

Year 2025 Report on Activities to Implement Washington State's Water Quality Plan to Control Nonpoint Sources of Pollution

Water Quality Program

Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington

November 2026, Publication 26-10-074

Publication Information

This document is available on the Department of Ecology's website at:
https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2610074.html

Contact Information

Water Quality Program

Department of Ecology Headquarters
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7600
Phone: 360-407-6000
Website[1]**:** Washington State Department of Ecology

ADA Accessibility

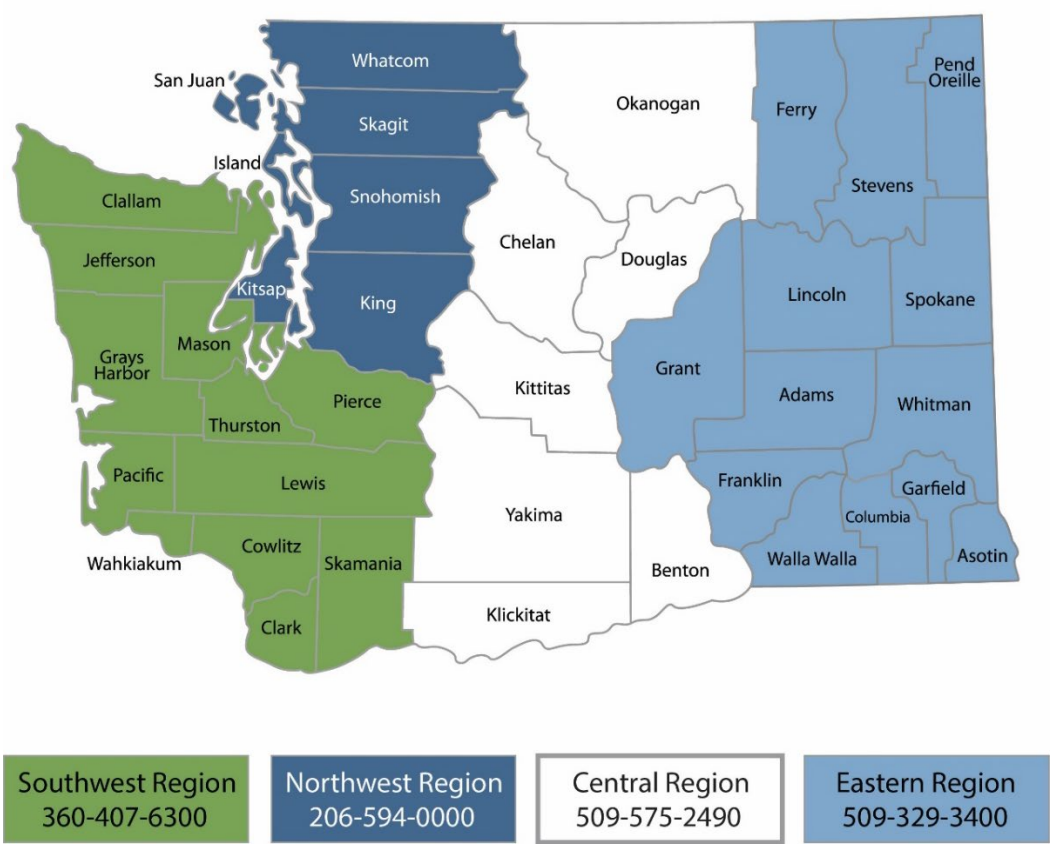
The Department of Ecology is committed to providing people with disabilities access to information and services by meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Section 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, and Washington State Policy #188.

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6000 or email at hannah.coe@ecy.wa.gov. For Washington Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341. Visit Ecology's website for more information.

[1] www.ecology.wa.gov/contact

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices

Map of Counties Served



Region	Counties served	Mailing Address	Phone
Southwest	Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Mason, Lewis, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum	P.O. Box 47775 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6300
Northwest	Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom	P.O. Box 330316 Shoreline, WA 98133	206-594-0000
Central	Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima	1250 West Alder Street Union Gap, WA 98903	509-575-2490
Eastern	Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman	4601 North Monroe Spokane, WA 99205	509-329-3400
Headquarters	Statewide	P.O. Box 46700 Olympia, WA 98504	360-407-6000

Year 2025 Report on Activities to Implement Washington State's Water Quality Plan to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution

Water Quality Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
Olympia, WA

November 2026 | Publication: 26-10-074



Table of Contents

Table of Contents

Year 2025 Report on Activities to Implement Washington State's Water Quality Plan to Control Nonpoint Sources of Pollution .....

Publication Information 1

Contact Information 1

ADA Accessibility 1

Department of Ecology's Regional Offices 2

Map of Counties Served 2

Year 2025 Report on Activities to Implement Washington State's Water Quality Plan to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution 3

List of Figures and Tables 6

Figures 6

Tables 7

Purpose of Document 8

Chapter 1: The Path Towards Clean Water 10

Chapter 2: EPA's 319 Grant Funding Distribution 12

2.1 Ecology's Water Quality's Nonpoint Program Support 12

2.2 Direct Implementation Fund 14

2.3 Ecology's Integrated Grant and Loan Program 15

2.4 Expenditure Summary 19

Chapter 3: Implementation in Action 20

3.1 Goal 1: Clean-up impaired waters and meet water quality standards. 22

3.2 Goal 2: Ensure Clear Standards 125

3.3 Goal 3: Develop and Strengthen Partnerships 130

3.4 Goal 4: Monitor Waters for Nonpoint Source Impairments, and Program Effectiveness 137

3.5 Goal 5: Administering the Nonpoint Source Program effectively and efficiently as possible 142

Chapter 4: Conclusions 145

Appendix A. Ecology's Integrated Grant and Loan Program- project details 148

Direct Implementation Fund (DIF) Projects 148

Nonpoint Source Watershed Projects Awarded Grants and Loans in SFY2026 151

Best Management Practices implemented in 2025 168
Appendix B. Forest Practices Adaptive Management Program Results 175
Appendix C. Priority Watersheds for 2026 184
SWRO Priority Watersheds 184
NWRO Priority Watersheds 197
CRO Priority Watersheds 203
ERO Priority Watersheds 207
Appendix D. Maintenance of Effort (MOE) List for State Fiscal Year 2025 per CWA Section 319(h)(9) 229

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Figure 1. Pass through funding for nonpoint grants for State Fiscal Year 2026. This figure omits funding disbursed as loans, such as for on-site sewage projects funded by the On-Site Sewage System Regional Loan Program. 16
Figure 2. Map of Ecology Regional Offices' boundaries. 22
Figure 3. Map showing Skokomish River watershed and Annas Bay. 33
Figure 4. Map showing White River TMDL priority watersheds - Boise, Pussyfoot and Second Creeks. Inset shows location of these three priority tributaries within the Puyallup watershed as a whole. 35
Figure 5. The Deschutes watershed is pictured in blue. Inset: Location of the Deschutes watershed within Western Washington. 39
Figure 6. Map of the Lacamas Creek watershed. 42
Figure 7. Map of Oakland Bay and Johns Creek. 44
Figure 8. Map of Sequim Bay. 46
Figure 9. Map of Eld Inlet, Henderson Inlet, and Nisqually Reach. 48
Figure 10. Willapa Bay Watershed. 50
Figure 11. Map of the East Fork Lewis River watershed. 52
Figure 12. Whatcom County watersheds containing Shellfish Growing Areas 54
Figure 13. Lower Skagit Tributaries TMDL study area 58
Figure 14. Samish Bay watershed in Skagit and Whatcom counties, northwest Washington. 58
Figure 15. South Skagit Bay subbasins. 61
Figure 16. Map of the Stillaguamish watershed with streams indicated in blue. 63
Figure 17. Lower Stillaguamish River PIC Phase 4 Project Area (Snohomish County). 64
Figure 18. Green River Watershed and tributary Newaukum Creek where nonpoint implementation efforts prioritize riparian and flood plain restoration to address water temperature impairments. 66
Figure 19. Map of the Lower Yakima River focus areas. 69
Figure 20. Map of the White Salmon River watershed. 71
Figure 21. Map of the Bonaparte Creek watershed. 74
Figure 22. Hangman watershed showing locations of prioritized sites ERO staff have contacted since 2018 and are actively working with on water quality improvement projects. Triangle icons represent complaint sites, square icons represent livestock sites, circle icons represent dryland agricultural sites. Dashed vertical line represents Idaho/Washington border. 76
Figure 23. Interpretive sign installed along Highway 274 overlooking a large restoration project near the town of Tekoa, WA. 78
Figure 24. Map showing Palouse River watershed boundary. 83
Figure 25. Little Spokane River watershed boundary. 88
Figure 26. Spokane River watershed boundary within Washington state. 91
Figure 27. Upper Colville River watershed. 94
Figure 28. Map of Hawk Creek watershed boundary. 97

Figure 29. Map of Moses Lake watershed boundary. 100
Figure 30. Map showing Snake River Tributaries in Whitman County. 103
Figure 31. Map showing Snake River Tributaries (Asotin Creek, Alpowa Creek, Deadman Creek, Meadow Creek, Tenmile Creek and Couse Creek). 105
Figure 32. Map of the Walla Walla River watershed 108
Figure 33. No Discharge Zone informational booth at a boating outreach event. 115
Figure 34. NDZ branded materials (zip ties, tote bag, brochures) used to educate boaters 116
Figure 35. NDZ branded placemats 116
Figure 36. NDZ online and print advertisements. 117
Figure 37. Examples of NDZ Education and Outreach Materials. 117
Figure 38. Left: example of NDZ educational information. Right: No Discharge Zone program logo. 118
Figure 39. Examples of NDZ sign at Washington marinas (left: Drayton Harbor Marina; right: Friday Harbor Marina) 119
Figure 40 Screen view of the Nonpoint Collector Application shows how Ecology staff can track site visits at particular locations 143

Tables

Table 1. Milestones from the 2022 Nonpoint Plan and the location in this Annual Report where that milestone is addressed. 8
Table 2. Staff costs supported with 319 project FA15 funding (SFY2026). 12
Table 3. Compilation of state funding match amounts. 17
Table 4. Federal Expenditure Summary as of March 31, 2026. 19
Table 5. Total Expenditure Summary with Match as of March 31, 2026. 19
Table 6. Summary of Vision Phase 1 watershed cleanup projects with 2025 updates 23
Table 7. Recreational vessel sewage pumped in Puget Sound 2023-2025. 122
Table 8. Active Direct Implementation Fund projects 148
Table 9. Projects offered funding for SFY 2026. 152
Table 10 Summary of Load Reductions in 2025. 164
Table 11 Load Reductions per Project in 2025. 164
Table 12. Summary of BMPs Implemented in 2025. 168
Table 13. Best Management Practices Implemented per Project in 2025 169
Table 14. Summary CMER Research Milestones and their status. 178
Table 15. Summary Non-CMER Project Milestones and their status. 181
Table 16. Final SFY24 Nonpoint Source Projects-Excluding 319 State Match Projects. 230

Purpose of Document

This Year 2025 Report on Activities to Implement Washington State's Water Quality Plan to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution is intended to meet the requirements of section 319 (h) (8) and (11) of the Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 USC 1329). The report documents the activities and accomplishments of the State of Washington in achieving clean water, and the Department of Ecology's (Ecology) administration of the State's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution Program. As described herein, Washington is making significant progress toward meeting the substantial on-the-ground and policy challenges presented by nonpoint water pollution.

This is the final Annual Report for the 2022 update of Washington's Water Quality Management Plan to Control Nonpoint Sources of Pollution (Nonpoint Plan), which includes activities completed from 2023-2025. To facilitate EPA's review, we have included below a list of milestones and where in the document they are addressed:

Table 1. Milestones from the 2022 Nonpoint Plan and the location in this Annual Report where that milestone is addressed.

Milestone from 2022 Nonpoint Plan	**Where in document milestone is addressed**
Complete 159 Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)/Straight to Implementation (STI)/ Other Restoration plans by 2025 (average 53 per year)	Section 3.1.1
Focus on a minimum of 8 priority watersheds to implement our nonpoint strategy per year and in the 8 watersheds implement 10% of the STI/TMDL per year	Section 3.1.2
Respond to 100% of complaints received	Section 3.1.3
4 Pollution Identification and Correction programs established in accordance with DOH and Ecology guidance	Section 3.3.9
Number of gallons of recreational boat sewage collected at Clean Vessel Act-funded pumpout facilities	Section 3.1.4
Number of education/outreach tools (actions or products) developed to share No Discharge Zone key messages	Section 3.1.4
Complete Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture Chapters	Section 3.2.4
Complete Tier 2 antidegradation analysis for the Department of Natural Resources Type NP rule	Section 3.2.3
Hold at least two Tribal workshops a year where we discuss our nonpoint activities	Section 3.3.6

100% of Ecology-led monitoring projects have an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan	Section 3.4
Initiate 3 effectiveness monitoring studies per year in TMDL/STI watersheds	Section 3.4
Achieve the following estimated reductions per year: • 14,000 lbs. of phosphorous. • 8,000 tons of sediment. • 40,000 lbs. of nitrogen.	Appendix A
70 On-site sewage system repair/ replacement projects completed by State Revolving Fund/ Centennial funded local loan programs	Section 2.3.1
100% of sites evaluated by Ecology are entered into the nonpoint tracking system	Section 3.5.1

Chapter 1: The Path Towards Clean Water

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution in our waterways is the greatest water quality challenge facing Washington State today. Ecology's NPS strategy focuses on multiple implementation paths to achieve clean water. However, no matter the approach, we continually strive for greater regulatory clarity and a comprehensive strategy that uses all available tools to control and prevent nonpoint sources of pollution and achieve compliance with water quality standards. In 2025 we made significant progress towards our goal of preventing nonpoint pollution and improving water quality across Washington. Some of our bigger successes include:

- Completed an update to Washington State's Nonpoint Plan. We held a public webinar and a 100-day comment period. Prior to the public comment period, we shared the draft with Tribes and held a Tribes-only webinar. Following the comment period, we made updates to the Plan and completed a response to comments document. We submitted the Nonpoint Plan to EPA in early 2026.
- Completed the remaining chapters of the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture[2]. We completed a public comment period and made updates to the guidance as a result of comments. We obtained an extension on the submission deadline and successfully submitted the remaining eight chapters to EPA in early 2026.
- Published the most recent update to Ecology's Water Quality Combined Funding Program guidelines, ensuring that the funding guidance reflects the BMPs included in the approved chapters of the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture, and continued to offer incentives for implementing full Site Potential Tree Height (SPTH) buffers.
- Supported the Forest Practices Board in developing rulemaking materials for the Board's proposed Type Np waters buffer rule, Water Typing System rule, and associated Board Manual guidance. This rule update, which will support clean and cool water in non-fish bearing perennial streams in forestlands, was adopted by the Forest Practices Board.
- Continued to provide yearly ecosystem payments to dryland wheat farmers who install riparian buffers with native woody vegetation in the Hangman Creek Watershed, through the Hangman Riparian Buffer Pilot Program. The payments are structured to match the amount of income they would receive by farming those areas (commodity buffers).
- Published an update to our nonpoint program webpages, which included information about nonpoint pollution sources and solutions, information on how our regional nonpoint field staff work, and shares resources for landowners, operators, and partners to learn more about nonpoint pollution in Washington State.
- Published the 2024 Annual Report to our nonpoint webpage, to transparently provide information on the past year of work, such as discussion of grants awarded, BMPs

[2] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2010008.html

implemented, and which watersheds staff are focusing work and what has been accomplished in the past year.
- Nonpoint regional staff attended townhalls, fairs, and other public events to engage with local communities around nonpoint pollution and steps that landowners can take to improve water quality.

Ecology's efforts to manage NPS pollution are underlain by a foundation of strategic policies intended to foster and guide water quality protection efforts. Accordingly, this report highlights some of the policy level advances in our continual effort to map out the nonpoint source regulatory landscape, and subsequently navigate toward a more effective statewide nonpoint source program.

Ecology's nonpoint strategy focuses on promoting the implementation of effective best management practices (BMPs) that support compliance with the water quality standards and prevent pollution discharge. The primary tools Ecology uses to facilitate and guide on-the-ground implementation are:

- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and associated implementation plans
- Advance Restoration Plans (i.e., a watershed-based implementation effort in advance of a TMDL)
- Straight to Implementation (STI) projects-a type of Advance Restoration Plan
- Ecology's Grant and Loan program and associated funding guidelines
- Regional nonpoint staff who provide on-the-ground technical assistance, and, when appropriate, provide a regulatory backstop.

This report also details the significant federal and state water quality protection investments made through our combined funding program. The grants and loans administered by this program are essential for advancing efforts to control NPS pollution. By facilitating the widespread implementation of effective BMPs, such as improved agricultural practices and riparian area restoration, this program is helping to create a paradigm shift in which NPS pollution control is viewed as important and customary by all contributing sectors.

Chapter 2: EPA's 319 Grant Funding Distribution

This report covers calendar year 2025. During 2025, the FA14 EPA section 319 two-year grant funding cycle ended June 30, 2025, and our current FA15 grant funding cycle began July 1, 2025. Federal funding is typically awarded for a two-year period, that happens to align with the State's budget biennium (the current state biennium is 2025-2027). And the project period for completing the work typically runs five years.

The Section 319 federal allocation was $6,355,270 for FA14. The table in section 2.4 of this chapter shows federal expenditure progress for the last three EPA grant funding cycles (FA13, FA14, and FA15).

Section 2.1 focuses on the EPA funding awarded in July 2025, which is the majority of the funding we are operating under. The overall project award for the 7/1/2025 through 6/30/2027 period is $10,372,666, with a 60/40 cost-share between EPA and Ecology. EPA's 60 percent cost-share equals $6,223,600. The funding is used to support three major work plan elements within Ecology: Ecology's Nonpoint Program, Direct Implementation Fund, and Water Quality Combined Funding Program.

2.1 Ecology's Water Quality's Nonpoint Program Support

Under FA15, Ecology funds 8.2 staff Full Time Equivalents (FTEs) annually that support the state's nonpoint program with policy development, technical assistance, water quality monitoring, and project implementation oversight.

2.1.1 Program Support - 8.2 FTE ($1,400,310 annually, $2,800,620 for SFYs 2026 and 2027)

Table 2. Staff costs supported with 319 project FA15 funding (SFY2026).

319 Funded WQ Support Projects	FTEs	319 Cost
Nonpoint Policy and Plan Coordination	2.50	454,832
Financial and Data Administration	1.00	173,899
TMDL Nonpoint Education and Outreach	0.50	66,527
TMDL Development and Implementation	1.00	161,178
Nonpoint Technical Assistance and Compliance	0.90	130,782
TMDL and BMP Effectiveness Monitoring	2.30	413,091
Total	8.20	$1,400,310

1. **Nonpoint Policy and Plan Coordination (2.50 FTE)**

   Ecology is responsible for overseeing and coordinating overall Nonpoint Plan implementation activities and policy. Part of that role entails management, monitoring overall status, compiling progress reports, and reporting back to EPA, taking the lead in coordinating with other Ecology programs, facilitating inter-state agency work, implementing activities that have statewide applicability, and performing technical outreach about the plan with local governments, Tribes, forest practices, and special purpose districts. In addition, Ecology is responsible for statewide nonpoint policy and planning.

   Estimated cost of this work plan component – **$454,832.**

2. **Financial Administration (1.0 FTE)**

   Staff of the Water Quality Program's Financial Management Section administer and manage all Section 319 grant funds and match funds passed through to local government entities, Tribes, and public not-for-profit groups. Staff ensure that funds are ranked and allocated to highest priority projects and are spent in a fiscally responsible manner. Staff also closely track project tasks, results, and data from initiation to completion.

   Estimated cost of this work plan component – **$173,899.**

3. **TMDL Nonpoint Education and Outreach (0.50 FTE)**
   Ecology initiates an education and outreach effort as part of every TMDL. The purpose is to ensure that people understand why we are doing a TMDL, what their responsibilities are likely to be, and how they can participate. A successful public process makes TMDL implementation more likely and more effective.

   Estimated cost of this work plan component – **$66,527.**

4. **TMDL Development and Implementation (1.00 FTEs)**
   The primary job of a TMDL lead is managing the development of the TMDL and supporting documents for successful submission to and approval by EPA. This element includes knowledge of TMDL concepts and procedures, and the ability to work effectively with diverse groups within and outside Ecology. Other products required from this work element include development of an implementation strategy (IS) to go along with the TMDL, a summary of public involvement, and a water quality (detailed) implementation plan (WQIP). Once these procedures are documented, the TMDL lead coordinates and initiates implementation activities to meet the allocations set in the TMDL. In some cases, the TMDL lead also manages local implementation grants.

   Estimated cost of this work plan component – **$161,178.**

5. **Nonpoint Technical Assistance and Compliance (0.90 FTEs)**
   The purpose of this work plan element is to provide technical assistance to landowners, as well as federal, state, and local agencies, Tribes, forests, and special purpose districts to ensure their activities, projects, and programs meet state water quality laws, regulations,

and standards. Areas of technical assistance include forest practices, agricultural activities, riparian restoration, complaint management, inspections, and nonpoint source enforcement. This work plan element will apply in Watersheds that implement nonpoint TMDLs, or in Watersheds with plans that focus on protection of threatened waters or implementation activities to clean up waters.

Estimated cost of this work plan component – **$130,782.**

6. **TMDL and BMP Effectiveness Monitoring (2.30 FTEs)**
   This part of the plan designs and conducts monitoring studies to determine the effectiveness of nonpoint source management programs. Effectiveness monitoring and ground water monitoring capture the success or failure of various voluntary and regulatory efforts. In addition, we will measure the effectiveness of specific implementation activities. Post TMDL monitoring is also conducted to verify that the pollutant controls result in the water body improving or meeting water quality standards. It tests the effectiveness of the implementation management programs/plans.

   Estimated cost of this work plan component – **$413,091.**

2.2 Direct Implementation Fund

The Direct Implementation Fund (DIF) is designed to assist Ecology's regional offices to directly address priority nonpoint problems. The DIF program uses unspent/de-obligated dollars from competitive projects, or other sources, to implement on-the-ground practices that will provide a direct and demonstrable water quality benefit by addressing an acute pollution problem at a specific site. Examples include planting riparian buffers, installing livestock exclusion fencing, and use of waste storage facilities to remove livestock (and associated pollution) from surface waters.

Projects may be proposed for DIF by an Ecology regional office at any time. The project goes through a review process and, if approved, will be placed in a queue for when funds are available. If funds become available without projects in the queue, the Nonpoint Funding coordinator may notify all regional offices to solicit proposals. To qualify, the project must address:

1. Identified sources of nonpoint pollution causing the most significant harm to water quality.
2. Water bodies that are identified as not meeting water quality standards and/or have a strategic implementation plan (such as a completed TMDL, straight to implementation (STI) or other appropriate watershed plan).
3. An actual ability to fix the problem (i.e. can implement the desired change and are ready to proceed and reach completion).
4. Criteria established in the DIF funding guidelines (updated SFY2026).

Ecology works closely with local partner organizations to facilitate implementation, leveraging both DIF and competitive grant programs. In 2025, due to a budget freeze, zero Centennial or Section 319 DIF projects were awarded.

