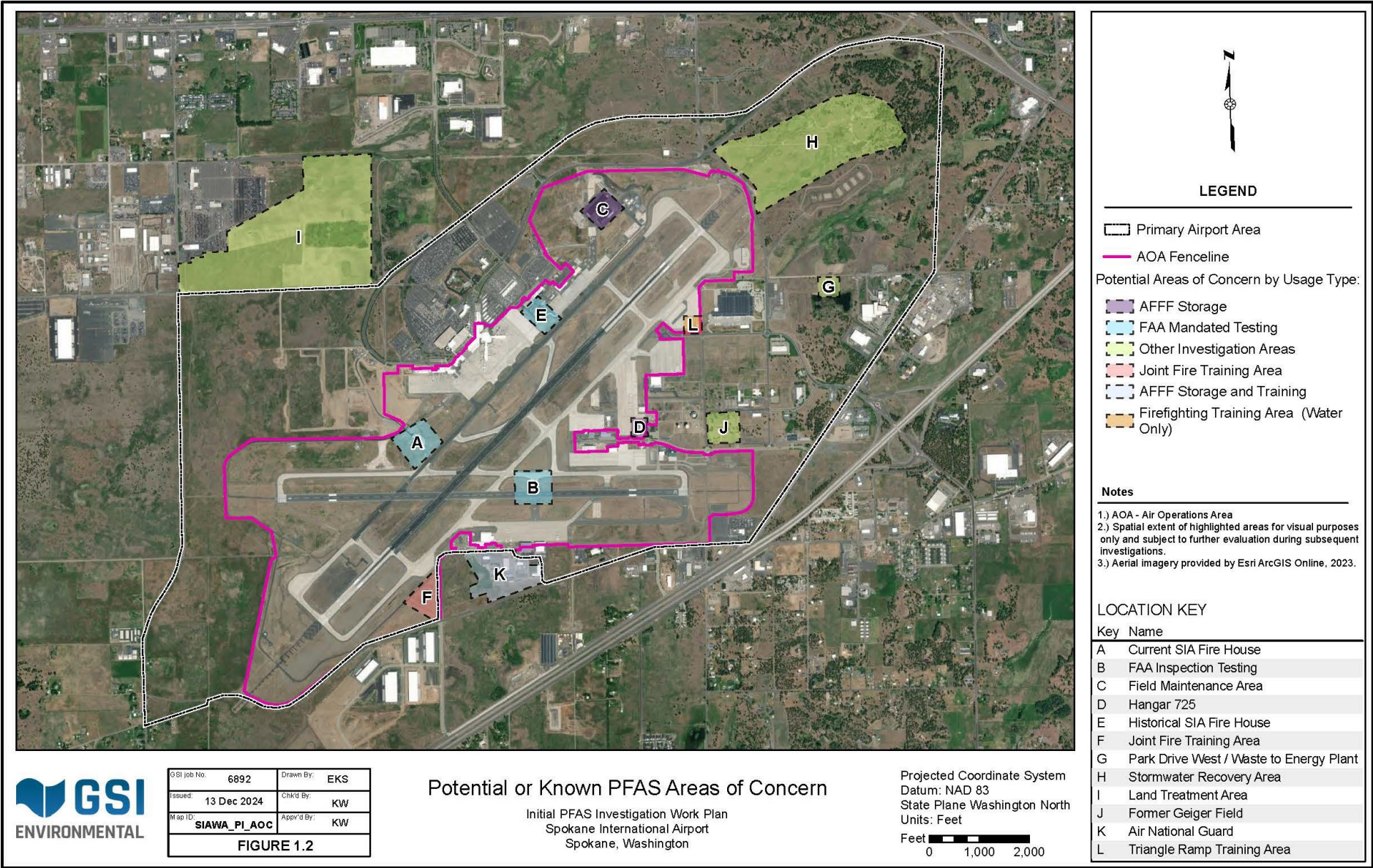


Figure 1. Areas where soil and groundwater were sampled, except for Hangar 725 where PFAS firefighting foam was stored but no known spills have occurred.
Note: This is Figure 1.2 in the Initial PFAS Investigation Work Plan (figure by GSI Environmental).