2.3 Ecology's Integrated Grant and Loan Program

Ecology's Water Quality Combined Funding Program (WQC) administers seven major funding sources that provide grants and low-interest loans for projects to protect and improve water quality in Washington State. Ecology acts in partnership with local governments, special purpose districts, Tribes (Federally recognized), and nonprofits (Section 319 only), by providing financial and administrative support for their water quality efforts. Eligible project types include wastewater, stormwater, nonpoint, and on-site sewage systems (OSS). Ecology manages the seven fund sources as one with common guidelines, one funding cycle, application form, and offer list.

The WQC offers funding packages to the highest ranked projects through an annual application process. Funding becomes available and agreement negotiations begin on July 1st every year. The full offer list is available as an interactive map, spreadsheet, and document on the WQC Funding Cycles webpage[3].

Funding packages may include dollars from:

- **Centennial Clean Water Fund** (Centennial) grants for all project types
- **Clean Water Act Section 319** (319) grants for nonpoint
- **Clean Water State Revolving Fund** (SRF) loans for wastewater, nonpoint, and OSS.
    - Low interest loans and the Green Project Reserves (GPR), with the possibility of forgivable principal normally boosts the number of SRF applications for nonpoint source projects.
- **Stormwater Financial Assistance Program** (SFAP) grants are designed to fund stormwater projects and activities that have been proven effective at reducing environmental degradation from stormwater and go above-and-beyond permit requirements. Stormwater facilities and a limited suite of stormwater activities may be funded through SFAP. SFAP-eligible facility projects must reduce stormwater pollution from existing development and will be reviewed by Ecology to ensure compliance with Ecology's design standards.
- **Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program** (OSG) grants for projects that address infrastructure needs for combined sewer overflows (CSO), sanitary sewer overflows (SSO), and stormwater management.
- **Stormwater Community-Based Public-Private Partnership Program** (CBP3) performance-based contracts to accelerate stormwater project delivery.

[3] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Payments-contracts-grants/Grants-loans/Find-a-grant-or-loan/Water-QualityCombined-Funding-Program/WQC-funding-cycle

- **Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Grant Program** (PSNR) financial assistance to eligible publicly owned treatment works (POTWs) managing discharges of domestic wastewater containing inorganic nitrogen to Washington waters of the Salish Sea, excluding facilities on federal or Tribal lands and waters.

2.3.1 Nonpoint Grant and Loan Investments (SFY2026)

Nonpoint projects are evaluated and ranked based on feasibility criteria and water quality benefit, in support of the Washington State Nonpoint Plan and Watershed plans. Nonpoint projects may receive a combination of grants and/or loans from 319, Centennial, and/or CWSRF as one funding package. The funding guidelines for nonpoint projects are updated annually, including to reflect changes in the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture. In 2025, Ecology completed the remaining chapters of the Clean Water Guidance. While chapters were under development in 2025, no significant changes were made to the funding guidelines, as Ecology nonpoint staff expect to begin incorporating the additional chapters in 2026 after final publication of the Clean Water Guidance.

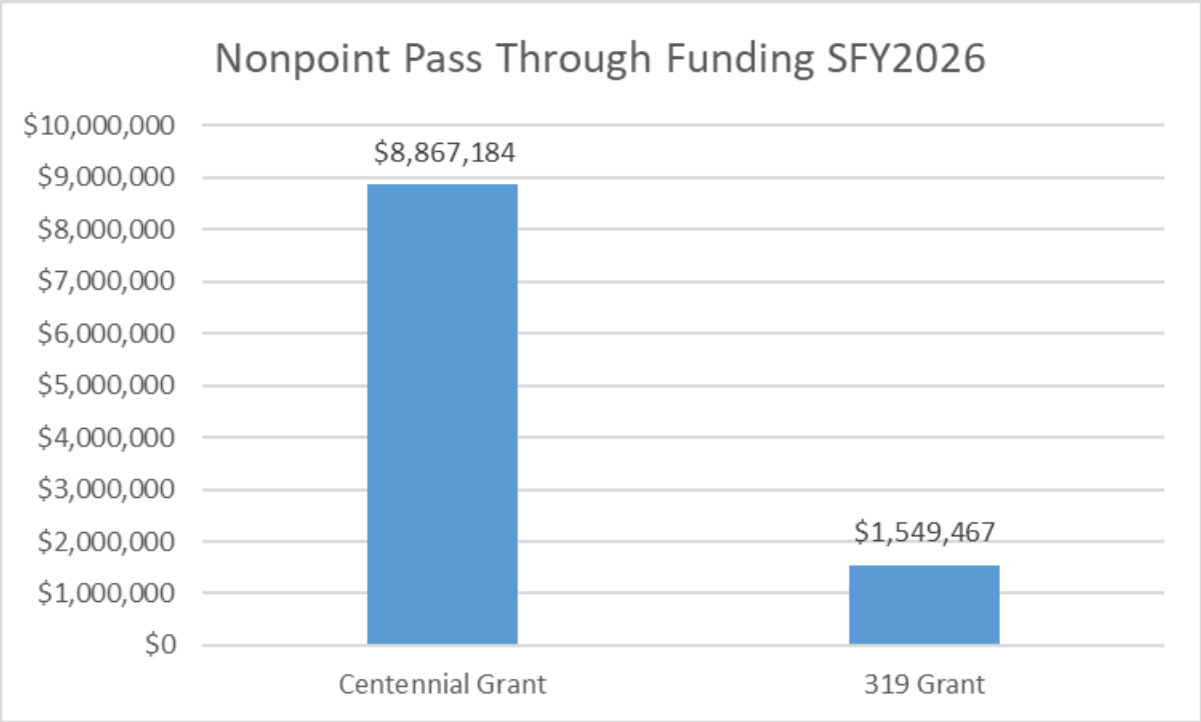


Figure 1. Pass through funding for nonpoint grants for State Fiscal Year 2026. This figure omits funding disbursed as loans, such as for on-site sewage projects funded by the On-Site Sewage System Regional Loan Program.

- $10,440,049 total Ecology investment in nonpoint projects in SFY 2026.
- 4 projects received 319 funding through the WQC program.
- 14 projects received state funding, in addition to the projects that were identified to satisfy the match requirement for EPA funds.

6 projects received matching state funding:

Table 3. Compilation of state funding match amounts.

Fund Source	Offer Amount	Number of Projects
Centennial	$6,253,395	14
Centennial Match	$2,613,789	6
Section 319	$1,549,467	4
Grand Total	**$10,416,651**	**24**

319 Pass-through Funding Summary

- $1,711,878 allocated from EPA for pass-through.
- $1,549,467 awarded through the WQC program.
    - Ecology staff are aware that $162,411 of the EPA allocation has not been awarded. Originally, Ecology had awarded a 5th Section 319 award for $224,892, but the organization disbanded in late 2025 due to loss of other federal funding. Ecology intends to offer the remaining funding as a new pass-through agreement in the WQC-2027 funding cycle.
- $2,613,789 identified for state match in SFY 2026. The total two-year projected match amount will be determined after the WQC-2027 funding round.

Project descriptions extracted from EPA's Grants Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS) can be found in Appendix A.

On-site Sewage System Regional Loan Program

To address the financial burden of repair and replacement of on-site sewage systems (OSS) while reducing the impact of failing systems to our public health and ecosystems, Washington State's Departments of Ecology and Health partnered with local non-profit lender Craft3 and local health agencies to create an affordable loan program. Traditional financing, like bank or credit union home equity loans, have credit, equity, and/or income thresholds that, even with credit enhancements, leave out many potential customers. Systemic inequities in conventional credit and financing underwriting, as well as in public infrastructure, put greater burden on already under-resourced communities; the OSS Regional Loan Program strives to remove these barriers.

Ecology provides funding for the program through Washington State's Centennial Clean Water Program and the EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund. Department of Health (DOH) provides technical assistance as the state agency responsible for administering OSS rules. Program partners collaborate to support homeowners and small businesses with

flexible, affordable financing to address the financial gap that exists for many to deal with a failing system.

OSS projects funded during the reporting period:

2023: 294 projects for $9.6M

2024: 319 projects for $10M

2025: 264 projects for $8.7M

2.3.2 Load Reduction Estimates by Project in 2025

Load reduction estimates (for some best management practices) are provided by recipients every January for the previous calendar year. Ecology compiles and enters this data into the GRTS database annually. EPA has inquired about yearly fluctuations in the total load reduction estimates found in this section. Load reduction estimates may differ from year to year based on several factors. Significantly, Washington State implements many BMP projects that may not result in nitrogen, phosphorus, or sediment load reductions because they are intended to reduce temperature and/or fecal coliform— which STEPL and PLET cannot currently calculate. Temperature and fecal coliform impairments are of particular concern because of their impacts on shellfish and salmon. Ecology has therefore placed a high priority on implementing BMPs that address these pollutants. Further, implementation of BMPs that target temperature and fecal coliform help address Tribal treaty rights at risk. While these efforts may not be adequately captured in the reporting tables, we believe that they are good investments. We have also extracted a list of 2025's BMP implementation from GRTS (see Appendix A). These tables, taken together, provide a more accurate picture of the environmental benefits of our investments. Pass through grant project agreements have 3-4 years to complete the scope of work. Load reduction estimates resulting from active projects in 2025 were extracted from GRTS and are provided in Appendix A.

2.3.3 Best Management Practices (BMPs) Implemented in 2025

Pass through grant project agreements have 3-4 years to complete the scope of work. BMPs implemented through active projects in 2025 were extracted from GRTS and are provided in Appendix A.

2.4 Expenditure Summary

The table below shows expenditure progress made on federal award portions of the last three federal 319 grants that are still open. Each budget period is two years, but the project period is five years to provide sufficient time for the projects to be constructed and the funding exhausted.

Table 4. Federal Expenditure Summary as of March 31, 2026.

Project	Grant Number	SFY	Start	Project End	Fed Award Amount	Total Fed Funding Dispersed	Total Expenditures	Federal Dispersed Spent %
FA13	C9-00044912	22	7/1/2021	6/30/2026	6,466,000.00	6,466,000.00	6,466,000.00	100%
FA14	C9-02J42201	24	7/1/2023	6/30/2028	6,355,270.00	6,355,270.00	4,935,293.00	78%
FA15	C9-03J13701	26	7/1/2025	6/30/2030	6,223,600.00	3,112,188.00	2,867,053.39	92%

Note: Spent funding is based on federally dispersed funds rather than the federal award, as we can only spend what EPA has provided for drawdown.

The table below shows the expenditure progress made on state match portions of the awards for the same three grant numbers.

Table 5. Total Expenditure Summary with Match as of March 31, 2026.

Project	Grant Number	SFY	Start	Project End	Total Award Amount	Fed Award Amount	State Match Amount	State Match Spent %
FA13	C9-00044912	22	7/1/2021	6/30/2026	10,776,666.00	6,466,000.00	4,310,666.00	100%
FA14	C9-02J42201	24	7/1/2023	6/30/2028	10,781,109.00	6,355,270.00	2,118,856.00	33%
FA15	C9-03J13701	26	7/1/2025	6/30/2030	10,372,666.00	6,223,600.00	4,149,066.00	13%

Chapter 3: Implementation in Action

In 2025, Ecology continued our internal and external efforts to achieve nonpoint pollution reduction goals in accordance with the state Nonpoint Pollution Management Plan. In addition to providing on-going guidance to our own staff, we have continued to build on external partnerships and use our nonpoint authority to make progress in cleaning up the state's waters.

In 2020, we reached a settlement agreement with Northwest Environmental Advocates (NWEA), which included several commitments. Ecology continues to dedicate resources to implementing this settlement agreement, and we have included information on progress in this annual report.

In 2025, we achieved several key milestones in implementing the settlement agreement:

- Completed drafts of the 2025 Nonpoint Plan update and the final eight chapters of the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture. We completed public comment periods and obtained agreement from NWEA to extend the submission deadline for the CWG and Nonpoint Plan to February 13, 2026. The Nonpoint Plan and Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture were submitted to EPA by the deadline.
- Updates to the funding guidelines made in 2025 were completed before the remaining chapters of the CWG, and therefore we did not incorporate new chapters into the most recent guidelines. However, with the completion all chapters, in future years we will continue work to incorporate chapters of the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture into our Water Quality Combined Funding Program guidelines.
- Reporting requirements: Annually Ecology identifies the priority watersheds in which non-grant implementation efforts (e.g., TMDL implementation, other nonpoint source control implementation) will be focused, and will include a description of priority actions to be conducted in each priority watershed. This annual report includes the following information: Updates about the status and progress of BMP guidance development; Description of updates to Washington funding guidelines based on BMP guidance development; Use of BMP guidance for technical assistance; Use of BMP guidance in new TMDLs and TMDL implementation plans, TMDL implementation, and TMDL alternatives; BMP outreach materials developed and training provided to field staff; Number of watershed evaluations conducted per Watershed; and Number of complaints received and summary of complaint types.

Chapter 3 is divided into five sections that align with goals identified in the 2022 Nonpoint Pollution Management Plan:

- Clean up impaired waters and meet water quality standards.

- Ensure clear standards.
- Develop and strengthen partnerships.
- Monitor waters for nonpoint sources impairments and program effectiveness.
- Administer the Nonpoint Source Program as effectively and efficiently as possible.

The summaries within each section include activities that supported the Nonpoint Management Plan goals during calendar year 2025. Within these goals, significant progress has been made statewide to reduce nonpoint source pollution, including:

- Made progress on developing Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and other advance restoration plans.
- Implementing the nonpoint portions of TMDLs and other water clean-up efforts through a combination of grants/loans, technical assistance, and enforcement tools.
- Updated eligibility and funding guidance for Ecology-funded nonpoint grant and loan projects[4], to ensure guidelines continue to reflect the approved chapters of the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture, including the riparian buffer chapter.
- Ongoing coordination with important partners such as the WA Department of Agriculture, the Agriculture Advisory Committee, the WA Forest Practices Board, and various Tribal entities and organizations.
- Continued working with conservation districts, local governments, and nonprofit organizations on nonpoint education and outreach efforts.
- Completed the draft Water Quality Management Plan to Control Nonpoint Sources of Pollution, which was shared early with Washington State Tribes, and completed a 100 day public comment period.
- Completed drafts of the remaining additional chapters of the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture, continuing work to identify BMPs that prevent water pollution and support the achievement of water quality standards in surface waters flowing through agricultural lands.

Many sections of this chapter are divided into progress at the regional scale due to how regional staff work in and with different counties, Watersheds, and regional partners. The below map shows the areas where regional staff dedicate their time. Our regional offices are divided into the Southwest Regional Office (SWRO), including the Vancouver Field Office,

[4] More information on Ecology's funding programs and guidelines can be found on the Ecology Water Quality Combined Funding Program webpage (https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/How-we-operate/Grants-loans/Find-agrant-or-loan/Water-Quality-Combined-Funding-Program).

Northwest Region Office, including the Bellingham Field Office (NWRO), the Central Regional Office (CRO), and the Eastern Regional Office (ERO).

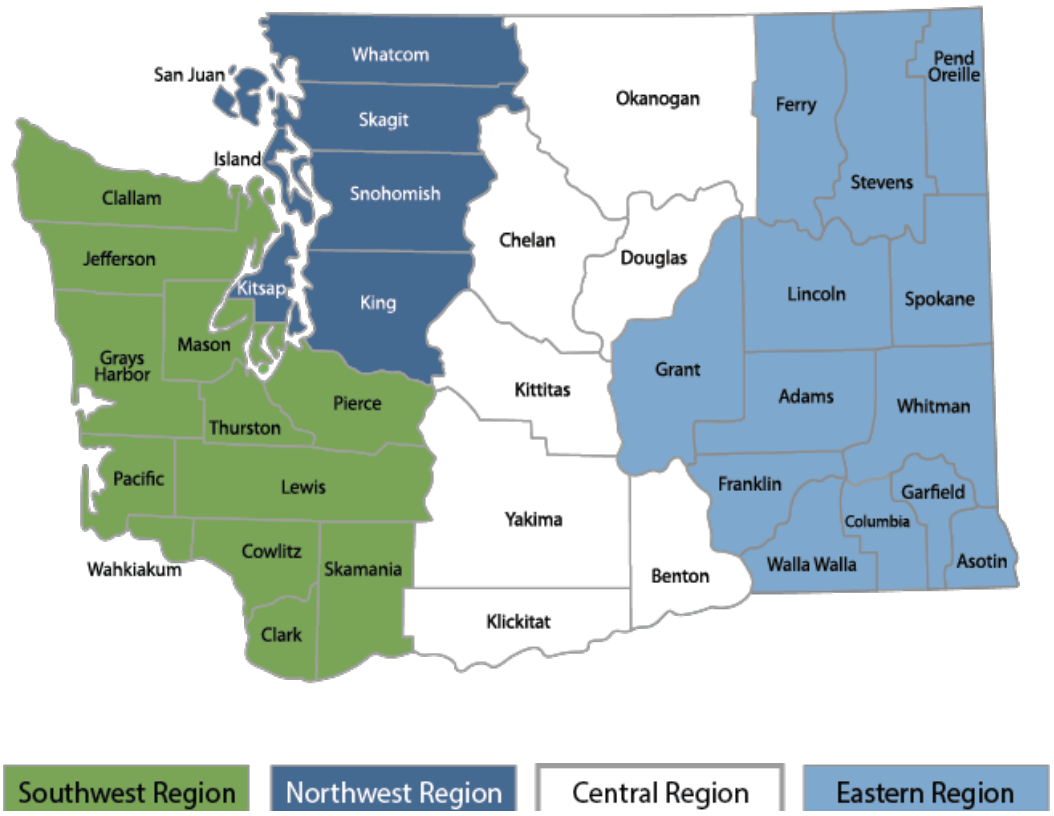


Figure 2. Map of Ecology Regional Offices' boundaries.

3.1 Goal 1: Clean-up impaired waters and meet water quality standards.

3.1.1 Development of Watershed Clean-up plans: Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL), Advance Restoration Projects (ARP) and Straight to Implementation (STI) projects

In September of 2024, EPA transitioned states from the Bridge Metric performance metric to the Vision Performance Measure (Vision). The Vision will be carried out in 2-year phases based on federal fiscal year timelines, until 2032. Vision Phase 1 began October 1, 2024 and runs through September 30, 2026. By September 30, 2026, the Vision Phase 1 projects will be updated and priorities for the next 2-year cycle (Oct. 1, 2026-Sept. 30, 2028) priorities will be entered into EPAs ATTAINS database. The Vision Phase 1 priorities with statuses as in progress will carry over to Vision Phase 2. Every 2-year phase there is an opportunity to revise Vision priorities and statuses (statuses can be either complete or in progress within the 2-year period). The table below represents Ecology's Phase 1 Vision priorities (October 1,

2024- September 30, 2026). We are in the process of determining the next Vision phase/cycle priorities, to be determined before Oct. 1, 2026. For all TMDLs, Advance Restoration Plans, and Straight to Implementation projects, Ecology will utilize the recommendations of the Clean Water Guidance when developing implementation plans that address nonpoint pollution from agricultural sources.

For the reporting period of the 2022 Nonpoint Plan (2023-2025), Ecology completed TMDLs, ARPs, and/or STI's covering 130 individual listings. While this is significant progress towards developing water cleanup plans to guide water quality improvement in Washington state, it is slightly below our milestone goal for this period, which was 159 listings. During the reporting period, we experienced position vacancies and staff turnover. Additionally, the 2021 disapproval of Washington's natural condition criteria (NCC) in our water quality standards required Ecology to adopt to go through the rulemaking process to adopt replacement NCC. We are currently awaiting EPA approval of our natural conditions criteria and performance-based approach. Without NCC in place we needed to re-prioritize temperature, DO, and pH water cleanup plans that likely will need to utilize the NCC to lower priorities, and in some cases, we paused work in progress to start work on plans that are not dependent upon natural conditions criteria. This impacted the pace of cleanup plan development during the reporting period. In the first half of 2026, we anticipate the completion of water cleanup plans covering 48 additional listings which will put us over the 159 listings goal.

Table 6. Summary of Vision Phase 1 watershed cleanup projects with 2025 updates.

Vision Phase 1 Projects in 2024	Status
Alkali Flat STI	Early action implementation underway. Outline developed, plan writing ongoing; watershed evaluation work took place throughout 2025 along with continued plan writing, strategy planned to be complete during Phase 1.
Almota and Little Almota STI	This project is on hold while we prioritize completion of the Hawk Creek STI.
Bonaparte Creek STI	Internal work plan drafted, in region review status. Active public outreach throughout 2025.
Burnt Bridge Creek ARP	ARP Report drafted, reviewed by region and headquarters (HQ), revisions made. Report review by external partners and subsequent revisions throughout 2025. Publication planned for late Spring 2026; report planned to be transmitted to EPA by September 2026.

Vision Phase 1 Projects in 2024	Status
Chimacum Creek ARP	Scoping has been completed and will now transition to source assessment work, which will continue through 2025 and into 2026.
Drayton Harbor Bacteria TMDL	TMDL submitted to EPA December 19, 2025. EPA approved the TMDL on March 6, 2026.
French Creek TMDL	Modeling by the Environmental Assessment Program was completed in 2023 and the technical report, which will inform the draft TMDL, is complete.
Hangman DO/pH ARP	Sediment study draft completed. Plan writing currently underway.
Hawk Creek STI	Early action implementation and planning has been ongoing since 2022. Strategy under development in 2024 and 2025.
Lacamas Creek ARP	Plan writing underway throughout 2024 and 2025.
Pataha Creek Multiparameter TMDL	Extended project scoping occurred in 2023. Data collection began in 2024 and is still underway.
Pend Oreille Tributaries multiparameter TMDL	Extended scoping was completed in 2025 and in 2026 the project is moving forward to formally start the TMDL study and development.
Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction ARP	Plan underwent public review in 2025. Additional, public and tribal engagement is planned.
Quilcene/Tarboo ARP	Scoping has been completed and will now transition to source assessment work, which will continue through 2025 and into 2026.
Sequim Bay multiparameter TMDL	This new project underwent extended project planning (scoping) in 2025 and has been proposed for EAP to begin source assessment work in 2026.
Soos Creek DO/Temperature/Bacteria TMDL	Data collection was completed in 2024; model design and calibration in progress from 2024 through 2025.
Soos Creek Fine Sediment TMDL	TMDL submitted to EPA December 30, 2025. Waiting on EPA action. TMDL was completed during Phase 1.

Vision Phase 1 Projects in 2024	Status
Spring Flat Creek STI	Initial draft completed in 2022. Strategy developed in 2023. Strategy transmitted to EPA August 22, 2024. Completed during Bridge Metric, was revised on March 5, 2025 and EPA accepted the strategy April 8, 2025.
Upper Colville STI	Early action implementation and planning in 2022 and 2023. Strategy to be developed in 2024. Stakeholder outreach and plan writing throughout 2025.
White Salmon Bacteria ARP	Fieldwork completed in 2024 and plan drafted. Plan was in region review throughout 2025.
Wide Hollow Temperature TMDL	Allocations being developed, report writing in progress. Position vacancy caused delay.

Southwest Regional Office

TMDLs

Many of SWRO's TMDL resources and allocated Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) resources are currently focused on development of Advance Restoration Projects and scoping appropriate watersheds for future watershed cleanup plans.