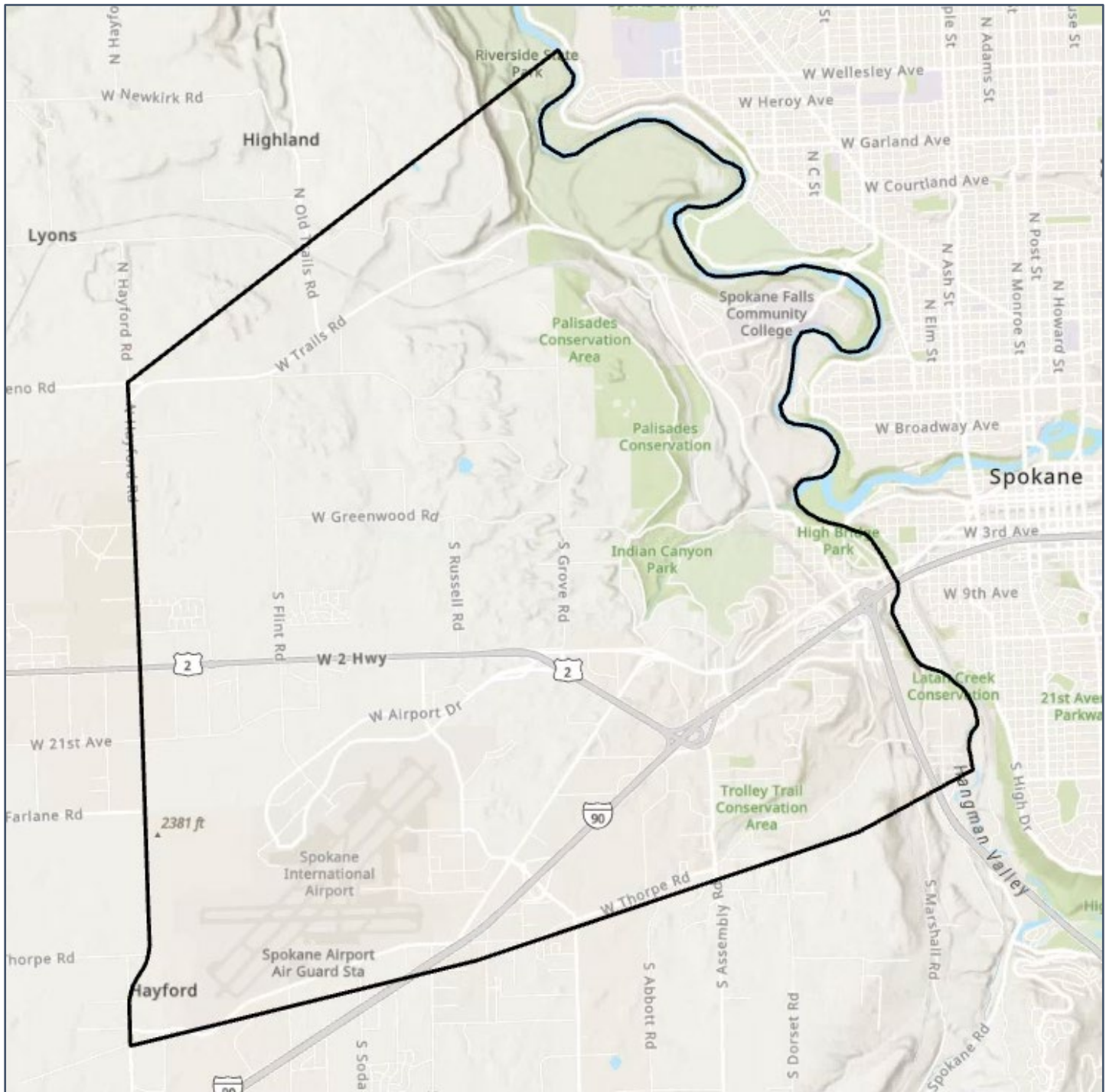


Figure 2. Emergency interim action area where safe water will be provided to residents and businesses with contaminated private wells. We based the boundaries on the airport's on-property groundwater sampling from 2017 through 2025, [EPA's sampling of 411 private wells in 2024](#), and [our groundwater investigation grant work](#)⁴ with the City of Medical Lake and Eastern Washington University.

⁴ <https://ecology.wa.gov/spills-cleanup/contamination-cleanup/cleanup-sites/sites-with-pfas-in-drinking-water/west-plains-pfas/sampling-results>