There is a new Sequim Bay multiparameter TMDL that underwent extended project planning (scoping) in 2025 and has been proposed for EAP to begin source assessment work in 2026.

Advance Restoration Projects

In 2024, a draft of the Burnt Bridge Creek Advance Restoration Plan (BBC ARP) was completed and underwent reviews by the region and headquarters staff. The draft has since been edited to incorporate feedback and the 2024 draft was shared with partners in 2025, leading to additional edits to the draft plan, and is now going through final internal review so that it can go out for public review and comment in 2026. There will be an informational workshop held during the public review period. The BBC ARP is planned to be transmitted to EPA for acceptance by summer 2026.

Ecology also continued work on the Lacamas Creek ARP. The source assessment report for the Lacamas Creek watershed, published in March 2024, is informing the draft plan for the Lacamas Creek Advance Restoration Plan. The Lacamas Creek Partnership for Clean Water

webpage[5] was updated in 2025 to reflect activities taken in recent years and next steps for the Lacamas Creek Partnership.

Ecology's Southwest Regional Office initiated two new Advance Restoration Plan water cleanup projects in 2024, by requesting Environmental Assessment Program resources to scope projects in the Chimacum and Quilcene/Tarboo watersheds. Scoping has since been completed and those projects will now transition to source assessments conducted by the Environmental Assessment Program, to inform the writing of each cleanup plan. Source assessment work continued through 2025 and into 2026.

Northwest Regional Office

TMDLs

Ecology developed a fine sediment TMDL in Soos Creek to address impairments to benthic invertebrates, an indicator of stream health. This is the first TMDL of its kind in the state. Fine sediments from upland sources and those produced through instream erosion must be controlled to improve stream habitat and meet water quality standards. In 2024, Ecology completed a draft of the TMDL that underwent internal review. The draft TMDL and implementation plan were finalized in 2025. Following the draft completion, a public comment period was held from September 17 through October 20, 2025, and we held an informational workshop on the draft TMDL on October 7, 2025. In addition to efforts to control turbidity, recommendations for restoration of degraded habitat by improving riparian buffers and increasing channel complexity will also be part of the accompanying implementation plan. The TMDL was submitted to the EPA on December 30, 2025.

The second TMDL Ecology is developing in Soos Creek will address temperature and dissolved oxygen impairments that indicate a failure to meet the aquatic life designated use, and bacteria impairments that indicate a failure to meet recreational uses. Data collection efforts began in 2023 and were underway throughout the year to support the technical analyses for this project. After data collection was completed in 2024, model design and calibration began and is currently still ongoing.

Ecology also continued work on the Drayton Harbor Bacteria TMDL in 2025. We put the draft out for public comment from August 21 through September 26, 2025. We held two informational workshops during the public comment period, one in-person and online (hybrid) on August 28, 2025 and one online only on September 3, 2025. The Drayton Harbor TMDL was submitted to EPA December 19, 2025, and was approved by EPA March 6, 2026.

Finally, we continued work on the French Creek Watershed clean-up plan. Modeling by the Environmental Assessment Program was completed in 2023 and a technical report was

[5] https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37698/lacamas_creek_partnership_for_clean_water.aspx

completed in 2025, currently awaiting publication. The most recent analysis has determined this will be a temperature TMDL and the report is currently being drafted.

Central Regional Office

Advance Restoration Projects

Work on the White Salmon Advance Restoration Project continued in 2024; a draft plan has been developed and is currently being reviewed by the region.

As of early 2025, an internal work plan for a Bonaparte Creek Bacteria Straight to Implementation project has been drafted. The draft is still in review status at the region throughout 2025. Bonaparte Creek is a tributary to the Okanogan River.

In 2025, Ecology's Central Regional Office requested Environmental Assessment Program resources to conduct extended project planning (scoping) for a new water cleanup project in the Klickitat watershed. The scoping was completed in 2025 and the project has been requested to formally start in 2026.

Eastern Regional Office

TMDLs

Ecology's Eastern Regional Office continues to focus on TMDL and STI implementation, prioritizing resources toward achieving on-the-ground actions that get to clean water. In 2023, scoping for the Pataha Creek Multiparameter TMDL was completed. Data collection and planning were initiated in 2024 and are currently underway. In 2025, Ecology's Eastern Regional Office requested Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) resources to conduct extended project planning (scoping) for a Spokane River temperature and Pend Oreille Toxics water cleanup project. There were not enough EAP resources to carry out scoping for these two TMDLs, however, extended scoping was completed for the Pend Oreille Tributaries multiparameter TMDL in 2025 and in 2026 the project is moving to formally start the TMDL study and development.

Ecology is also working on writing an implementation plan for the EPA Pend Oreille Temperature TMDL. During 2025, the Implementation Plan has been drafted and in 2026 will be reviewed and eventually published.

Straight to Implementation Projects

ERO is expanding STI work to several watersheds: Alkali Flat Creek, Almota Creek, Spring Flat Creek, Hawk Creek, and the Upper Colville Watershed. In 2023 we continued our watershed evaluations in these watersheds to collect information on problem sites and connect with local partners. We continued to gather information, and in 2024 many of these plans were still being drafted; because of staffing changes and associated vacancies, the plans were not

completed in 2024. Work on the plans continued through 2025 and many are planned to be transmitted to EPA by summer 2026. A draft of the Spring Flat Creek STI was completed in early 2024. The Spring Flat Straight to Implementation Strategy was transmitted to EPA on August 22, 2024 and EPA accepted the plan on April 8, 2025. Alkali Flat Creek, Upper Colville, and Hawk Creek projects remain priorities on our Vision Phase 1 list to be either complete or in development through when the Phase 1 performance measure period ends (September 30, 2026).

Statewide Projects

Puget Sound Nutrient Source Reduction Project

- **Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan public review:** Our Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan underwent an extensive internal review process the first half of 2025. We then held a 3 month public comment period in the summer. We have since been reviewing the feedback received and considering how best to consider and incorporate feedback on the draft plan.
- **Modeling work (Phase 2 Optimization Scenarios):** This year we published our latest Salish Sea Model technical report, Model Updates and Optimization Scenarios Phase 2, which builds off of the modeling scenarios developed in 2022 to identify a reduction scenario that achieves water quality standards across all of Puget Sound while also considering the amount of reductions needed. This modeling work supports the target reductions identified in the Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan.
- **Puget Sound Spatially Referenced Regression on Watershed Attributes** (Puget Sound SPARROW): The United States Geological Survey (USGS) and Ecology have collaborated to develop refined, seasonal load estimates of total nitrogen and total phosphorus within watersheds draining to Washington waters of the Salish Sea. Development of this model is complete and we anticipate that it will be used for selecting watersheds for future cleanup plans and to inform nonpoint efforts to reduce nutrients.
- **Engagement & outreach:** We continue to engage with the Nutrient Forum, comprised of the regulated community, Tribes, all levels of government, industry, environmental groups, academics, and local implementers. We plan to continue engagement in 2026, which will focus on gaining broader alignment on the right balance of reductions to meet the dissolved oxygen needs of Puget Sound. See section 3.3.4 for more information on the Nutrient Forums held in 2025.

Columbia and Snake River Temperature TMDL Implementation Plan

- **Project Background:** In 2021 EPA published the *Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers Temperature TMDL* evaluating temperature pollution on the mainstem Columbia and Lower Snake Rivers in Washington and Oregon. The TMDL identified dam impoundments and climate change as having the largest impact on elevated temperatures in these rivers with load allocations and wasteload allocations assigned to tributaries, dams, and point source dischargers. As agreed in a previous MOA, EPA

would complete the TMDL while the states of Washington and Oregon would both complete accompanying state-specific implementation plans. In 2024, Ecology hired an FTE to begin coordination on the implementation plan.

- **Kickoff and Planning Process:** Ecology kicked off the planning process for the accompanying implementation plan with an introductory summary meeting on March 17, 2025. During this meeting Ecology provided an overview of the TMDL and outlined our strategy for producing a draft implementation plan in 2026. To help better inform and form a strategy for implementation, Ecology formed a technical advisory group consisting of subject matter experts, Tribal representatives, agencies, and other watershed partners which met once a month from June 2025 to January 2026. Each monthly meeting was focused on a specific component of the TMDL (e.g., tributaries, dams, point sources) and was composed o topic-specific presentations, advisory group discussions, and time for questions from the public. Additionally, Ecology produced a "Public Input Form" to solicit public feedback and recommendations on preferred implementation activities for consideration in the future implementation plan.
- **Implementation Plan:** With the completion of the planning process in the beginning of 2026, Ecology will release a draft Implementation Plan in mid-2026 after a first review and comment by the technical advisory group. The plan will be open for a 60-day public comment period with the goal of publishing a completed Implementation Plan by the end of 2026. Finally, the publishing timeline of Washington's implementation plan is being coordinated with Oregon's implementation as well as associated Water Quality Attainment Plans (WQAPs) in Washington to better align progress tracking and adaptive management cycles for the entire TMDL.
- **System-wide Analysis:** Supplementary to the implementation plan and WQAP processes Ecology began a project using the River Basin Model 10 (RBM10) water quality model to examine impacts of potential future temperature mitigation measures across the entire Columbia River system. Work for this project is being coordinated with federal dam agencies and local public utility districts (PUDs) to help better inform implementation and decision making. This project will be ongoing throughout implementation process and aid in better understanding temperature changes in the Columbia River system as mitigation efforts are enacted across the basin.

3.1.2 Implementation of TMDLs, STIs, Nonpoint Enforcement Efforts

Ecology continues to promote water cleanup activities across Washington State with an emphasis on our TMDL, STI and Advance Restoration Project watersheds. Each of our regional offices have chosen selected areas where we are attempting to increase the pace of BMP implementation to address nonpoint pollution. The following were focus watersheds for our regional staff's implementation efforts in 2025 and are part of continuing multi-year efforts (focal issues in parentheses):

Southwest Regional Office:

- Annas Bay and the Skokomish River watershed (bacteria TMDL)
- Boise, Pussyfoot, and Second Creeks- Lower White River tributaries (bacteria and pH TMDLs)
- Deschutes River, Percival Creek, and Budd Inlet Tributaries (multiparameter TMDL: bacteria, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and nutrients)
- Lacamas Creek (bacteria, pH, temperature, dissolved oxygen ARP)
- Oakland Bay and Johns Creek (bacteria, temperature, dissolved oxygen TMDL)
- Sequim Bay (bacteria ARP in development)
- South Sound Shellfish Growing Areas: Henderson, Eld Inlet, and Nisqually Reach (bacteria TMDLs)
- Willapa Bay (temperature and dissolved oxygen TMDLs)

Northwest Regional Office:

- Whatcom County Shellfish Growing Areas (bacteria TMDLs)
- Skagit River and Samish River (temperature and bacteria TMDLs)
- South Skagit Bay (bacteria and temperature TMDLs)
- Stillaguamish River (dissolved oxygen, bacteria, pH, temperature, arsenic, mercury TMDL)
- Green-Duwamish River (temperature TMDL)

Central Regional Office:

- Lower Yakima River (sediment, bacteria, temperature TMDLs)
- White Salmon River (bacteria ARP in development)
- Bonaparte Creek (bacteria STI in development)

Eastern Regional Office:

- Hangman Creek (bacteria, dissolved oxygen, nutrients, pH, temperature, turbidity TMDLs)
- Palouse River watershed (bacteria, temperature TMDLs)
- Little Spokane River (TMDLs for bacteria, temperature, dissolved oxygen, total phosphorus, and pH)
- Spokane River watershed (dissolved oxygen TMDL)
- Upper Colville River (STI in development, building upon bacteria TMDL)
- Hawk Creek watershed (STI in development, listed for bacteria, temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and turbidity)
- Moses Lake (locally led partnership- harmful algal blooms)
- Whitman Snake River tributaries (bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature STI)
- Blue Mountain Snake River tributaries (bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature STI)

- Walla Walla River Watershed Multiparameter TMDLs (Bacteria, Temperature, pH, DO, Toxics)

Ecology's nonpoint compliance staff work out of four regional offices- Southwest, Northwest, Central, and Eastern. By working out of regional offices, staff are able to be locally engaged with partner organizations, active on the ground, and have an increased awareness and involvement in local water quality issues. As stated in Chapter 2, 319 funding from EPA provides 0.9 FTE focused on technical assistance and compliance activities; when combined with positions supported via state funding allocated from the legislature, the nonpoint technical and compliance positions total 10 FTEs focused solely on TA and compliance, 11 FTE who conduct both TA/compliance and TMDL writing, and two staff who focus on outreach and education communications. Additionally, there are 6 positions focused on implementation of the forest practice rules.

Nonpoint staff frequently coordinate with local partners, including municipal and county government agencies, interagency workgroups, Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) groups, local Tribes, conservation districts (CD), and local watershed groups. Across the regions, information is shared between nonpoint staff and our partners through a variety of methods, often tailored to the needs and preferences of the community and partners. This may include workgroup meetings, attendance at monthly conservation district board meetings, and one-on-one conversations between Ecology staff and staff of local partner organizations. For example, in the Southwest Region Office, a monthly newsletter is utilized to spread information among active partners. Whatever the method, there is an emphasis on continuing to develop cooperative relationships with local restoration practitioners. Because these organizations are often local technical assistance resources for landowners needing to make improvements, these relationships consistently prove to be invaluable for implementing water quality improvement BMPs.

Due to the often high costs of BMP implementation for landowners, nonpoint field staff work to support grant applications from CDs and other local partners. Nonpoint field staff work with Ecology's grants staff to provide grant information, application assistance, and feedback to potential applicants prior to the grant submission deadline. In our Eastern region, nonpoint staff continue to work with landowners and local CDs to maintain an innovative grant structure that utilizes incentive payments for riparian buffer implementation, to compensate producers for loss in income due to the change in land use. This program has been hugely successful and instrumental in achieving change on the ground. We continue to strive to identify new watersheds and partners to work towards applying this commodity-based incentive structure in new watersheds within the state.

Through technical assistance letters, outreach mailers, phone calls, and in-person site visits, nonpoint staff provide landowners with resource-specific water quality education materials (e.g. information on the impacts of land use practices on water quality and agricultural BMPs for water quality protection, utilizing the recommendations of the Clean Water Guidance for

Agriculture chapters). Staff work with landowners to contextualize the impacts of local actions on water quality, explain water quality data, provide recommendations to address nonpoint source pollution, and provide referrals to local partners for financial assistance through cost-share programs and grants. Increasingly staff have participated in in-person events to connect with community members and directly with landowners, with several regions utilizing townhall-style meetings to share information and answer questions from the community. While nonpoint staff strive to work *with* landowners to implement the necessary changes, when necessary, we rely on the regulatory authority granted by RCW 90.48 to achieve compliance with state water quality law.

In general, there are two main methods by which staff identify and respond to nonpoint pollution- reactively to environmental complaints submitted by the public, and proactively via watershed evaluations in priority areas. Watershed evaluations help to prioritize efforts and focus resources throughout the region. Staff may also use water quality sampling to identify focal reaches and track progress. Regardless of the method of identification, sites with verified nonpoint concerns are recorded in the Nonpoint Implementation (NPI) database, and staff follow internal guidance documents and a graduated compliance flowchart to address pollution concerns.

The 2022 Nonpoint Plan goals and milestones table specifies focusing nonpoint field staff efforts in a minimum of eight priority watersheds, a benchmark we have greatly surpassed, with staff working in 24 watersheds in 2025. As described above, staff are working in these watersheds to educate landowners and facilitate the implementation of BMPs that will address nonpoint sources of pollution, and progress has been made toward that goal within watersheds. Within each annual report during the reporting period of 2023-2025, descriptions of this work and progress towards milestones can be found within the regional reporting in section 3.1.2. Within the 2022 Nonpoint Plan, we also set a goal of implementing 10% of the water cleanup plan each year; we have demonstrated progress via the regional watershed information provided in section 3.1.2 of each Annual Report, as well as in the BMP implementation information provided in the funding updates within each report. The 10% implementation metric was challenging to track and not a specific or detailed metric for accurately accounting for and tracking watershed cleanup implementation, especially when the BMPs being implemented may take years or decades to be fully effective (such as riparian buffers, which need time for trees to grow). To address this, we have adjusted this reporting metric in the recent 2025 Nonpoint Plan update, to instead focus on tracking measurable steps forward, such as: watershed evaluations, letters sent, BMPs implemented, and the use of graduated compliance. We believe that by focusing on the steps that lead to BMP implementation (outreach, direct landowner education and technical assistance, financial assistance, and use of regulatory authorities), as well as numbers of BMPs implemented, we will be better positioned to measure progress and determine if we are successfully addressing nonpoint sources of pollution.

For each region's focal watersheds, priority actions taken in 2025 are highlighted below.

Southwest Regional Office Priority Watersheds

Priority Watershed Name: Annas Bay and the Skokomish River Watershed

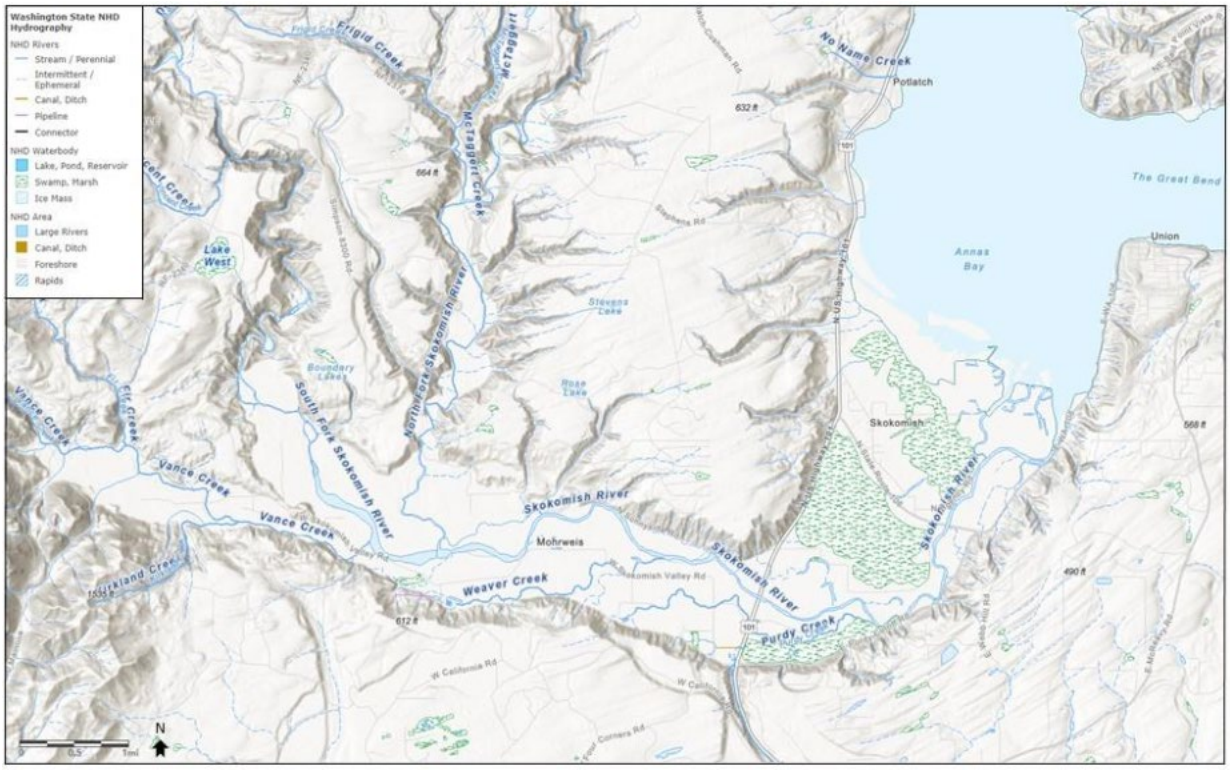


Figure 3. Map showing Skokomish River watershed and Annas Bay.

Implementing: Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, Skokomish River Basin Fecal Coliform TMDL

In this watershed, nonpoint staff work with local partners such as Mason County Environmental Health Department, Mason Code Enforcement, Mason Conservation District, Skokomish Tribe, and landowners to reduce nonpoint sources of bacteria pollution originating from agricultural activities. After responding to multiple ERTS and partner referrals within these watersheds/sub-watersheds, staff observed multiple parcels where livestock operations have had the potential to contribute to bacteria pollution. Furthermore, risk to shellfish growing areas downstream from bacteria pollution continued to increase, increasing the risk of growing area closures.

Summary/Context Info:

The Skokomish River and the Delta, known as Annas Bay, boasts hundreds of acres of tidal flats used for shellfish harvest, and are home to numerous species of fish and wildlife including ESA-listed Coho and threatened stocks of Chinook. Flooding events in the Valley magnify the water quality impacts of livestock operations and Ecology is working to address the pollution inputs of this small community.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Collaborate with staff to coordinate messaging regarding water quality work in the area:** Staff continue working with Mason County Environmental Health Department, Mason Clean Water District, and other area partners to develop educational mailers to provide landowners with up-to-date information regarding available technical and financial resources as needed.

Financial Assistance

- **Offers of financial assistance resources:** Staff gave information regarding opportunities for landowners to access financial assistance resources through 1 correspondence. Staff also regularly provided information regarding grant opportunities to local partners.

Partner Coordination

- **Reported concerns:** Nonpoint staff communicated and coordinated with area partners to identify appropriate responses to two complaints.
- **Partner Meetings:** Staff participated in 3 PIC meetings to coordinate efforts to address specific pollution concerns. Staff attended Mason CD board meetings to provide updates and serve as a bridge between the two agencies.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Site of concern resolution and follow-up:** Staff coordinated with local partners to resolve nonpoint water quality concerns at one identified site of concern. In 2025 one watershed evaluation was conducted.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Technical assistance and compliance follow-through:** Staff issued one Technical Assistance letter and attended one site inspection.

Monitoring Activities

- **Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) coordination:** Staff participated in two Clean Water District meetings, two quarterly meetings with Squaxin Island Tribe, as well as regular informal staff-to-staff meetings, during which partners discussed ambient monitoring efforts and results.

Priority Watershed Name: Boise, Pussyfoot, and Second Creeks—Lower White River, Enumclaw Plateau Tributaries

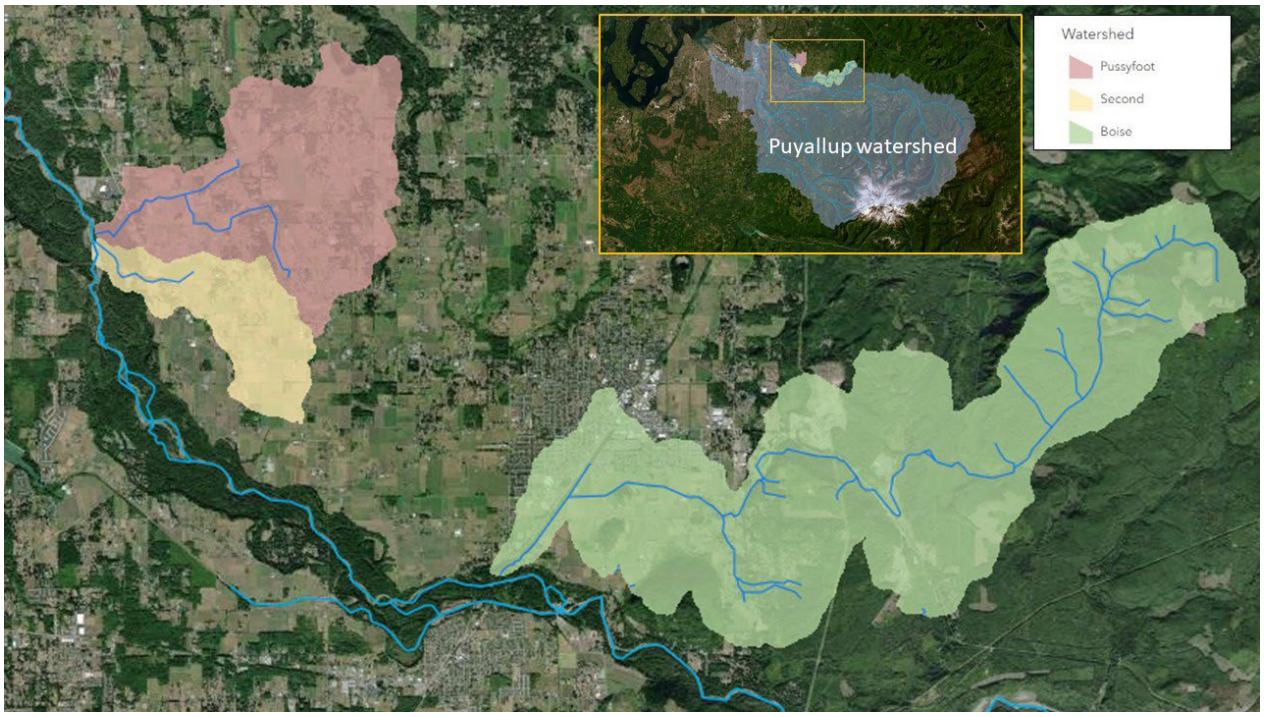


Figure 4. Map showing White River TMDL priority watersheds - Boise, Pussyfoot and Second Creeks. Inset shows location of these three priority tributaries within the Puyallup watershed as a whole.

Implementing: Puyallup Watershed Fecal Coliform TMDL; Lower White River pH TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

Since 2014, Ecology nonpoint staff have been collaborating with state, Tribal, and local partners to monitor, identify, and address pollution issues on the WRIA10 (Puyallup-Lower White Basin) side of the Enumclaw Plateau. Ecology identified three tributaries within the Enumclaw plateau as priority watersheds: Boise Creek, Pussyfoot Creek, and Second Creek. Nonpoint pollution inputs within these watersheds significantly increase during the wet season. Studies show that the majority of nonpoint pollution comes from domestic livestock rather than from septic systems or wildlife inputs. External partners include the Muckleshoot Tribe, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Washington State Department of Agriculture, King County Livestock Program, King County Public Health, King County Rural and Regional Services, Seattle-King County Public Health, King Conservation District, City of Enumclaw, Enumclaw Plateau Community Association, and others.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Continued to maintain and update Enumclaw Partnership webpage:** This webpage compiles reports and data, as well as Partnership meeting minutes and presentation

slides. The page is a resource both for Partnership members and for landowners.

- **Facilitated language access:** Ensured that all education and outreach materials were translated into Spanish as needed. This included having Ecology vendors translate a number of farm plan fact sheets and materials on King Conservation District's behalf.
- **Explored feasibility of hosting a town hall-style meeting:** Working with SWRO Nonpoint's Education and Outreach Specialist, Nonpoint staff explored the feasibility of hosting a joint town-hall style meeting in coordination with King Conservation District and other partners. The purpose of this meeting would be to give community members an opportunity to ask questions of Ecology and to share our work throughout the watershed. We were able to partially scope this activity and gain clarity on what the Conservation District's desired level of participation would be.

Financial Assistance

- **Provided partners with front-end feedback on grant proposals:** In an effort to encourage and assist our partners to draft successful grant proposals, we coordinated with grants staff to provide grantees with the option to submit a notice of intent and receive feedback prior to the fall submittal deadline for the Water Quality Combined grant program.
- **Provided information to landowners**: We provided information about technical and financial assistance available to landowners as they moved forward with BMP implementation.
- **Managed Direct Implementation Fund (DIF) grant project**: We worked with awardee King County Water and Land Resources Department to manage the $110,000 grant for the riparian project on Boise Creek.

Partner Coordination

- **Continued to hold sites of concern prioritization meetings with partners:** Coordinated and facilitated meetings with partners directly involved with BMP implementation to discuss and receive feedback about future and ongoing enforcement activities. This included standing, recurring 1:1 meetings with Muckleshoot Tribe natural resources staff, 1:1 meetings with WSDA staff to coordinate on dairy properties and those undergoing CAFO permitting, quarterly and ad-hoc small group meetings with King Conservation District staff, and frequent communication with King County Stormwater Services staff.
- **Hosted and facilitated quarterly watershed partner meetings:** Continued to hold quarterly meetings with Tribal, federal, state, and local water quality monitoring staff to share data, facilitating the coordination and prioritization of implementation efforts. Organized presentations of interest to the group and facilitated group brainstorm and networking activities.
- **Continued to participate in monthly King County Peer-to-Peer engagement meetings:** Provided feedback and direction to the group as it moved forward with its social marketing efforts. This included providing edits and comments on draft surveys and

mailers.

- **Created and facilitated monthly interagency task force meetings:** Starting in April 2025, convened multiple agencies monthly to share information regarding a complex case with multiple violations.
- **Clarified referral process with King Conservation District:** Ecology staff have an excellent relationship with King Conservation District staff. At present, we work with them under an agreement (made years previously) called a Cooperative Referral process. We were able to improve the process further by clarifying some details around requirements and timelines for landowners.
- **Built relationships with King County Public Benefit Ratings System (PBRS) staff:** PBRS is a landowner incentive program taking place on the Plateau that may prove effective as additional carrots and/or sticks to use in Nonpoint work.
- **Pitched the idea of a riparian buffer incentive program to KCD staff:** We presented the basics of the Hangman watershed's innovative riparian rental program to KCD staff and discussed whether such a program could be viable in the Enumclaw area. KCD staff were not interested in taking on the role of grant applicant and trustee that would be necessary to administer this program.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Continued to identify sites of concern:** Continued to work in the field to check on existing sites of concern and identify additional sites of concern that had not yet been prioritized. Staff performed four watershed evaluations over the year.
- **Continued to use monitoring data to refine nonpoint efforts:** As additional monitoring data becomes available, we used it to refine the existing prioritization scheme for contacting sites of concern.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Provided technical assistance to area livestock owners:** Ecology worked to connect with area livestock owners to provide technical assistance. In this process, Staff made liberal use of Ecology's in-house translation services and the State's contracted language services vendors to ensure that properties with non-English speaking landowners were receiving letters and other communications in their preferred language. Staff also used on-site interpretation for site visits with non-English speaking landowners, and had farm plans translated.
- **Provided technical assistance and compliance follow-up to area landowners and livestock owners:** Ecology worked to connect with area landowners and livestock owners to provide technical assistance, following the priorities laid out in the reach prioritization scheme developed in 2024. Most landowners in high-priority reaches had already been contacted in 2024, so in 2025, we focused on contacting landowners in reaches ranked as medium-priority, while simultaneously continuing to work with landowners in high-priority reaches.

- **Compliance steps:** Meanwhile, nonpoint staff continued working on compliance steps for properties that previously received technical assistance 1 (TA1) and technical assistance 2 (TA2) letters. Staff sent 16 TA1 letters, 23 TA2 letters, and 9 warning letters. General site visit follow up letters were also sent. Staff also issued one penalty for a site that had not complied with an administrative order issued in 2024.
- **Site visits:** Ecology staff conducted 19 in-person site visits—sometimes joint site visits with King Conservation District staff or other partners—on parcels that had been identified as sites of concern. In most cases, site visits have led to landowners taking recommended steps, or, less frequently, Ecology taking further enforcement actions.
- **Continued to increase language access in technical assistance and compliance actions**: Continued to include Spanish translation taglines in letters to Enumclaw residents, as well as translated versions of handouts (such as the Landowner Self Assessment Tool) and translated versions of the letters themselves. Continued to use LanguageLink or in-house, on-site interpretation services to interpret conversations with Spanish-speaking landowners. Continued to use in-house translation services and State translation vendor contracts to translate documents such as farm plans
- **Evaluated and responded to incoming ERTS complaints:** Continued to respond directly or coordinated with WSDA, King County, and City of Enumclaw staff to address nonpoint-related pollution sources.

Monitoring Activities

- **Investigatory Collection:** Ecology staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis.
- **Ecology Monitoring:** Ecology TMDL staff perform monthly monitoring as a part of the TMDL, and King County staff perform bi-monthly monitoring as part of their stormwater permit obligations. Both sets of data are used by Ecology Nonpoint staff to help inform where to focus landowner education, outreach, and enforcement efforts.

Priority Watershed Name: Deschutes River, Percival Creek & Budd Inlet Tributaries



Figure 5. The Deschutes watershed is pictured in blue. Inset: Location of the Deschutes watershed within Western Washington.

Implementing: Deschutes River, Percival Creek, & Budd Inlet Tributaries Multiparameter TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

The Deschutes River, Percival Creek, & Budd Inlet Tributaries TMDL was submitted to EPA in 2018. These waterbodies are impaired for bacteria, temperature, dissolved oxygen, and nutrients. Partners involved include: Thurston County Environmental Health, Thurston County Community Agriculture Program, Thurston Conservation District, Cities of Olympia, Lacey, and Tumwater, Squaxin Island Tribe, WRIA 13 Lead Entity, South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group, Capitol Land Trust, Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, and others.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Financial Assistance

- **Provide partners with front-end feedback on grant proposals:** In an effort to encourage and assist our partners to draft successful grant proposals, we coordinated with grants staff to provide grantees with the option to submit a notice of intent and receive feedback prior to the fall submittal deadline for the Water Quality Combined grant.
- **Provided information to landowners**: We provided information about technical and financial assistance available to landowners as they moved forward with BMP implementation.

Partner Coordination

- **Held sites of concern prioritization meetings with state and local partners and stakeholders:** Ecology staff coordinated and facilitated meetings with partners directly involved with BMP implementation to discuss and receive feedback about future and ongoing enforcement activities. This included 1:1 meetings with Squaxin Island Tribe natural resources staff, 1:1 meetings with WSDA staff to coordinate on dairy properties and those undergoing CAFO permitting, and monthly 1:1 meetings with Thurston Conservation District staff. In addition, we met with Thurston County Environmental Health program staff to coordinate on parcels of concern.
- **Continued to host and facilitate monthly multi-agency Task Force**: Ecology staff brought together partners from several Thurston County programs, WDFW, DNR, Thurston Conservation District, WSDA, Olympic Region Clean Air Agency, and Ecology programs such as Shorelands and Environmental Assistance, Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction, Water Resources, Construction Stormwater, and Toxics Cleanup Program to coordinate regarding a particularly challenging compliance case. These monthly meetings are ongoing and are a chance for programs to keep each other updated and stay on the same page regarding the case.
- **Attended partner meetings to build relationships and knowledge about goings-on in the watershed:** Ecology staff attended monthly WRIA 13 Lead Entity meetings as well as quarterly Thurston Shellfish Protection District Pollution Identification and Control meetings.
- **Participated in Town Hall-style meeting planning:** Helped Thurston County plan a “Meet Your Regulators” Town Hall-style meeting at Brighton Hall Grange in Tumwater, which will be held in early 2026. The meeting will include a panel of regulators and technical service providers who will give brief presentations, followed by a lengthy mediated Q&A session. Ecology will participate on the panel. The event will be geared toward the Thurston County agricultural community and focus on State and local water quality regulations, as well as resources available for landowners from groups such as conservation districts and NRCS.
- **Scheduled and facilitated meeting between TCD Riparian program staff and Ecology’s Ecosystem Services grant program lead:** In this meeting, Nonpoint staff and Financial

Management Section staff pitched the idea of a riparian rental program to TCD staff and discussed whether such a program could be viable in TCD's service area.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Watershed evaluations:** Staff performed three watershed evaluations to identify additional sites of concern and re-check previous sites. Staff documented sites of concern in the Nonpoint Implementation (NPI) database.
- **Sites of concern ranking/prioritization:** Staff prioritize sites following watershed evaluations and will continue to reassess site risk and reassign risk as needed.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Provided technical assistance to area livestock owners:** Ecology worked to connect with area livestock owners to provide technical assistance.
- **Letters and other communications:** Staff sent 14 technical assistance 1 (TA1) letters and 5 technical assistance 2 (TA2) letters. General site visit follow up letters were also sent. Staff also sent countless emails and text messages and made countless phone calls to landowners.
- **Site visits:** Staff performed three site visits to inspect properties and talked with landowners about best management practices. One site visit was part of the legal discovery process during an appeal of administrative order, and was performed jointly with SEA program staff and ECY attorneys. A second site visit was a joint site visit with Thurston CD to provide technical assistance to a landowner who reached out after receiving a TA2. A third site visit was performed by Nonpoint staff after a landowner had received a TA1.
- **Compliance steps:** Nonpoint staff wrote an administrative order for one property jointly with Ecology's SEA program. This order was appealed and Nonpoint staff have been working with attorneys on the appeal litigation throughout 2025 and early 2026.
- **Evaluated and responded to incoming ERTS complaints:** Nonpoint staff responded directly to or coordinated with WSDA and Thurston County to address nonpoint-related pollution sources.

Monitoring Activities

- **Investigatory Collection**: Ecology staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis.

Priority Watershed Name: Lacamas Creek Watershed

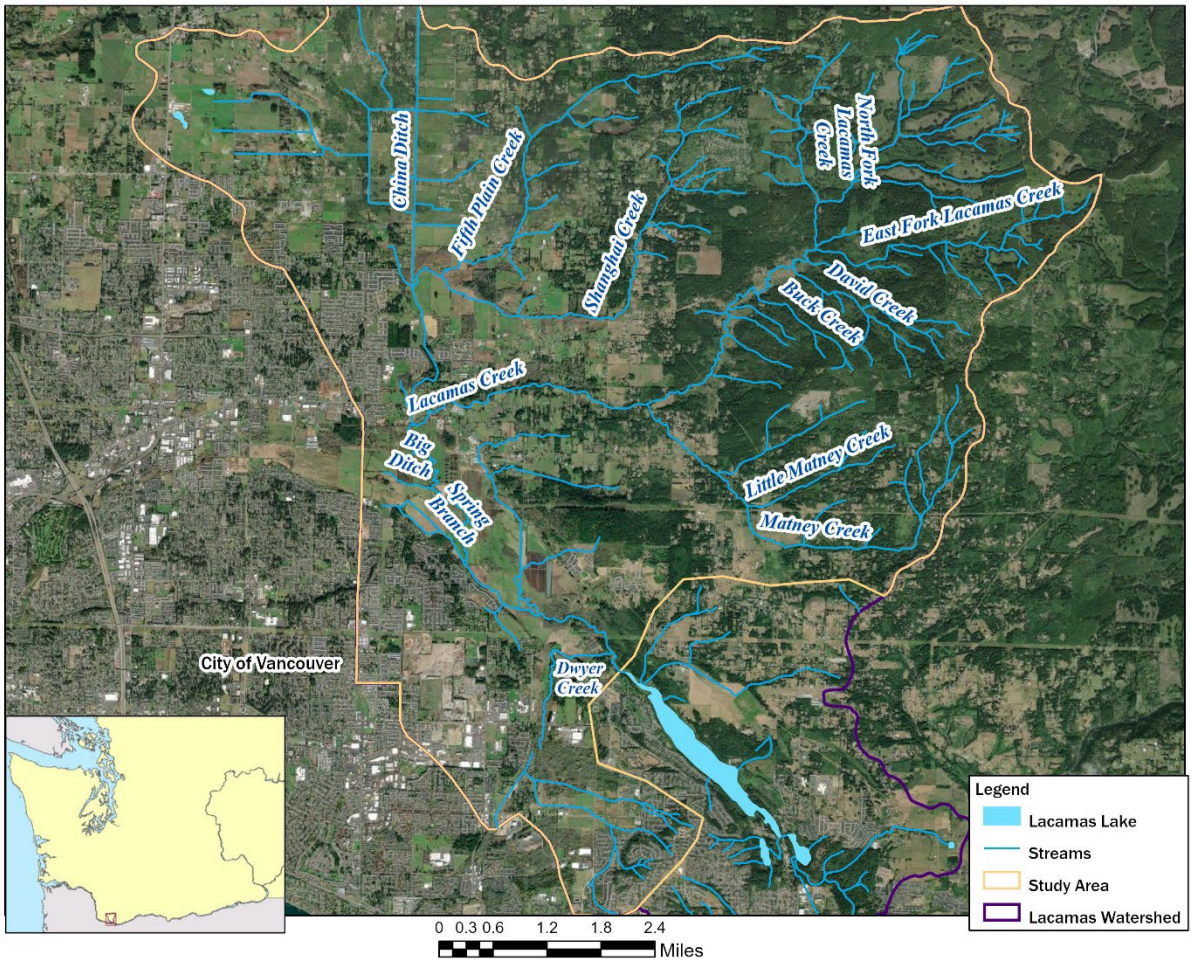


Figure 6. Map of the Lacamas Creek watershed.

Implementing: Lacamas Creek Partnership for Clean Water Action Agenda

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is the lead for the Lacamas Creek Partnership for Clean Water. Supporting partners are Clark County, City of Camas, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Clark Conservation District, and the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA NRCS).

Summary/ Context Info:

The Lacamas Creek Watershed is home to one of the fastest growing cities in Washington State, Vancouver. The watershed is on Washington State's polluted waters list for warm water temperatures, bacteria, dissolved oxygen, and pH impairments. The Lacamas Creek Partnership has been established to improve the waterbody. Lacamas Lake eutrophication was first recognized in the 1970's and the Lacamas Creek Watershed TMDL was first published January 1996. The focal waterbodies and impairments of the watershed include China Ditch (Phosphorus, Nitrogen), Shanghai Creek (Bacteria), Fifth Plain Creek

(Temperature, Nitrogen), Big Ditch (Temperature), Spring Branch Creek (Phosphorus, Nitrogen), Lower Lacamas Creek (Nitrogen, Bacteria), Dwyer Creek (Phosphorus, Temperature).

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Public Events:** Ecology staff coordinated with the Clark County Conservation District, Clark County Public Health, Clark Public Utilities on water quality workshops, and participated in public outreach events, when appropriate.
- **Landowners:** Ecology provided water quality related educational materials to landowners within the watershed. This included providing translation services for a non-English speaking property owner as well as technical guidance for the decommissioning of multiple lagoons on a former dairy. Ecology staff contacted 11 landowners and provided them with information regarding BMPs and potential funding opportunities.

Financial Assistance

- **Funding:** In 2022, Ecology funded the initiation of Poop Smart Clark Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program in four selected sub-watersheds addressing livestock and onsite nonpoint pollution concerns. These funds were available through 2025.

Partner Coordination

- **Lacamas Creek Partnership:** SWRO staff collaborated and attended annual meetings with Clark County, City of Camas, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Clark Conservation District, and the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service.
- **Conservation District:** SWRO staff attended monthly Clark Conservation District Board Meetings and coordinated with CD staff on addressing pollution concerns.
- **Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC):** SWRO staff participated in monthly PIC "Poop Smart" meetings and provided updates on compliance activities.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Watershed Evaluation:** Staff conducted ten watershed evaluations, during which SWRO staff identified seven new sites of concern and continued to evaluate conditions at existing sites.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Complaint Response:** Staff verified and responded to seven nonpoint concerns submitted through Ecology's reporting system (ERTS).

- **Technical Assistance:** Staff provided ten Technical Assistance letters to landowners identified as having nonpoint concerns identified during watershed evaluations and through ERTS.
- **Site visits:** Staff conducted three site visits to assess potential pollution sources, provided technical assistance to residents, and referred landowners to Clark Conservation District when appropriate.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Investigatory collection:** Ecology staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis.

Priority Watershed Name: Oakland Bay and Johns Creek



Figure 7. Map of Oakland Bay and Johns Creek.

Implementing: Oakland Bay, Hammersley Inlet, & Selected Tributaries Fecal Coliform Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load Water Quality Improvement Report and Implementation Plan

Summary/Context Info:

Oakland Bay is a shallow, poorly flushed embayment connected to the South Puget Sound, with a history of poor water quality and an extremely productive shellfish industry. Because of its poorly flushed nature, shallow waters, and increasing population, Oakland Bay continues to

experience declining water quality. Johns Creek enters Oakland Bay at its northwestern shore. Multiple water quality parameters in Johns Creek have impairments, including bacteria, temperature, and dissolved oxygen. Nonpoint staff have identified agricultural operations and residential onsite septic systems that are impacting the water of both Oakland Bay and Johns Creek.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Landowners**: Ecology staff contacted 11 landowners and provided them with information regarding sustainable livestock operations, BMP recommendations, and financial assistance opportunities to mitigate for any water quality concerns.

Financial Assistance

- **Information sharing:** Ecology staff provided landowners with information regarding financial assistance opportunities from local partners and grant funding opportunities in the technical assistance letters that were mailed. Staff also regularly communicated with partners regarding updates to any financial assistance opportunities.

Partner Coordination

- **Partner meetings**: Staff regularly attended meetings with the Mason Conservation District, the Squaxin Island Tribe, the Department of Environmental Health, PIC groups, and the Mason County Clean Water District.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Complaint/referral response**: Staff performed 16 watershed evaluations to identify sites of concern and coordinated with local partners to provide landowners with technical assistance. Staff also responded to environmental complaints regarding water quality concerns in the watershed.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Technical assistance and compliance follow-through**: Staff sent 13 technical assistance letters to properties with water quality concerns. Staff also attended three site visits with landowners to explain the water quality concerns more thoroughly and in-person. Three follow-up letters were sent detailing each of the site visits.

Monitoring Activities

- **Water quality monitoring**: Staff participated in regular meetings with the Mason County Clean Water District, in which partners shared monitoring data throughout the watershed. Staff utilized this shared data to find water quality hotspots throughout the watershed.

Priority Watershed Name: Sequim Bay



Figure 8. Map of Sequim Bay.

Implementing: Sequim Bay TMDL/ARP (in development)

Summary/Context Info:

The Sequim Bay watershed, located in northwest Washington on the Olympic Peninsula, has high levels of fecal coliform bacteria, prompting Ecology to initiate a TMDL/ARP for the watershed. Several waterbodies in the watershed are on Ecology's 303(d) list of impaired waters. The Sequim Bay watershed consists mainly of forested land, with smaller pockets of rural/agricultural land containing both smaller hobby farms and larger commercial farms. It also provides critical habitat for a variety of shellfish. Jimmycomelately Creek, the main tributary in Sequim Bay, is home to summer chum salmon, coho salmon, winter steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat trout. Water quality improvement in Sequim Bay is vital in the efforts to restore animal habitat and reduce nonpoint water pollution.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- Staff continued to grow partner connections within the watershed with the Conservation District and the Dungeness Clean Water Work Group, as this project was recently initiated.
- Staff began planning future outreach possibilities, such as a mailer for the watershed residents.

Financial Assistance

- Information sharing: Ecology staff discussed the possible financial assistance availability with partners, and what to expect moving forward in the watershed.

Partner Coordination

- Partner meetings: Staff regularly attended meetings with the Conservation District and the Dungeness clean water work group to share watershed updates and information.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Complaint/referral response: Staff monitored all ERTS in the watershed for water quality concerns. Staff also performed multiple desktop surveys of the watershed to identify any areas of concern for future watershed evaluations and enforcement cases. No watershed evaluations were conducted in 2025.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Technical assistance and compliance follow-through: Staff performed desktop surveys of the watershed to prepare for future water quality concerns. No technical assistance has been provided yet, as this project was just recently initiated.

Monitoring Activities

- Water quality monitoring: Staff meets regularly with partners in the watershed, who share their local water quality monitoring data.

Priority Watershed Name: South Sound Shellfish Growing Areas

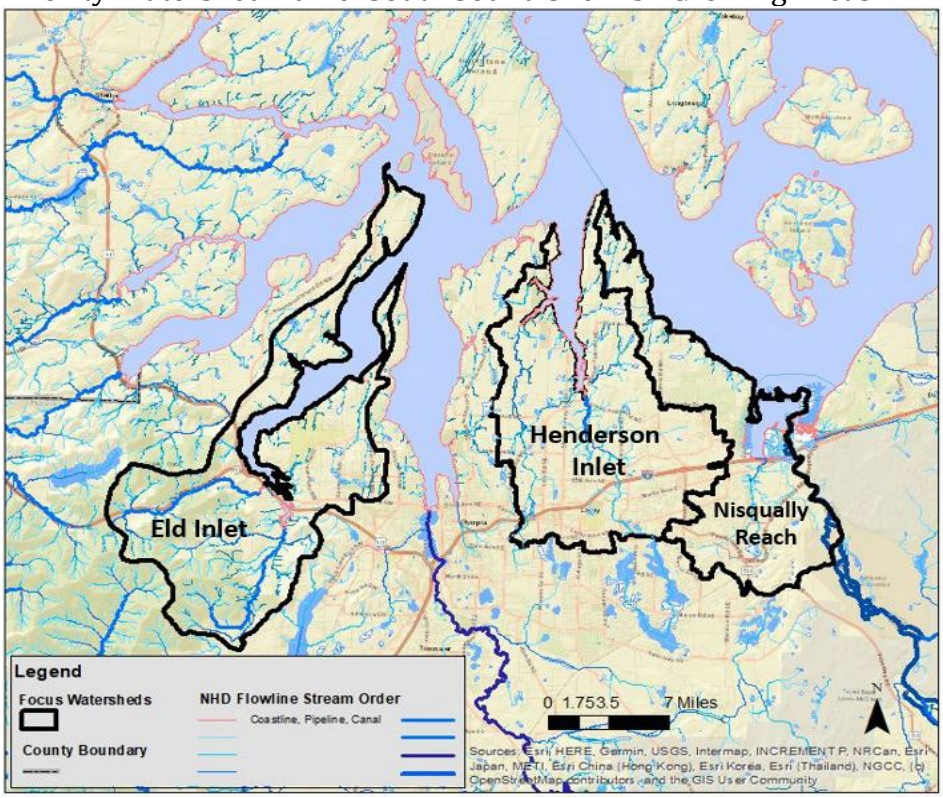


Figure 9. Map of Eld Inlet, Henderson Inlet, and Nisqually Reach.

Implementing: South Sound Partnership Action Agenda; Puget Sound Nutrient Source Reduction Project

Nonpoint staff work with local partners such as Thurston County Public Health and Social Services, Thurston Conservation District, Thurston County Code Enforcement, Henderson Inlet/Nisqually Reach Shellfish Protection District, and landowners to reduce nonpoint sources of bacteria pollution originating from domestic and agricultural activities.

Summary/Context Info:

The Eld and Henderson Inlets and the Nisqually Reach drainage areas are located within the South Puget Sound, known for low flushing rates and abundant shellfish habitat. These watersheds have shellfish growing areas identified by DOH as at risk of closure due to elevated marine fecal coliform levels. These watersheds also support salmon habitat in rural, suburban, and urban areas and most of the land use is residential with a low density of small agricultural sites. SWRO staff have been coordinating nonpoint efforts in these watersheds in concert with local partners' outreach and PIC work.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Partner coordination to provide educational materials and accurate information to landowners:** Staff coordinated with Thurston Conservation District, Thurston County Public Health, and Nisqually Reach/Henderson Inlet Shellfish Protection District to continue to follow up on complaints in this area.

Financial Assistance

- **Offers of financial assistance resources:** Staff provided information regarding grant opportunities to local partners during one partner meeting.

Partner Coordination

- **Quarterly partner meetings:** Staff participated in two Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) meetings with local partners to coordinate efforts, provide updates, and address specific pollution concerns.
- **Partner meetings:** Staff participated in regular meetings to update Thurston Conservation District on ongoing work.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Complaint/Referral response:** Staff coordinated with local partners to respond to concerns. County code enforcement, Environmental Health, Hazardous Waste, and Thurston Conservation District were referred, and local residents began looking into improvements to their private infrastructure that would be protective of water quality and local salmon populations.
- **Watershed Evaluations**: One watershed evaluation was conducted in 2025.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Site of concern resolution and follow-up:** Staff coordinated with local partners to resolve nonpoint water quality concerns at two identified sites of concern.

Monitoring Activities

- **Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) coordination:** Staff coordinated and participated in two PIC meetings, two meetings with Squaxin Island Tribe, as well as regular informal staff-to-staff meetings, during which partners discussed ambient monitoring efforts and results.

Priority Watershed Name: Willapa Bay

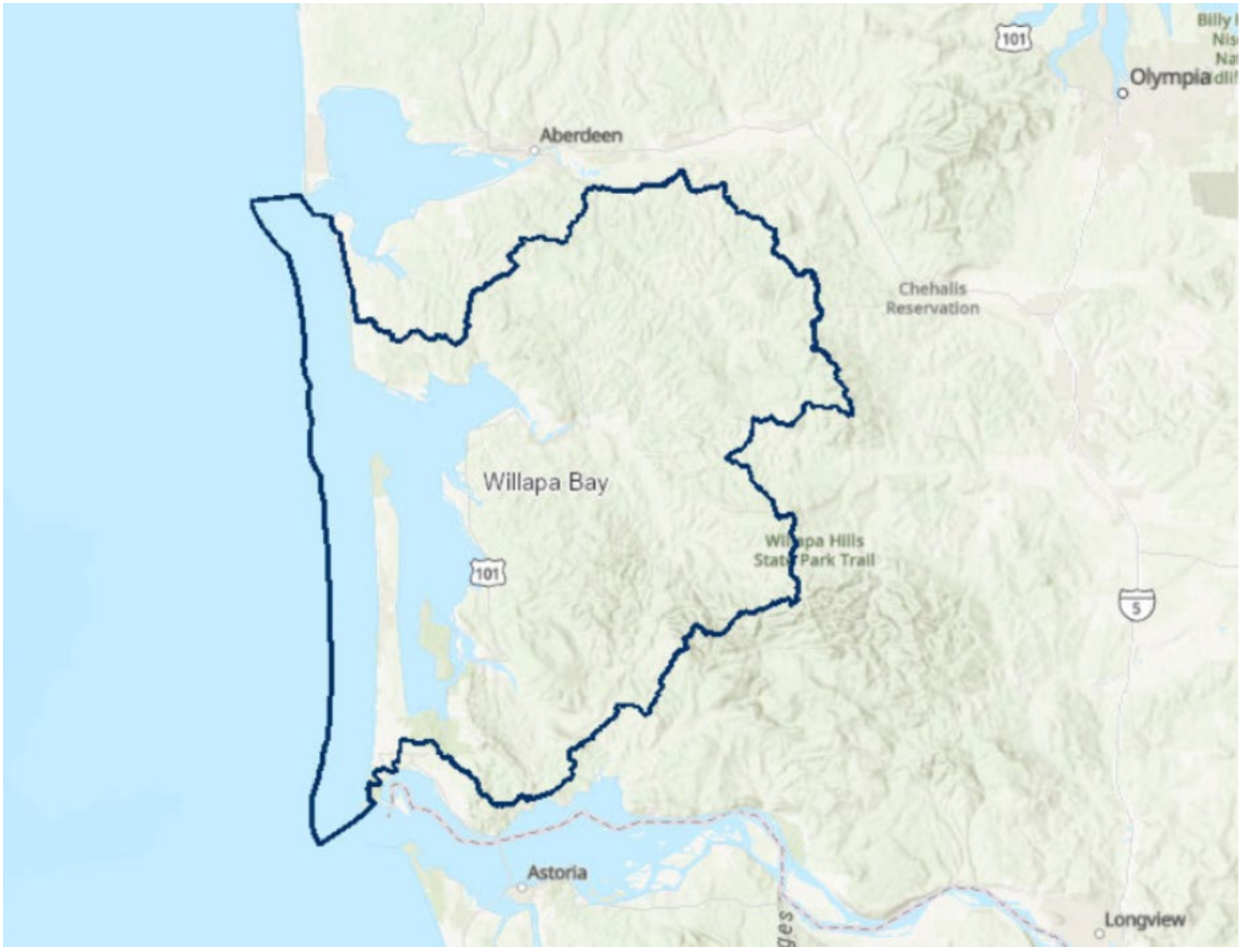


Figure 10. Willapa Bay Watershed.

Implementing: Willapa River Watershed Temperature TMDL/ Willapa River Oxygen Dissolved TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

Nonpoint work within this area focuses on working with local partners such as the Conservation District, Department of Health, and local activist groups. Willapa Bay sits along the Southwestern coast of Washington and is known for its abundant shellfish and areas of wildlife refuge. Willapa Bay and the Willapa River have been identified as "water quality limited" due to bacterial pollution from human and animal sources. Fecal coliform sources threaten or impair shellfish harvest areas of Willapa Bay, which produces over 50% of Washington's shellfish. Ground water and recreational uses are also threatened by bacterial contamination. Most of the bacterial problems in the watershed appear to be generated by nonpoint sources: on-site septic systems, combined sewer overflows, and livestock manure. Some corrections of the major

sources have occurred, but problems in other areas have led to shellfish harvesting restrictions.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Partner coordination to provide educational materials and accurate information to landowners:** Staff coordinated with Pacific Conservation District, WSDA, and Department of Health to continue to follow up on complaints in this area.

Financial Assistance

- **Offers of financial assistance resources:** Staff provided information regarding grant opportunities to local partners during one partner meeting.

Partner Coordination

- **Partner meetings:** Staff participated in regular meetings to update Pacific Conservation District on ongoing work and informal meetings with staff.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Complaint/Referral response:** Staff coordinated with local partners to respond to concerns. No watershed evaluations were conducted in 2025.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Technical Assistance:** Staff did not issue any compliance or technical assistance communications in 2025.

Monitoring Activities

- **Monitoring Data:** Staff met with Department of Health to share monitoring data in the area.

Priority Watershed Name: East Fork Lewis River

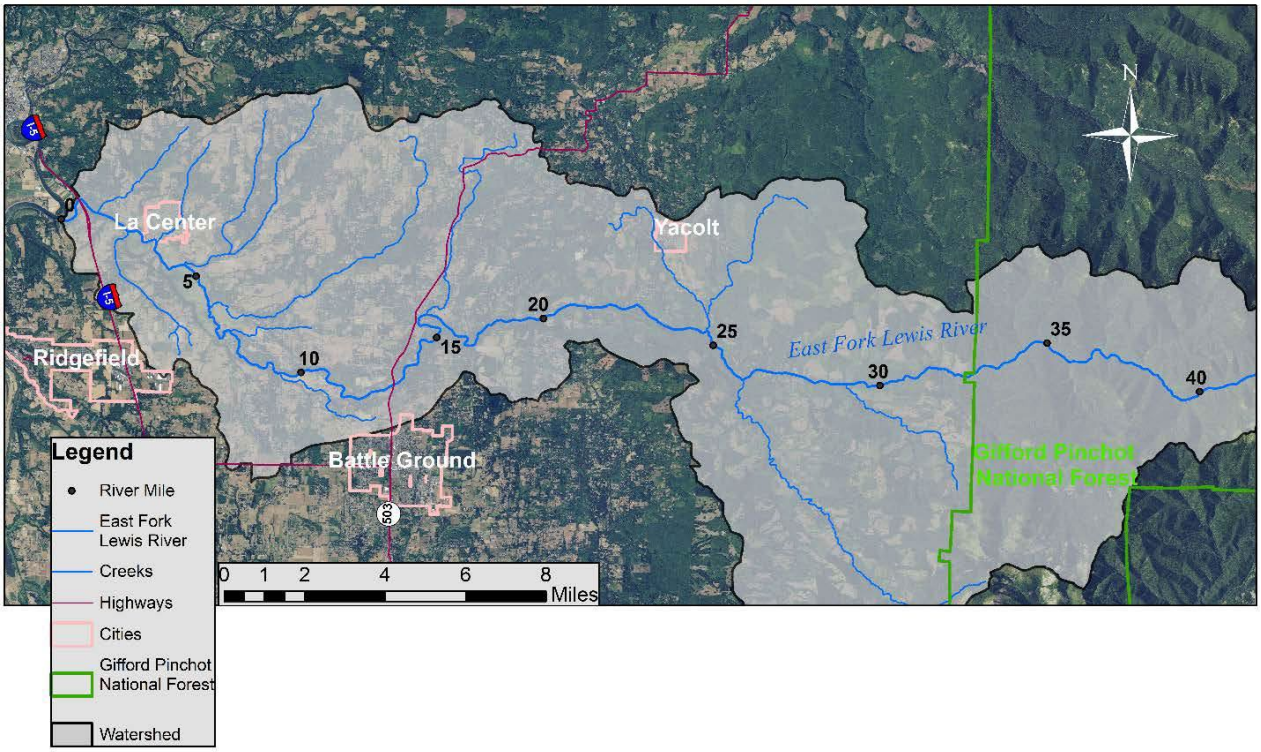


Figure 11. Map of the East Fork Lewis River watershed.

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is the lead for the East Fork Lewis River Alternative Restoration Plan. Supporting partners are Clark County, City of Camas, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Clark Conservation District, and the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (USDA NRCS).

Summary/Context Information:

The East Fork Lewis River (EFLR) Alternative Restoration Plan was approved by EPA in 2021 to address temperature and bacteria impairments. The EFLR Watershed is home to both one of the fastest growing cities in Washington State, and five high priority populations of Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed salmon and steelhead. This Watershed provides recreation, timber, agriculture, and water resources for this rapidly growing region of the State. At the same time, the Watershed is key to the recovery of ESA-listed salmon and steelhead that rely on the mainstem and tributaries for critical spawning and rearing habitat.

The Poop Smart Clark Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) group is working collaboratively to identify bacteria sources and to direct resources to problem areas. Stream and habitat restoration projects have been initiated by local non-profit Watershed groups including the reclamation project of nine abandoned pit mines along the East Fork Lewis River. External partners include Clark County Conservation District, Clark Public Utilities, Washington

State University Extension, Clark County Public Health, Clark County Clean Water, The Watershed Alliance, and the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach:

- **Public Events:**
    - Ecology staff attended monthly public meetings with the Clark County Conservation District.
    - Ecology presented to Fort Vancouver High School at their career day.

Financial Assistance:

- **Funding:** In 2022, Ecology funded the initiation of Poop Smart Clark Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program in four selected sub-watersheds addressing livestock and onsite nonpoint pollution concerns. These funds were available through 2025.

Partner Coordination:

- **East Fork Lewis River Partnership** SWRO staff collaborated and attended annual meetings with Clark County, City of Camas, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Clark Conservation District, and the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service.
- **Conservation District:** SWRO staff attended monthly Clark Conservation District Board Meetings and coordinated with CD staff on addressing pollution concerns.
- **PIC:** SWRO staff participated in monthly PIC "Poop Smart" meetings and provided updates on compliance activities.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Watershed Evaluation:** Staff conducted twelve watershed evaluations.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Technical Assistance:** Staff provided Seven Technical Assistance letters to landowners identified as having nonpoint concerns identified during watershed evaluations and through ERTS. As a result, staff conducted one site visit to assess potential pollution sources, provided technical assistance to residents, and referred landowners to Clark Conservation District when appropriate.
- Ecology provided technical assistance and water quality related educational materials to landowners within the Watershed via two site visits by Ecology staff, in addition to site visits conducted by the Clark County Conservation District's Working Lands Program Manager.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Investigatory collection:** Ecology staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis. No samples were taken by nonpoint staff in 2025.

Northwest Regional Office

Priority Watershed Name: Whatcom County Shellfish Growing Areas (Various Whatcom County Watersheds)

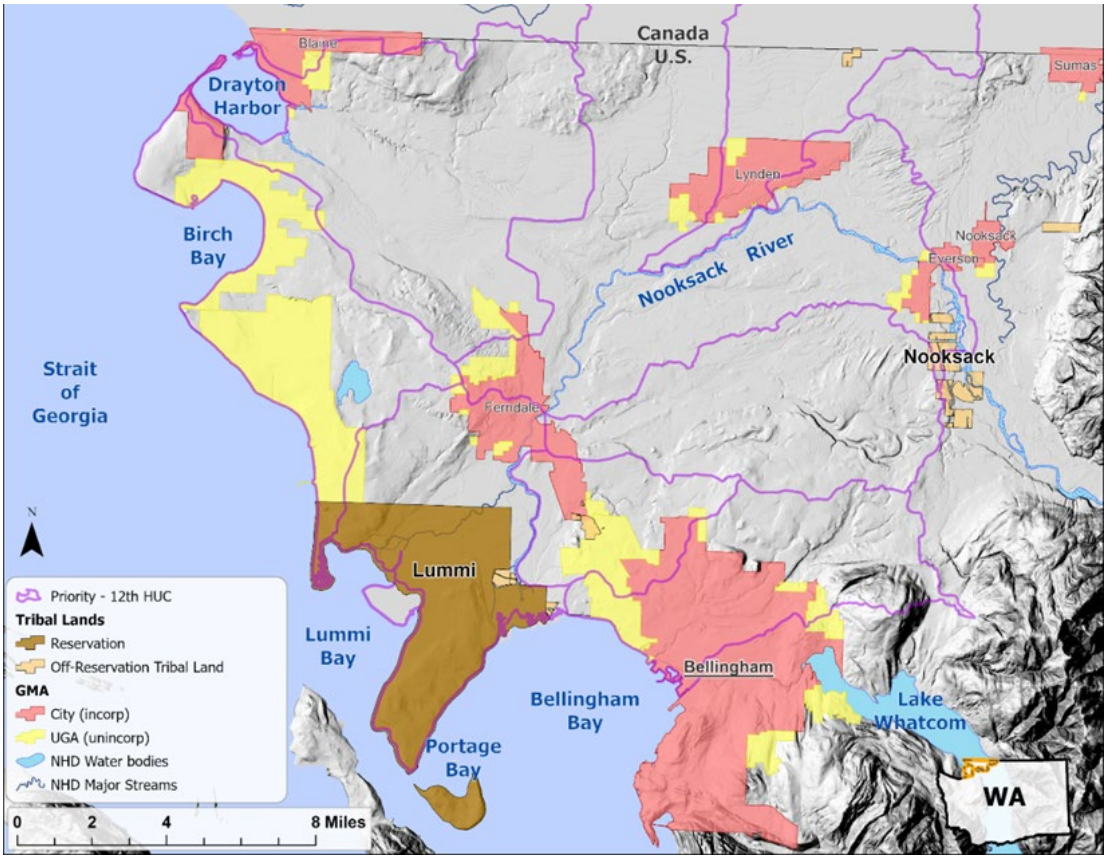


Figure 12. Whatcom County watersheds containing Shellfish Growing Areas

Implementing: Drayton Harbor Bacteria TMDL, Regional Pollution Identification and Control (PIC) Programs through the Whatcom Clean Water Program (WCWP)

Summary/Context Info:

TMDL staff continued to facilitate the implementation of the Lake Whatcom Multi-parameter TMDL (2016), Nooksack River Bacteria TMDL (2000), and Whatcom Creek Bacteria TMDL (2023). Nonpoint field staff focused efforts on partner collaboration, PIC education and enforcement process refinement, and complaint response.

The Drayton Harbor Bacteria TMDL was submitted to EPA for approval on December 19, 2025, to address bacteria impairments on the 303(d) list in marine and freshwater and complete a

watershed plan. The harbor supports beneficial commercial, recreational, and Tribal shellfish harvesting uses. The land in the watershed mainly includes agriculture, followed by forest, urban and residential development, and wetlands. Nonpoint sources received the majority of the TMDL allocations. EPA approved the TMDL on March 6, 2026.

In 2008, with input from local partners, Ecology began developing the TMDL to address bacteria pollution in Drayton Harbor. In 2012, the Whatcom Clean Water Program (WCWP) partnership formed to lead pollution control efforts with the local community. This work has improved water quality and reopened shellfish areas that had been closed due to bacteria pollution. Continuing pollution identification and correction (PIC) work will be necessary to protect and maintain shellfish growing resources. Ecology renewed its direct involvement in the WCWP-led implementation in late 2024 with the onboarding of new staff dedicated to addressing nonpoint pollution issues in Whatcom County.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- Nonpoint staff conducted partner-to-partner education throughout the year that included subjects such as implementing the Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture and ERTS response workflows. Due to changes in the nonpoint team structure in the region, staff provided overviews of Ecology's organizational structure and staff and management roles to help inform and execute PIC process workflows.
- Nonpoint Staff worked with WCWP to develop a new landowner engagement flowchart and revised education letters, which now include an Ecology Landowner Self-Assessment Tool. If completed, the tool will allow landowners to determine the potential water pollution from agricultural activities on their property. Staff collaboration efforts within the WCWP produced an adapted assessment for the WCWP.
- Nonpoint Staff participated in an education and outreach booth at the Lynden Raspberry festival with WCWP staff.

Financial Assistance

- Nonpoint staff attended the Water Quality Applicant Workshops to improve their understanding of Ecology's current funding guidelines and to better assist partners who are interested in accessing Ecology funding sources.

Partner Coordination

- Ecology staff continued their participation in quarterly Joint Shellfish Protection District meetings. These forums center on coordinating water quality monitoring, pollution identification and control, and technical assistance/enforcement efforts across these watersheds.
- Staff also maintained their engagement within the Whatcom Clean Water Program (CWP), a multi-entity PIC program. Ecology's participation in the program consisted of prioritizing properties to offer financial and technical assistance and familiarizing the

new nonpoint team with on-going technical assistance efforts from previous staff. Ecology also works with partners on data collection and analysis.

- Nonpoint staff worked with regulatory partners in Whatcom CWP to ensure technical assistance workflows align with Ecology's nonpoint compliance assurance policies.
- Nonpoint staff helped revise the PIC Flow Chart for Non-Dairy Agricultural Concerns and developed new outreach letters for Whatcom CWP to use when contacting new landowners.
- Ecology is a co-organizer with the British Columbia Ministry of Environment and Parks to coordinate efforts and share information with local actors when addressing fecal bacteria pollution. This group is informally known as the Nooksack Basin Transboundary Water Quality Partnership.
- Ecology coordinates with local Tribal partners including Lummi Nation and Nooksack Tribe to address water quality issues, share information, assess data, and plan for study designs and watershed planning. Three in-person meetings were held along with routine email exchanges.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Nonpoint staff conducted one windshield survey in the Wiser Lake Creek-Nooksack River sub-watershed in coordination with Whatcom CWP's wet-season survey efforts.
- In the California Creek-Frontal Semiahmoo Bay Watershed, Nonpoint staff completed six windshield surveys in coordination with Whatcom CWP, and one survey without Whatcom CWP.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Staff conducted two site visits in coordination with WA Department of Fish and Wildlife in response to an ERTS report. Staff achieved voluntary compliance from the landowner, and they successfully implemented erosion and sediment control BMPs.
- Staff conducted one site visit upon invitation from landowner in coordination with the region's Sand and Gravel General Permit (SGGP) team. The neighboring properties reached a resolution and nonpoint staff provided the landowner with compliance oversight updates about the SGGP facility as appropriate.

Monitoring Activities

- Nonpoint staff attend weekly Hotspot check-in meetings in coordination with Whatcom CWP water quality monitoring program to stay updated on current monitoring activities.

  Nonpoint staff participated in collaborative First Flush sampling event alongside other Whatcom CWP staff. This effort helped to characterize pollution trends in the Nooksack River tributaries and California Creek. The sampling event also augments the long-term monitoring record with data to inform future analyses of rainfall-driven bacteria pollution concentrations.

- Nonpoint staff assisted in two hotspot bracket sampling events in response to high bacteria counts from ambient sampling.
- Ecology meets once per month with the Lake Whatcom Data Team. Participants share data related to trends for lake water quality and information on TMDL implementation actions, and coordinate on decisions about future monitoring efforts to fill data gaps.
- Ecology's Freshwater Monitoring Unit collected Basin Station data in Dakota Creek once per month for Water Year 2025.

Priority Watershed Name: Skagit River and Samish River Watersheds

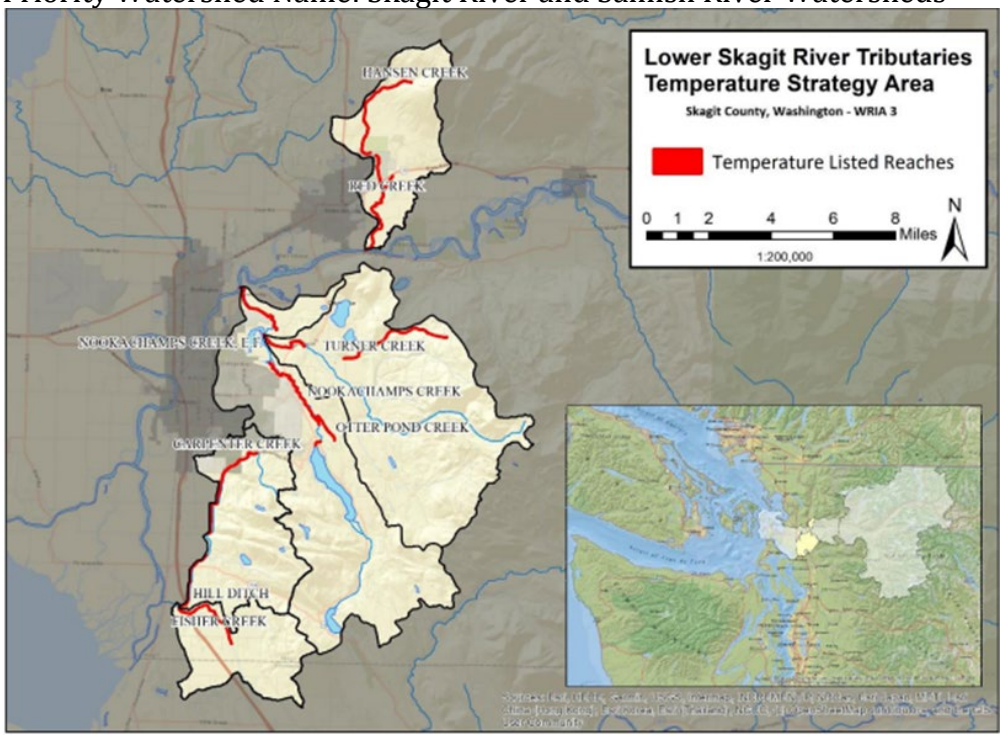


Figure 13. Lower Skagit Tributaries TMDL study area

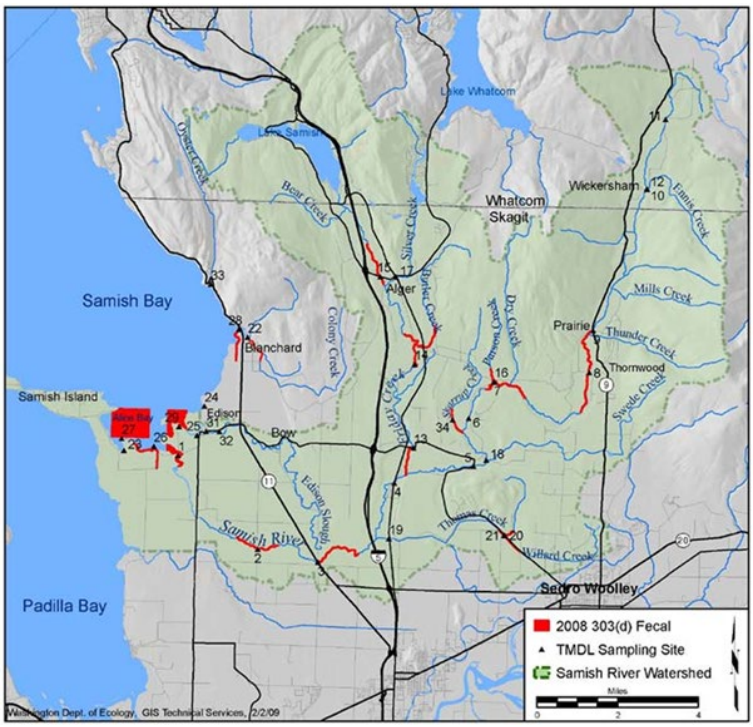


Figure 14. Samish Bay watershed in Skagit and Whatcom counties, northwest Washington.

Implementing: Lower Skagit Tributaries Temperature TMDL, Lower Skagit Fecal Coliform TMDL, and Samish Bay Watershed Bacteria TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

Ecology continues to collaborate with local restoration practitioners to support region-driven efforts to increase the pace of riparian restoration in the Lower Skagit Tributaries. The activities are a result of the Lower Skagit Tributaries Temperature TMDL Implementation Strategy developed in coordination with interested parties and implementation partners in 2019.

As the Lower Skagit Tributaries Temperature TMDL is in its implementation phase, there are continued challenges with riparian restoration and voluntary compliance. Nonpoint staff continue to respond to individual properties when risks to water quality are visible from public road right of ways. Technical assistance is provided, and Ecology staff work with local partners (example: Skagit Conservation District) to provide best management practice (BMP) information and financial assistance for installing recommended BMPs. When land use practices continue to cause impairments to water quality without meaningful property owner efforts to correct them, Ecology staff will use various enforcement tools as a backstop to gain compliance.

The Samish River TMDL implementation is primarily facilitated by the Clean Samish Initiative (CSI), a coalition of regulatory and non-regulatory organization, Tribal, and private citizen entities focused on reducing fecal coliform pollution in the Samish Bay Watershed (Skagit County, 2025).

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- Nonpoint staff conducted partner-to-partner education throughout the year that included subjects such as implementing the Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture, and ERTS response workflows. Due to changes in the nonpoint team structure in the region, staff provided overviews of Ecology's organizational structure and staff and management roles.
- Nonpoint staff reviewed previous education and outreach approaches and material to evaluate what updates are needed to continue using materials and consider new approaches to outreach

Financial Assistance

- Nonpoint staff attended the Water Quality Applicant Workshops to improve their understanding of Ecology's current funding guidelines and to help partners interested in accessing funding sources. Nonpoint staff connected one landowner with Skagit Conservation District staff to explore engineering plans related to BMP implementation for flood mitigation, exclusion fencing, and riparian vegetation planting.

- Ecology provided restoration project funding along the Skagit River- Lorenzan Creek Final Design and Restoration in Concrete, WA.

Partner Coordination

- Nonpoint staff gathered feedback from partners, including local and Tribal governments, the conservation district, restoration groups, and internal staff, which directly informed the selection of prioritized sites and improved coordination for the 2025 watershed evaluation. Staff conducted this evaluation to support proactive property owner engagement efforts for implementing the Lower Skagit Tributaries Temperature TMDL.
- Staff continued participation in Skagit County's bi-monthly Project Delivery Team meetings. These meetings are opportunities for field staff to collaboratively problem-solve nonpoint pollution issues, share project updates, and highlight pollution hotspots from water quality monitoring efforts.
- Staff continued participation in quarterly CSI executive meetings that center on coordinating pollution identification and control, technical/financial assistance efforts across Watersheds, and discussing challenges at a management level with members from the Conservation District, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Washington State Department of Health and Ecology.
- Staff met and worked with partners including Skagit County, Skagit Watershed Council (SWC), and Skagit Conservation District to focus on information sharing and collaboration to reduce Skagit River pollution.
- Staff attended Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) site visits and ranked salmon recovery projects during the SRFB funding round as a member of the SWC Technical Committee.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Staff completed the Lower Skagit River tributaries watershed evaluation, evaluating 25 sites through five days of right-of-way observations and a comprehensive desktop review of previous case notes. Identified 7 sites as priority contacts for 2026.
- Staff attended a ride along with Skagit PIC staff during their annual livestock BMP survey. The PIC program uses the survey to better understand the technical assistance needs in different priority watersheds.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Staff completed three site visits with landowners involved in ongoing compliance cases.
- Staff sent two technical assistance letters and three follow-up letters to landowners.
- Staff coordinated with state agencies and county programs on multiple occasions to ensure regulatory compliance across multiple jurisdictions.

- Staff connected a landowner with the Skagit Conservation District staff to evaluate engineering plans for BMP implementation.

Monitoring Activities

- Nonpoint staff assisted in a Skagit PIC ambient sampling route to better understand their water quality monitoring process and coverage area.

Priority Watershed Name: South Skagit Bay

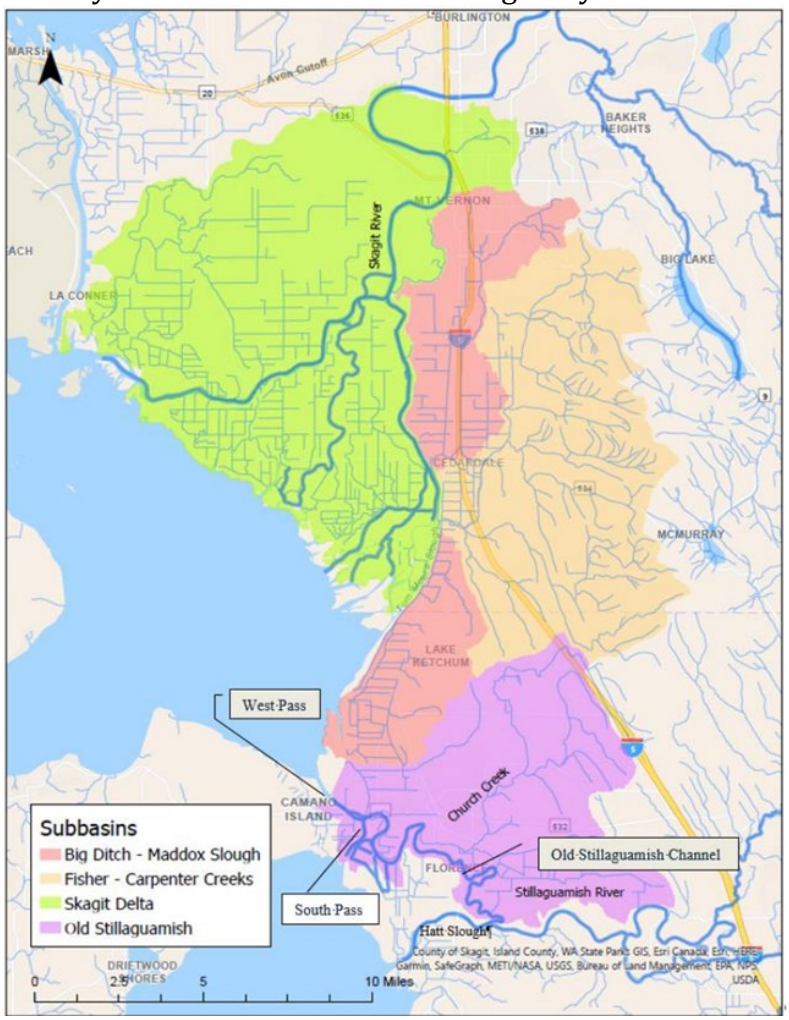


Figure 15. South Skagit Bay subbasins.

Implementing: Lower Skagit River Fecal Coliform TMDL (2000), Stillaguamish River Watershed Multiparameter TMDL (2005)

Summary/Context Info:

Shellfish Growing Areas in South Skagit Bay (SSB) were downgraded to “threatened” in 2017 by the Washington Department of Health (Health). To improve water quality in SSB, both Ecology and Health's Shellfish Division identified tributaries to SSB as a priority area for outreach and

technical assistance to reduce loading of bacteria to the bay. In 2018, Ecology developed and performed a bacteria monitoring and nonpoint source assessment aimed to identify potential sources of fecal coliform bacteria from SSB's sub-watersheds. This effort supports the Washington Shellfish Initiative and implementation of the Lower Skagit River Fecal Coliform TMDL and portions of the Stillaguamish River Watershed Multiparameter TMDL.

Information provided in this section relates to addressing nonpoint pollution concerns within the lower Skagit River watershed, located in Skagit County, but also pollution inputs into the Old Stillaguamish River channel in Snohomish County. The Lower Stillaguamish Pollution Identification and Control (PIC) program addresses nonpoint pollution inputs to SSB originating in Snohomish County. PIC participants include the following entities: Stillaguamish Tribe of Indians (Salmon Recovery co-lead entity), Snohomish County (Salmon Recovery co-lead entity, Surface Water Management, and Planning and Development Services), Tulalip Tribe, Snohomish Conservation District, Snohomish County Health Department, City of Arlington, and City of Stanwood.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- Ecology's education and outreach efforts in SSB mainly consisted of partner-to-partner education on the nonpoint team's previous monitoring and site identification efforts, as well as providing overviews of Ecology's nonpoint workflows and considerations for prioritizing landowner engagement.

Financial Assistance

- Ecology staff did not provide site-specific financial assistance in this watershed during the reporting period.

Partner Coordination

- In Spring 2025, Ecology presented data analysis for the SSB source assessment study to interested parties working in the Skagit and Old Stillaguamish watersheds. Ecology solicited feedback from attendees about sites of interest and what information would be useful to them in the report.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Nonpoint staff conducted a watershed evaluation of the lower Stillaguamish River watershed, consisting of the mainstem Stillaguamish River and its tributaries between Arlington, WA and Port Susan, and the Old Stillaguamish Channel to South Skagit Bay.
- Nonpoint staff received partner updates and reviewed existing documents for seven properties identified between 2018 and 2023 in the Miller, Douglas, and Fisher Creek

sub-watersheds. Staff continued evaluating these properties for renewed technical assistance throughout the reporting period.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Nonpoint staff coordinated a renewed investigation of a legacy case that remained unresolved related to alleged septic discharges into the Old Stillaguamish Channel. This case began as an ERTS received in 2023. Nonpoint staff coordinated partner site visits, compiled previous inspection findings, and ultimately concluded that the initial issue had been abated and that no current water quality risks are occurring.
- Nonpoint staff issued no technical assistance letters or enforcement actions in this watershed during the reporting period.

Monitoring Activities

- Ecology did not conduct any monitoring activities within this watershed during the reporting period.

Priority Watershed Name: Stillaguamish River Watershed

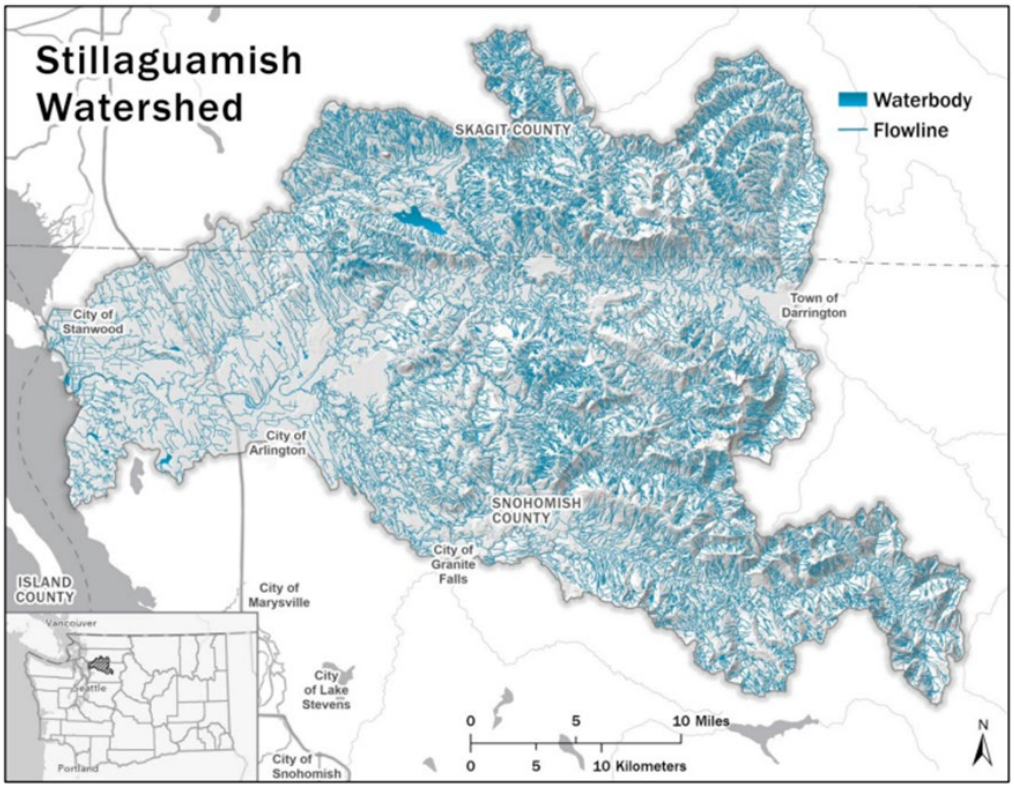


Figure 16. Map of the Stillaguamish watershed with streams indicated in blue.

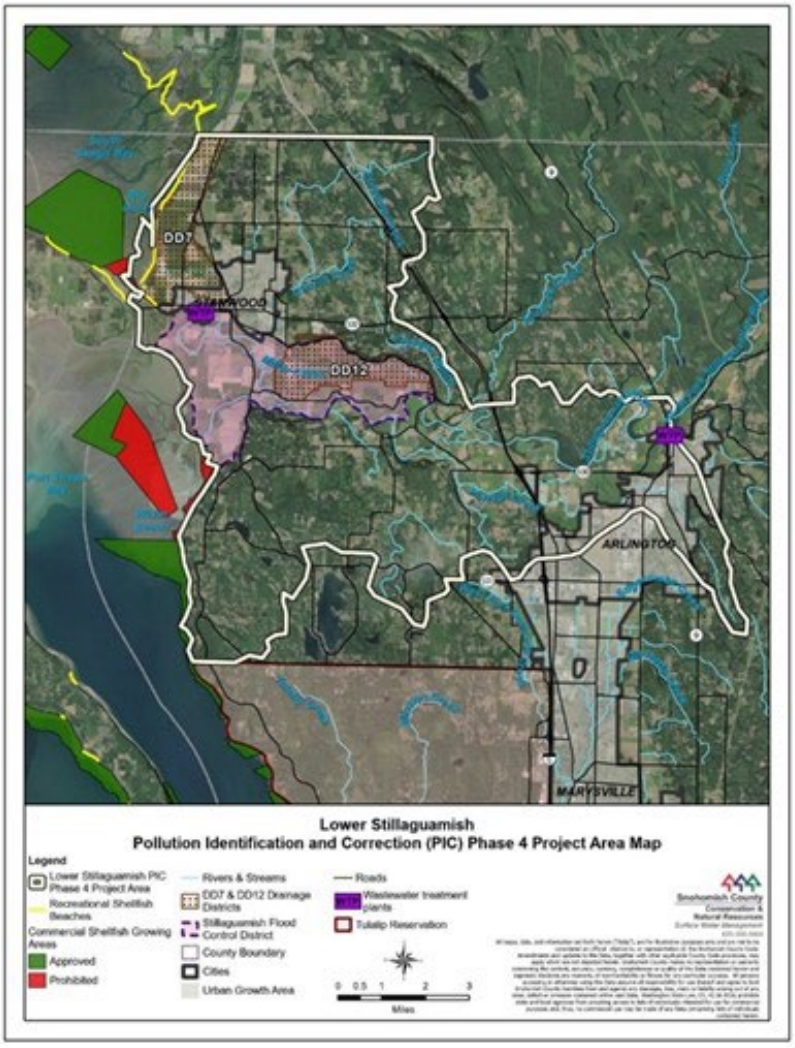


Figure 17. Lower Stillaguamish River PIC Phase 4 Project Area (Snohomish County).

Implementing: Stillaguamish River Watershed Multiparameter TMDL, Stillaguamish River Watershed Temperature TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

The Stillaguamish River Basin has been the focus of Ecology-directed water quality improvement efforts for several decades. TMDL reports were published in 2004 (temperature) and 2005 (multiparameter). The Old Stillaguamish Channel and its contributing area discharge into South Skagit Bay through West Pass, west of the city of Stanwood. This area is included in portions of the Stillaguamish multi-parameter TMDL and the South Skagit Bay Assessment area. More details on this portion of the lower Stillaguamish watershed can be found in the South Skagit Bay Priority Watershed Section of this report.

Pollution from the Lower Stillaguamish River Basin affects 4,950 acres of commercial shellfish areas, as well as recreational water uses in South Skagit Bay, Port Susan, and the Stillaguamish River (Snohomish County[6]). This specific area has been identified as having significant bacterial pollution problems.

Recent efforts and plans in the Stillaguamish watershed are primarily focused in the lower reaches of the river in the low-lying river valley west of the city of Arlington. Several portions of the historic river delta at Port Susan and Leque Island have been reconnected to tidal influence and delta restoration work is ongoing.

The highlights listed here relate to nonpoint pollution control efforts focused on the mainstem Stillaguamish River to avoid confusion between the actions described in the South Skagit Bay section of this report.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- Education and outreach efforts mainly consisted of partner-to-partner education as the new nonpoint team frequently informed partners about Ecology's nonpoint program, roles within the watershed, and workflow and enforcement approaches.

Financial Assistance

- To support restoration projects that implement the Stillaguamish River Multiparameter TMDL, Ecology awarded a $297,213 Centennial Grant to the Snohomish Conservation District for the restoration of 5.5 acres of riparian wetland and maintenance of 6 acres of planted riparian buffer along Eagle Creek, a tributary of the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River. This project will support water quality improvements to address impairments for temperature and dissolved oxygen. The project will also benefit ESA-listed Chinook salmon and other salmonids and aquatic life.

Partner Coordination

- Nonpoint coordination efforts occurred monthly through attending the Stillaguamish PIC coordination meetings as well as the PIC program's Water Quality sub-team meetings.
- TMDL staff attended regular meetings of the Stillaguamish Technical Advisory Group and Stillaguamish Watershed Council, with nonpoint staff serving as an alternate.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Nonpoint staff conducted a watershed evaluation across the lower Stillaguamish River watershed, identifying 30 sites to consider for prioritization of technical and financial assistance efforts. Staff solicited initial feedback from watershed partners on site

[6] https://snohomishcountywa.gov/3344/Lower-Stilly-PIC-Program

prioritization approaches, overlapping interests, and available project funding to further refine the list of eligible properties.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Nonpoint staff assisted with coordinating and addressing two legacy nonpoint issues that were first identified in 2022. Staff field visits to one site of concern near the Old Stillaguamish Channel confirmed that whatever suspected sewage discharges that were alleged at the site had been abated and that there were no present on-going water quality concerns originating from the property in question.
- Nonpoint staff continued to share and receive information related to ERTS reports with overlapping jurisdiction and discussed with PIC partners which entity held the most direct authority to address the problem and brainstorm desired TA or enforcement outcomes.

Monitoring Activities

- Nonpoint staff did not participate in any monitoring activities within the watershed during the performance period.

Priority Watershed Name: Green-Duwamish River Watershed

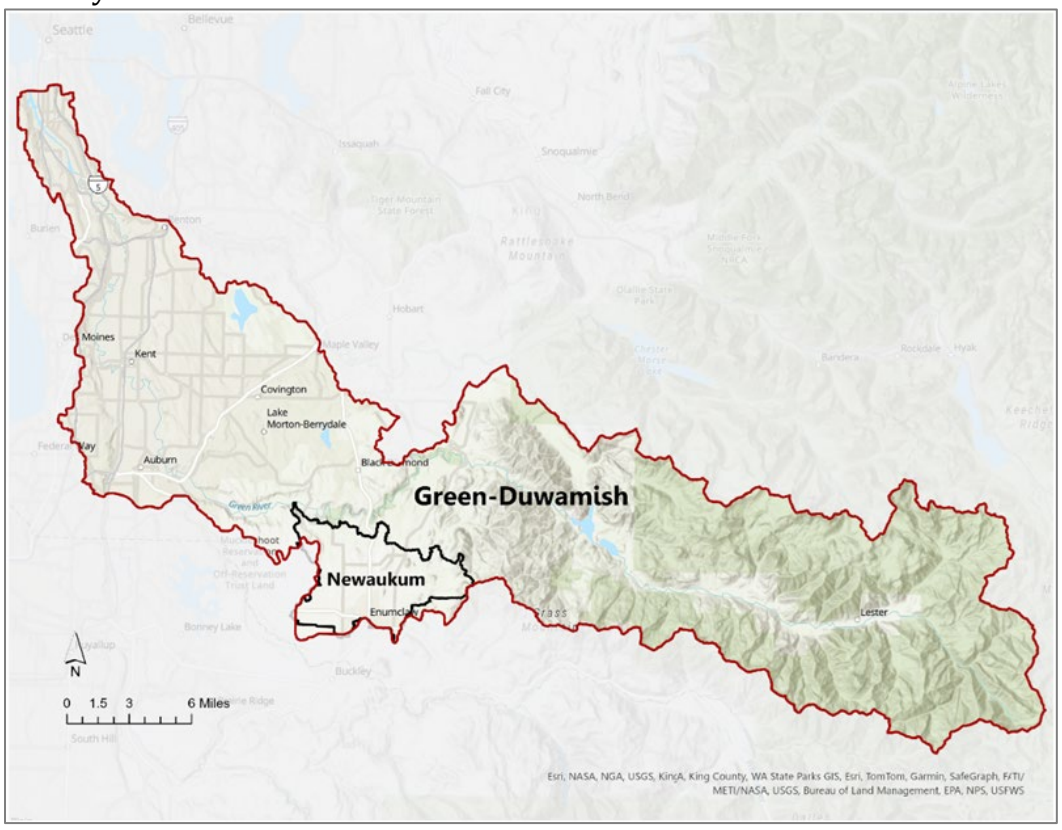


Figure 18. Green River Watershed and tributary Newaukum Creek where nonpoint implementation efforts prioritize riparian and flood plain restoration to address water temperature impairments.

Implementing: Green River Temperature TMDL, Newaukum Creek Temperature TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

Ecology completed the Soos Creek Fine Sediment TMDL and submitted it to EPA for approval on December 30, 2025. While most of the allocations are assigned to municipal stormwater sources, more than 10% of the allocations are assigned to nonpoint sources. Recommended actions to address pollution from nonpoint sources include, but are not limited to, fencing of livestock to prevent access to streams, rotational grazing, riparian buffer restoration.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- Ecology staff organized two virtual meetings with the public to share information about the Soos Creek Fine Sediment TMDL. One meeting was held In July 2025, when the public had the opportunity to review a draft of the TMDL report and another meeting was held in October 2025, during the formal public comment period.

Financial Assistance

- Ecology did not fund any nonpoint-related projects in this watershed during the reporting period.

Partner Coordination

- Ecology staff met monthly with Muckleshoot Indian Tribe Water Quality staff to discuss concerns about potential sources of pollution in the watershed and coordinate on actions aimed at identifying the sources and actions to address the pollution.
- Ecology staff attended Salmon Recovery Group Council meetings in the Green/Duwamish watershed, which leads and coordinates multiple restoration actions in the watershed meant to restore salmonid habitat and water quality conditions in the Green River.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Nonpoint staff began initial collaboration efforts to identify areas to target for riparian restoration along tributaries to Newaukum Creek. Staff completed an orientation-focused drive through of the areas of interest within the watershed and discussed how to best incorporate the properties into Ecology's nonpoint workflow.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- No technical assistance or compliance activities occurred within the watershed during the reporting period.

Monitoring Activities

- No monitoring activities occurred within the watershed during the reporting period.

Central Regional Office

Priority Watershed Name: Lower Yakima River

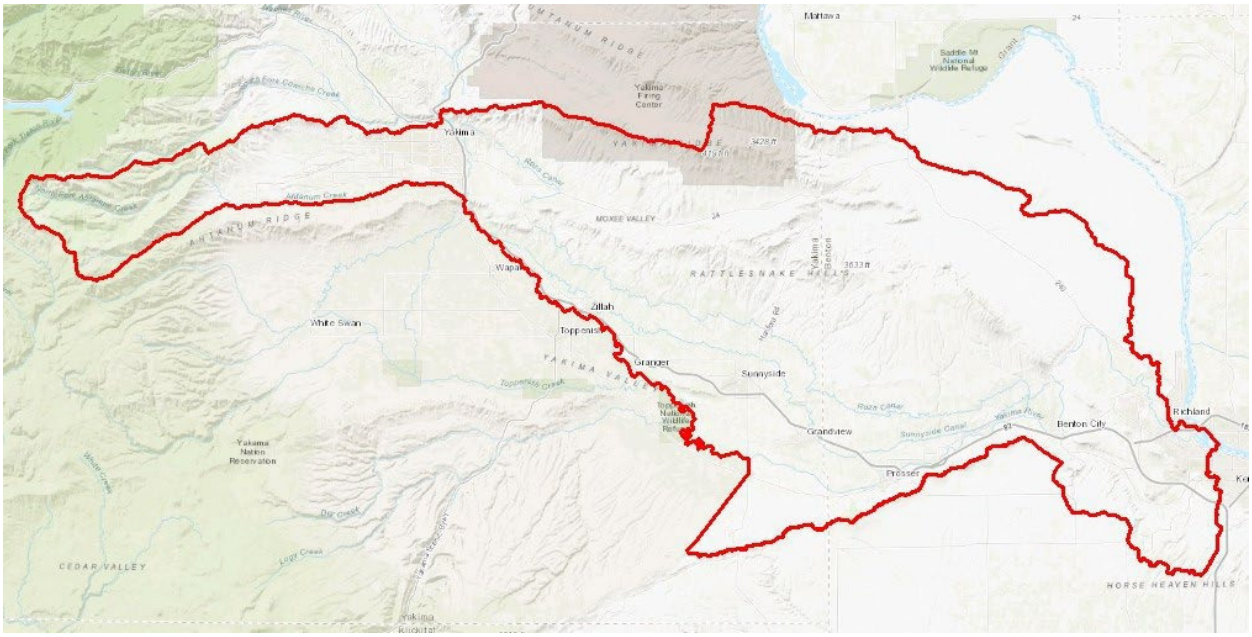


Figure 19. Map of the Lower Yakima River focus areas.

Implementing: Lower Yakima Groundwater Management Area, Suspended Sediment TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

The ongoing implementation of the Lower Yakima Suspended Sediment TMDL has greatly improved the water quality discharged to the Lower Yakima River. The existing strong partnerships with Roza and Sunnyside Valley Irrigation Districts are instrumental in the current and future successes seen in this Watershed. Ecology WQ staff are also coordinating closely with the Yakima Health District and the Washington Department of Agriculture on developing implementation plans for the Lower Yakima Groundwater Management Area (LYGWMA) and the Nitrate Reduction Project.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- Ecology's partners in the lower Yakima Watershed include Roza/Sunnyside Board of Joint Control (RSBOJC), South Yakima Conservation District, and the Benton Conservation District. These partners continue to conduct outreach with landowners on the need to reduce suspended sediment discharges. Ecology WQ staff work to support the Yakima County Health District as they begin implementation of the Lower Yakima Groundwater Management Area (GWMA). Ecology WQ staff are also coordinating with the Washington Department of Agriculture to reduce nitrates impacts from agricultural activities to waters of the state.

Financial Assistance

- Ecology non-point activity grants for water quality improvements are actively being implemented in the Lower Yakima River by the Benton and South Yakima conservation districts, and the Mid-Columbia Enhancement Group.

Partner Coordination

- Yakima County Health District is lead agency for the Lower Yakima Ground Water Management Area. Ecology staff are working closely with the health district on the LYGWMA.
- Washington Department of Agriculture is the lead for the nitrates reduction program that will be implemented in the LYGWMA. Ecology field staff and WSDA coordinate closely on complaint responses and will coordinate for the nitrates reduction program.
- Communication with the Roza/Sunnyside Board of Joint Control (RSBOJC), representing the irrigation districts, occurred on an as needed basis. Scheduling depended on field schedules and pollution reports. This coordination provided assistance in resolving complaints received through the Environmental Repost Tracking System (ERTS).
- Communications with the North Yakima, South Yakima, and Benton County conservation districts were conducted as needed to address potential pollution sources.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Additional non-point staff were hired in September 2024. This increase in staffing allowed for additional visits to the watershed in 2025, primarily follow up on ERTS reports of water pollution concerns. Three of these trips were specifically to review Lower Yakima tributaries and potential pollution discharges.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Cases needing compliance actions to address the TMDL goal were coordinated with Watershed partners, particularly the Washington Department of Agriculture. Close partnership between nonpoint staff and the Department of Agriculture inspectors has greatly enhanced our ability to work with the agricultural community. Complaint follow up has consisted of technical assistance and did not result in escalating to enforcement actions.
- Site visits were coordinated with Watershed partners, including irrigation districts, conservation districts, and municipalities in the watershed. Site visits focused on conducting monitoring and working on identification of turbidity sources, particularly through the summer irrigation season.

Monitoring Activities

- Monitoring activities in 2025 were undertaken by RSBOJC on Fecal Coliform, E. Coli and turbidity. Sampling locations and timing are designed to compare to TMDL goals and current water quality standards.
- Additional sampling was conducted in 2025 under grant funding to Benton CD to examine temperatures in tributary waters that serve as cold water refuge for migrating salmonids.

Priority Watershed Name: White Salmon River

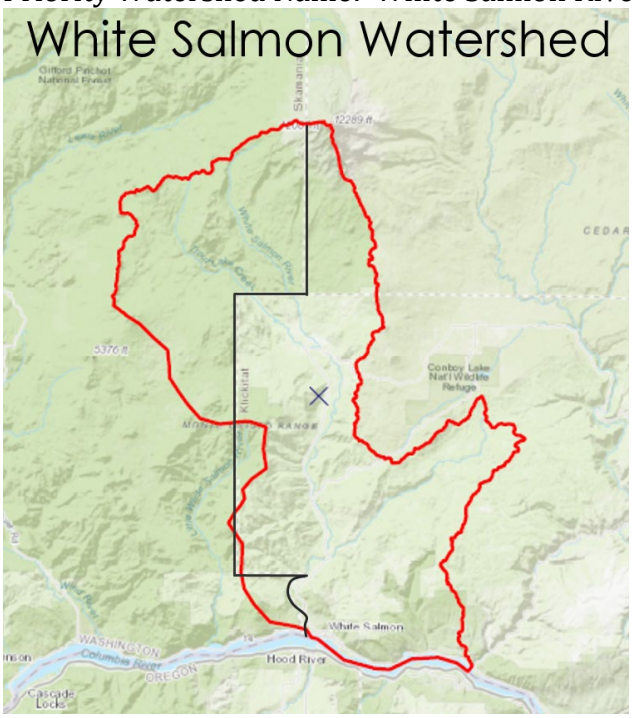


Figure 20. Map of the White Salmon River watershed.

Developing and Implementing: White Salmon River Advance Restoration Plan *(in development- bacteria impairments)*

Summary/Context Info:

Ecology is working on a water cleanup project for the White Salmon Watershed to address identified water quality impairments for bacteria. Partner organizations in the Watershed greeted ecology's entrance into the Watershed with interest and support. Some of the local water quality interest extends beyond the bacteria pollution problems.

Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program completed two years of sampling in October 2024. The data is being processed, and a data summary report is expected in spring 2026. The project consisted of bacteria samples collected twice a month from sites throughout the White Salmon Watershed. With the completion of the data summary report this project will move to complete the Advance Restoration Plan and move to implementation.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- In 2025 Ecology staff continued to work with the US Forest Service (USFS) on outreach to the recreational boaters. Ecology staff worked with the USFS staff to have water quality information included in the USFS recreational boating permit (USFS annual recreational boater permit for the Wild and Scenic River segment).
- Ecology staff assisted Underwood Conservation District, Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group, and the Yakama Nation on an annual educational project for the local school district addressing stream health for stream on school property.
- Ecology staff continued to work with local health jurisdictions to conduct outreach and education relating to the environmental impacts of failing septic systems, how this affects the White Salmon Watershed, and outline financial assistance resources available for septic system installation, repair, or replacement. Ecology staff worked with the conservation district and the local health district to develop information that was included in information packets that were distributed at 4 local events and provided directly to landowners through the mail.

Financial Assistance

- Underwood Conservation District used fiscal year 2025 grant funding from Ecology's Water Quality Program to implement water quality improvement projects in the White Salmon Watershed. This included bacteria sampling projects, riparian restoration plantings, livestock exclusion, Best Management Practices technical assistance and planning including solids liquid separation system and solids storage pad at a dairy, water quality monitoring, and education around riparian stewardship.

Partner Coordination

- Central Region Water Quality staff regularly attended Underwood CD board meetings. Ecology Water Quality staff coordinated with the U.S. Forest Service, Underwood Conservation District, Columbia Land Trust, Yakama Nation, Klickitat County Health District, Friends of the White Salmon, Mid-Columbia Fisheries, USGS, and Trout Lake City Council.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Ecology coordinated with the local CD on bacteria sampling and filling in data gaps, while preparing the White Salmon Bacteria cleanup plan.
- Data collected by Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) in 2024 will be used to identify reaches within the Watershed where additional sampling and source tracking may be helpful in identifying polluting inputs. The data report is expected to be available in early 2026.

- Ecology conducts complaint responses as needed and made monthly field visits to the White Salmon Watershed for pollution identification work. Two of these visits to the watershed were made for further watershed assessment, while the other watershed visits were for spot checking prior observations and connecting with watershed partners.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Community reports of water quality concerns in 2025 were entered into the ERTS database and followed up on by CRO nonpoint staff.
- Watershed visits to the White Salmon Watershed resulted in site visits to a dairy to provide technical assistance, about 14 other land owners were visited in the course of the year to provide information on WQ guidance for riparian landowners. Site visits were also conducted on 6 sites undergoing, or recently completing, grant funded Water Quality improvement projects.

Monitoring Activities

- Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) completed field sampling for a bacteria loading study in the White Salmon Watershed with sample collection spanning 2022-2024. This study will reference the current WQ bacteria standard for E. coli.
- Underwood Conservation District continued conducting grant funded monitoring for bacteria and other WQ parameters in the White Salmon Watershed. This monitoring included three sampling locations with 8 samples being collected at each location.

Priority Watershed Name: Bonaparte Creek

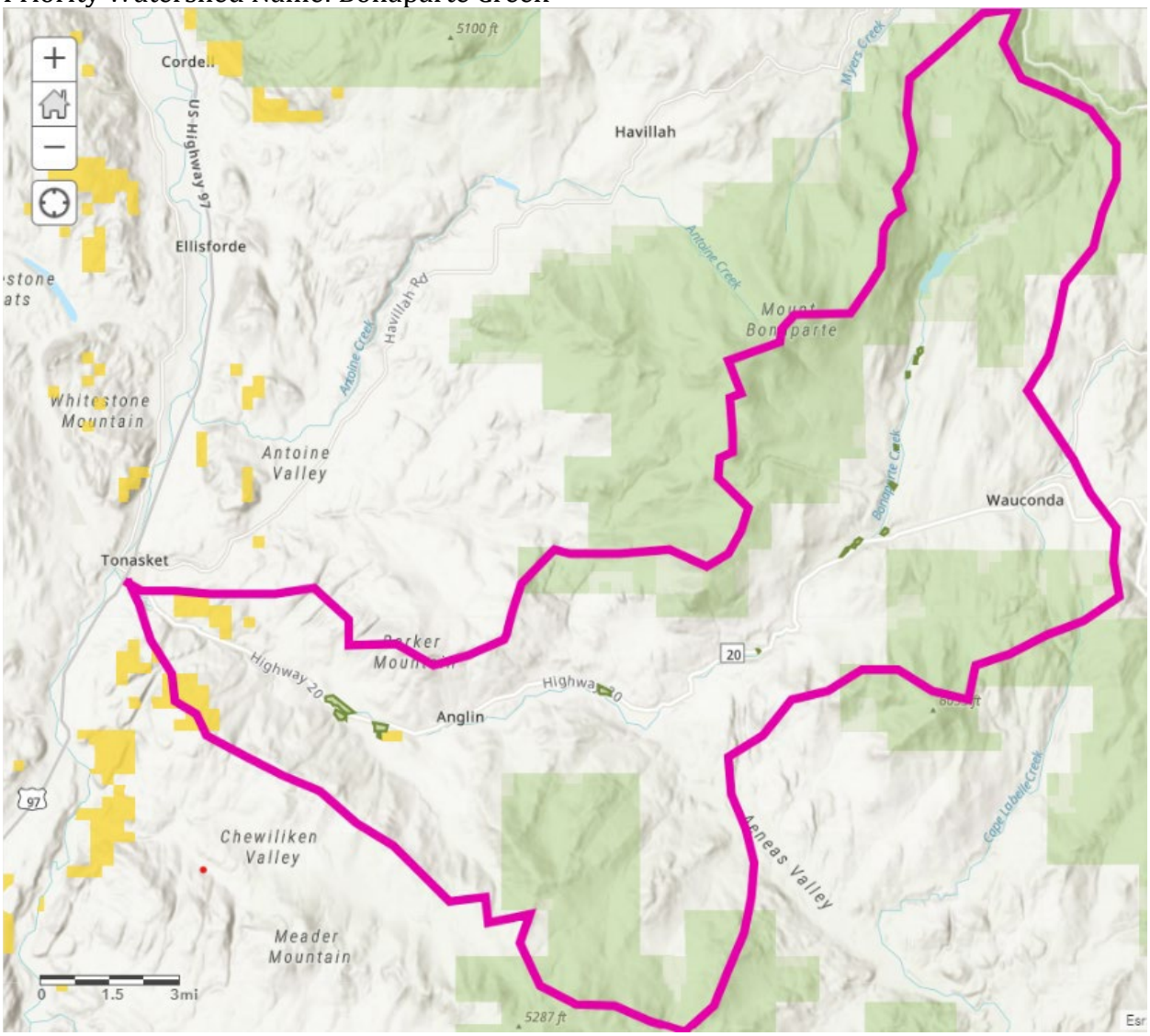


Figure 21. Map of the Bonaparte Creek watershed.

Implementing: Bonaparte Creek Bacteria STI (in development)

Summary/Context Info:

Central Region Water Quality has initiated a Straight to Implementation (STI) project for the Bonaparte Creek, a tributary of the Okanogan River in north central Washington. Bonaparte Creek enters the Okanogan River at the town of Tonasket, Figure 49 (WRIA 49) The Bonaparte sub-basin drains an area of about 150 square miles, or 100,000 acres.

The Bonaparte sub basin contains only nonpoint sources of pollution. No new point sources that would discharge the pollutant being addressed by the proposed STI are anticipated in the Watershed. Historic impairments are recorded for fecal coliform, temperature, and pH.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025

Education and Outreach

- Ecology attended the 2025 Okanogan Conservation District 85th anniversary celebration to meet and coordinate with partners and residents in the Okanogan Watersheds.
- Ecology staff made a presentation to the Omak-Okanogan Rotary club. About 27 people attended and were highly receptive to the message "we are all responsible for protecting shared waterbodies". Presentation included specific examples of nonpoint concerns and solutions regardless of whether one lives in town or on a farm or ranch.
- Ecology staff had an information table at the Tonasket Farmers Market twice in the summer/fall of 2025. Using an EnviroScape model and a riparian shade model we engaged area residents in discussions about nonpoint pollution. We also were able to assist residents who had questions about water quality, wetlands and other topics, referring them to other Ecology staff, or the local health district as appropriate.
- Ecology staff and project partners visited several restoration project sites and met with landowners to discuss site plans and end state goals.

Financial Assistance

- Ecology staff continues to encourage the Okanogan Health Department to apply for support to conduct a septic maintenance outreach program.
- Ecology staff met with the Okanogan Conservation District staff to review past grant projects and encourage them to apply additional grant funded projects.
- Encouraged the health district to apply for pass-through funding for septic upgrades.

Partner Coordination

- Attended meetings with the Okanogan Conservation District and Okanogan Health District in person or online as time and travel exemptions allowed.
- Ecology staff met with Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife and Department of Natural Resources staff to discuss opportunities to partner and coordinate on water quality education and messaging.
- Ecology met with natural resources and fisheries staff from the Colville Confederated Tribes to gather information on their priorities and goals.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Evaluated sources of nonpoint pollution by coordinating with Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program and considering alternative sampling strategies to gather regular bacteria samples. Requested sampling station for Bonaparte Creek FY 27.

- Nonpoint staff conducted 3 watershed surveys and have identified several dozen possible nonpoint pollution sources for follow up.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Identified sites have not yet been prioritized for initial contact.

Monitoring Activities

- Watershed surveys continue with additional planning for following up to identify specific watershed concerns.

Eastern Regional Office

Priority Watershed Name: Hangman Creek Watershed

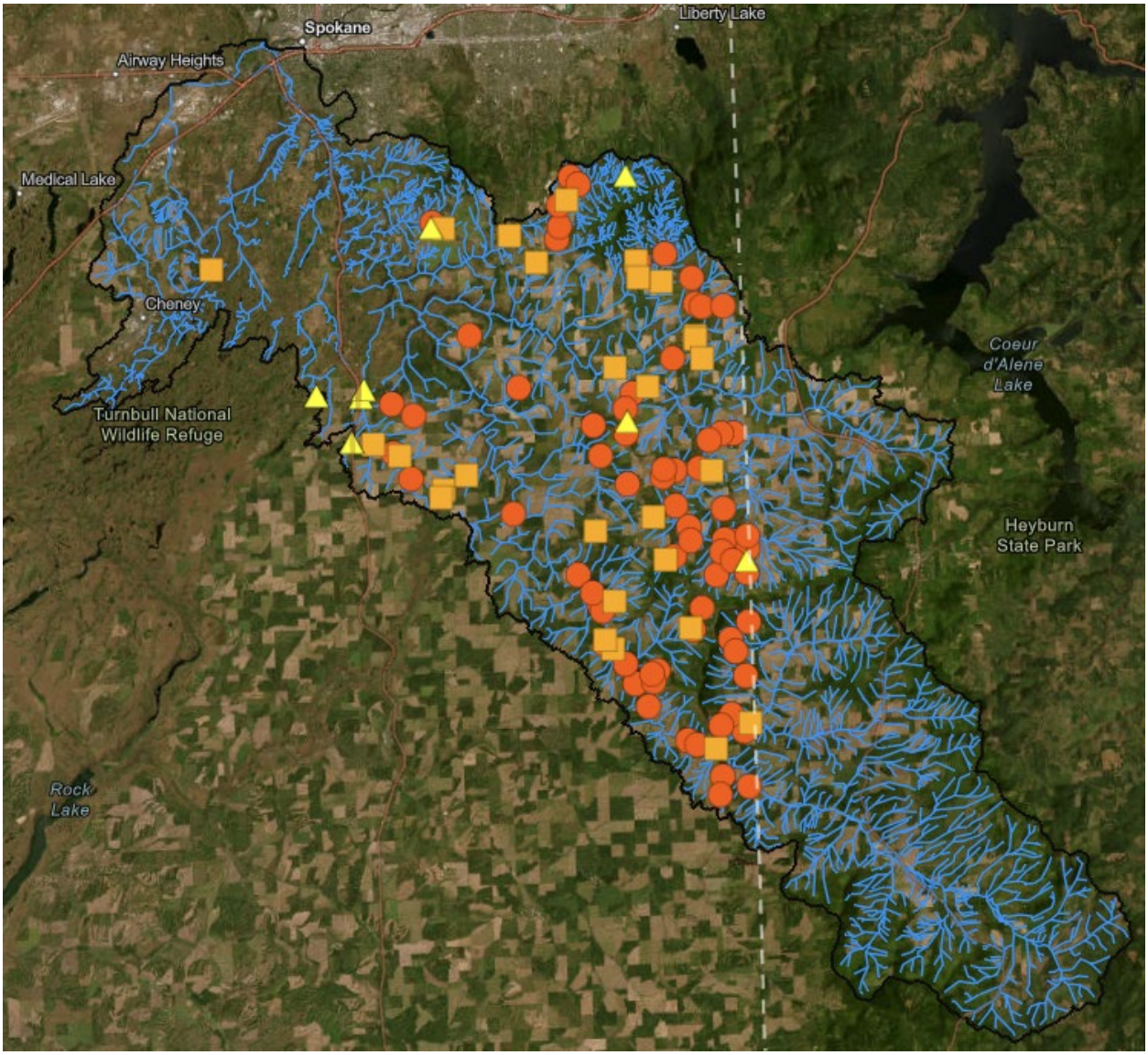


Figure 22. Hangman watershed showing locations of prioritized sites ERO staff have contacted since 2018 and are actively working with on water quality improvement projects. Triangle icons

represent complaint sites, square icons represent livestock sites, circle icons represent dryland agricultural sites. Dashed vertical line represents Idaho/Washington border.

Implementing: Hangman Creek Fecal Coliform Bacteria, Temperature, and Turbidity TMDL

Summary/Context Information:

Streams in the Hangman Creek watershed are impaired by excess bacteria, turbidity, elevated water temperatures, pH, and DO. The watershed is dominated by agricultural nonpoint sources. The watershed was studied to develop a TMDL report and ultimately a TMDL implementation plan. The implementation plan was completed in 2011. The Spokane Riverkeeper challenged the EPA approval of the TMDL. EPA, Ecology, and Riverkeeper negotiated a 10-year agreement that identifies and prioritizes specific actions to reduce pollution and ultimately make progress towards water quality improvements within the Hangman watershed. The agreement was signed in 2018 and Ecology is actively implementing.

Watershed stakeholder engagement has been a critical component to implementation efforts. Since 2018 Ecology has been working on building relationships and capacity among watershed stakeholders including but not limited to: Spokane Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Pine Creek Conservation District, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Indians, Trout Unlimited, Inland NW Land Conservancy, and the Lands Council. Since 2018 significant resources have been leveraged and focused in the Hangman watershed, as can be shown below in the actions completed.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Events:** Tabled at 4 conferences (Society for Rangeland Management Conference, Spokane River Forum Conference, Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians Conference, and State of the Lake in Moses Lake) and 3 community events (Spokane County Fair, Community Arbor Day at On Track Academy, and Slippery Gulch Festival in Tekoa, WA) educating over 1,400 community members, Tribal members, and producers within the Spokane and Hangman watersheds.
- **Partner Meetings:** ERO staff reconvened, organized, and facilitated Hangman Workgroup meetings biannually in April and October 2025. The first meeting in April was included as a session at the Spokane River Forum Conference.
- **Youth Education:** Ecology again participated in WaterFest at the Doris Morrison Learning Center in Spokane County, educating 410 elementary students from 6 schools in Spokane, Spokane Valley, and Freeman school district about watershed health and nonpoint pollution. Staff participated in salmon release events with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe in the headwaters of Hangman Creek (over 100 Tribe members and students), and with Braided Education (Mead and Cheney schools, approximately 100 students) at the confluence of the Spokane River and Hangman Creek. In addition, staff provided

macroinvertebrate and water quality lessons at 4 trout release days totaling 240 students in the Spokane area.

- **Signage:** A new interpretive sign was designed and installed overlooking a restoration project along Little Hangman Creek just outside the town of Tekoa, WA.



Figure 23. Interpretive sign installed along Highway 274 overlooking a large restoration project near the town of Tekoa, WA.

- **Earth Day Screening:** Ecology staff partnered with Spokane Riverkeeper and the Garland Theater to provide a free showing of the Common Ground documentary to educate the public about water, soil, and climate health through agriculture. The event was advertised via 200 fliers around town and an ad in The Inlander; 80 people attended.
- **Social media:** staff created a video about the 10 Year Spokane River Dissolved Oxygen Assessment[7] and the significant impacts of Hangman Creek and posted it on Ecology's social media platforms.
- **Mailings:** A second mailer detailing the definitions and importance of streams was sent to 2,773 landowners within the Hangman watershed in February 2025.

Financial Assistance

[7] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rgcNz0R9nHk

- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program Phases 1 & 2* ($6,817,000 - since 2022):** Since its inception in 2022, this program has contracted 300 acres of riparian restoration along 32.6 miles of streams in the Hangman watershed; these streams were previously in or directly adjacent to dryland agricultural production. This program was created to facilitate compliance for sites contacted by Ecology as having water quality concerns, which is an eligibility criterion for enrollment in the program. The implementation of these acres to perform site prep, plant installations, and planting maintenance is a heavy lift for the Spokane Conservation District. They have been building their riparian program and partnering with other watershed stakeholders to manage this important and challenging workload. This implementation and maintenance of these riparian restoration projects are ongoing.
- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program Phase 3* ($1,000,000):** This program provides rental rates with long-term contracts for agricultural riparian land taken out of production and planted with native trees and shrubs. Ecology partnered with Spokane Conservation District on this program. This first two phases of the program contracted 300 acres for riparian restoration along streams in the Hangman watershed, which were previously in dryland agricultural production. Phase 3 will continue to enroll approx. 50 more critical riparian acres into the program. This third phase of the project was funded in 2024, and individual contracts will be enrolled into the program over the course of 2025-2026.
- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *PNW Cover Crop & Agronomy Support Demonstration Project:* ($499,873):** The Spokane Conservation District will work with cooperative adjacent landowners near the confluence of Rock Creek and Hangman Creek to stabilize approximately 1,000 linear feet of unstable and actively eroding stream banks. This project will implement Phase I of restoring/stabilizing a high sediment contribution source of this confluence area. The project will address turbidity from stream bank erosion and build upon previous, planned, and future work in the reach. This project was funded in 2025 and will be completed in 2028.
- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Rock Creek Confluence Stabilization Project:* ($500,000):** This program will support at least 12 farmers in adopting sustainable practices through both financial assistance and agronomic support. The program provides $70 per acre for up to 100 acres per year for three years to incentivize the use of cover crops. Cover crops can significantly improve water quality by reducing erosion, pesticides, and fertilizers, and increasing water storage capacity. This project was funded in 2025 and will be completed in 2028.
- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Creek Agricultural Sediment Abatement Project* ($424,000):** This project will restore a 2,100-foot-long reach of the Hangman Creek mainstem. The project will remove historic livestock influences, reduce active erosion through bioengineered streambank stabilization

practices, and restore the riparian area with restorative buffers ranging from 130–200-foot widths. This project was funded in 2023 and will be completed in 2026.

- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Direct Seed Loan Program* ($5,196,914):** This loan from State Revolving Funds allowed Spokane County Conservation District to expand their Direct Seed Equipment Loan program to 13 counties in Eastern Washington. This program allows producers to purchase the necessary direct seed equipment to practice low disturbance, direct seed conservation tillage. This loan helps to convert acres in the Hangman Creek farmed with conventional tillage techniques to direct seed. Ecology and Spokane CD have operated this program for several years, this is the most recent phase of the program funding. This project was funded in 2023 and will be completed in 2026.
- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Creek Composite Toe Stabilization Project* ($500,000):** This project will implement nonpoint source best management practices recommended in the local Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Water Quality Implementation Plan to address turbidity from stream bank erosion in Hangman Creek. The project will build upon previous downstream work and will stabilize and install riparian plantings along approximately 1,050 linear feet of actively eroding stream bank on Hangman Creek near the Rock Creek confluence. This project was funded in 2024 and will be completed in 2027.
- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Watershed – Rock Creek Tributary Livestock BMPs* ($69,561):** This project will improve water quality by implementing livestock best management practices and 3 acres of riparian restoration on a farm located along an unnamed tributary to Rock Creek within the Hangman Creek watershed. The site was identified and contacted due to having significant water quality concerns by Ecology staff during annual watershed evaluations. This project was funded in 2024 and will be completed in 2027.
- **Implemented the Spokane Conservation District, *Spokane Riparian Establishment* Project ($283,500):** This project implements three projects, two of which are in the Hangman watershed. These projects include livestock BMPs and riparian restoration across approximately 35 acres. Both sites were identified and contacted due to having significant water quality concerns by Ecology staff during annual watershed evaluations. This project began in 2023 and will be completed in 2026.
- **Implemented the Spokane Falls Trout Unlimited, *Hangman Creek Floodplain Restoration at Grouse Creek Ranch – Phase 1 Project* ($499,730):** This agreement is part of a multi-phased project that will improve water quality, restore floodplain connectivity, and restore habitat functions along 2.2 miles of Hangman Creek upstream of its confluence with Rock Creek. This initial phase will generate a reach assessment identifying priority restoration opportunities, advance priority opportunities to preliminary and final design, initiate phased construction of priority restoration actions,

and provide monitoring and adaptive management. This first phase of the project was funded in 2024 and will be completed in 2027.

- **Implemented the Spokane Tribe of Indians, *DIF Project Maintenance, Riparian Restoration, and Livestock BMPs* Project ($257,868):** This project includes project maintenance across five previously installed riparian restoration projects in the Hangman watershed. All five projects were identified during past regional watershed evaluations by Ecology staff as having significant water quality concerns, which were addressed by a previous implementation grant. This project began in early 2023 and was completed in 2025.
- **Implemented the Spokane Riverkeeper, *Rock and Hangman Creeks Riparian Restoration and Water Quality Improvement* Project ($256,892):** This project will continue to improve nonpoint pollution issues throughout the watershed by installing 50 acres of riparian plantings, establishing three water quality monitoring locations, 10 water temperature loggers, install livestock BMPs, and provide education and outreach programs to maximize restoration efforts within the Hangman watershed. This project began in 2022 and was completed in 2025.

Partner Coordination

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ecology continued to work on increasing the number of stakeholders engaged in the Hangman Creek Watershed, as well as continued building and maintaining positive relationships with existing stakeholders. Engaged watershed stakeholders and positive partnerships are vital to cultivating a synergistic environment for achieving significant water quality improvements. Additionally, Ecology is committed to engaging with the Spokane and Coeur d'Alene Tribes and local municipalities on water quality protection measures.
- **Meetings with the Spokane Riverkeeper:** Ecology staff continued to meet with the Spokane Riverkeeper bi-annually to provide updates on work in the Hangman Creek Watershed, talk through issues, and plan for future work.
- **Meetings with Watershed Partners and Building Funding Capacity:** Ecology staff met regularly with watershed partners to plan and coordinate on implementing best management practices that improve and protect water quality. Ecology will continue to work on maintaining existing funding opportunities as well as support and encourage new funding opportunities for water quality improvement work.
- **Funding for New Riparian Restoration Program:** Ecology continued its partnership with the Spokane Conservation District on this innovative riparian restoration program – Hangman Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program. The program is currently implementing 350 acres of riparian plantings across over a dozen Hangman Settlement Agreement prioritized sites.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Performed Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation:** One watershed evaluation was completed in Hangman watershed in 2025. Ecology staff documented 60 non-point pollution problems in the watershed using the nonpoint program's watershed evaluation process. 5 tillage sites were prioritized from those sites using site specific criteria, such as the length of stream impacted and the severity of water quality concern.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Complaint Response:** Ecology staff followed up on one valid water quality complaint in the Hangman watershed. Ecology staff met with the landowner and sister agency staff and have reached an agreed upon plan to implement practices that will protect water quality.
- **TA Letters:** Ecology staff mailed out five certified letters to sites prioritized during the watershed evaluation process. Multiple phone conversations, site visits, and partnership meetings took place because of this effort. Much of the project implementation grant funding in the Hangman watershed is a direct result of this process.
- **Enforcement –Administrative Orders:** Ecology issued an Administrative Order to one livestock operation located in Mica Creek subwatershed in summer 2025. The Order was appealed and Ecology and the operation are currently in negotiations as of the end of 2025.
- **Enforcement – Warning Letters:** Ecology issued no warning letters in 2025 in Hangman watershed.

Monitoring Activities

- **Continued Implementing Spokane Riverkeeper's Monitoring Project:** Three water quality monitoring locations were established, and 10 water temperature loggers were installed as part of the Spokane Riverkeeper's Rock and Hangman Creeks Riparian Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Project. This project provides the data online to the public in real time.
- **Continued Spokane Salmon Restoration Collaborative Data Collection:** The Spokane Salmon Restoration Collaborative (The Collaborative), established in 2022, is the recognized Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery Efforts in the Spokane River Subbasin, which includes Hangman watershed. The Collaborative is tasked with collecting a multitude of data for Ecosystem Diagnosis and Treatment (EDT) modeling in order to generate a limiting factor analysis. Watershed partners compiled existing data and worked with a contract to compile a data gaps analysis in 2023 and in 2024 on the ground data collection efforts began in 2025 to fill any needed gaps. Field data collection will continue through 2026.

Priority Watershed Name: Palouse River Watershed

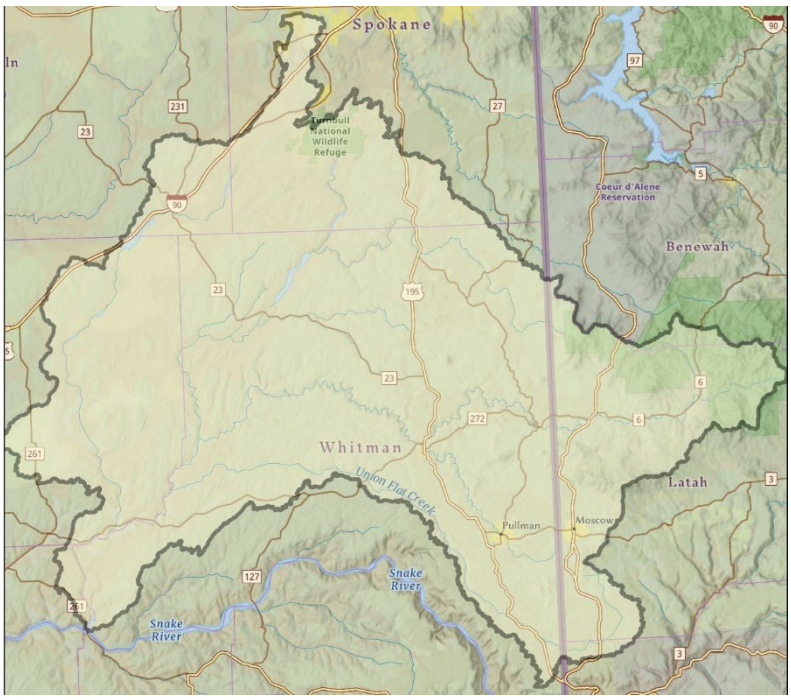


Figure 24. Map showing Palouse River watershed boundary.

Implementing: Spring Flat Creek STI; North Fork Palouse River Fecal Coliform TMDL; North Fork Palouse River DO, and pH TMDL; Palouse River Fecal Coliform Bacteria TMDL; Palouse River Temperature TMDL; Palouse River Toxics TMDL; South Fork Palouse Ammonia TMDL; and South Fork Fecal Coliform TMDL.

Summary/Context Info:

The Palouse River Watershed is located primarily in Whitman County, Washington and its headwaters are in Latah County, Idaho. Land use within the watershed is dominated by agriculture and rangeland with small rural city populations. Streams in the Palouse Watershed are impaired by excess bacteria, DO, pH, toxics, and elevated water temperatures. The Watershed and its sub basins have been studied several times and multiple TMDL reports, and subsequent implementation plans have been developed. The final Straight to Implementation (STI) Plan for the Spring Flat Creek subbasin of the Palouse was published in 2024 and significant efforts to implement that STI took place in 2025 partnerships between Ecology, Palouse Conservation District, and Whitman Conservation District.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Youth Education:** ERO staff coordinated with teachers from St. John Elementary School and Pine Creek CD to educate the 3rd grade class about water quality alongside their trout in the classroom program. Staff did an intro to watersheds lesson with the

EnviroScape in-class, held a field day sampling macroinvertebrates and other WQ parameters in the local Pleasant Valley Creek, and ran another water quality activity at Rock Lake when the class released their trout.

- **Mailings:** Staff created and mailed 478 mailers to landowners in the Spring Flat Creek watershed with information about the greater Palouse watershed, conservation practices (BMPs) for water quality, and funding opportunities to implement the practices.

Financial Assistance

- **Continued implementing the Palouse Conservation District Spring Flat Creek Buffer Incentive Program ($314,500):** High stream temperatures, low dissolved oxygen levels, and high pH values have recently been identified as problems in Spring Flat Creek (SFC), a tributary of the South Fork Palouse River. Like the Hangman Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program, this program will provide rental rates with long-term contracts for agricultural riparian land taken out of production and planted with native trees and shrubs. Ecology partnered with Palouse Conservation District and Whitman Conservation District on this project. This program was created to support the Spring Flat Creek STI. 2025 efforts for the program focused on landowner outreach.
- **Continued implementing the Palouse Conservation District Spring Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement Project ($345,445):** High stream temperatures, low dissolved oxygen levels, and high pH values have recently been identified as problems in Spring Flat Creek (SFC), a tributary of the South Fork Palouse River. This project will improve water quality in the SFC watershed by providing riparian buffer installation, technical assistance and conservation planning, direct seed cost share, environmental monitoring, outreach, and education to producers. In 2025, the Conservation District began their monitoring efforts and started restoration preparation and riparian plantings with one private landowner.
- **Completed the Whitman Conservation District North Fork of the Palouse Restoration ($240,000):** Now complete, the Whitman Conservation District restored approximately 34.1 acres of riparian area in the North Fork Palouse watershed. In addition to riparian plantings, 30 post assisted log structures (PALS) and beaver dam analogues (BDAs) were installed. This project occurred along a 3,500-foot reach of North Fork Palouse River, 3,266-foot reach of Silver Creek (a tributary to North Fork Palouse River), and a 1,728-foot ephemeral channel connected to Silver Creek. An education and outreach program also provided thirty (30) hands-on learning experiences on riparian restoration and water quality protection.
- **Began implementing the Palouse Conservation District Conservation & Community – Lower Fourmile Watershed Restoration Project ($500,000):** The Palouse Conservation District will improve water quality in Rose Creek in the Lower Fourmile Creek watershed by restoring 9 acres of riparian buffer along 1,246 feet of Rose Creek in the Lower Fourmile Watershed. Additional activities include providing technical assistance (TA) to 30 area landowners, conducting 24 months water quality monitoring along Fourmile

Creek, and performing education and outreach activities that will connect all project activities by sharing project successes.

- **Began implementing the Palouse Conservation District A Watershed Moment – Riparian Restoration and Education on the Palouse ($484,455):** The Palouse Conservation District will improve water quality in the South Fork Palouse River (SFPR) watershed through a series of riparian restoration projects, and providing riparian technical assistance and conservation planning, environmental monitoring development, outreach, and education to the public.
- **Continued implementing the Palouse Conservation District Full Stream Ahead! Riparian Restoration Innovations on the Palouse River Project ($666,666):** This multi-approach project by Palouse Conservation District is restoring 15 acres (1.5 miles), installing four beaver dam analogs (BDAs), and constructing three saturated riparian buffers (SRBs), a new conservation practice that facilitates riparian nitrogen removal, to improve water quality in the South Fork Palouse River watershed. Each SRB will be monitored in multiple locations to assess their effectiveness and measure water table dynamics.
- **Continued implementing the Palouse Conservation District Do the Residue! Promoting Direct Seed Operations on the Palouse Project ($666,666):** The Palouse Conservation District continued to implement five acres of riparian buffers and 9,000 acres of direct seeding to improve water quality in Whitman County streams. A survey of producers will assess direct seed adoption by conservation program participants. Additional crop residue monitoring and outreach and education programs, including the Alternative Cropping Symposium and Direct Seed Breakfasts, will lead to further water quality improvements in the Palouse River watershed.
- **Continued implementing the Palouse Conservation District Operation Residue: (Under) cover Crops & Direct Seeding on the Palouse Project ($590,716):** The Palouse Conservation District will lead implementation of one stream mile of riparian forest buffer and 6,000 acres of direct seeding to improve water quality in Whitman County streams. A 250-acre cover crop demonstration project will assist producers in improving soil health on their farms. Soil health assessment of direct seed and cover crop projects will demonstrate project effectiveness, and outreach and education programs will lead to further community investment in water quality improvements.
- **Continued implementing the Palouse Conservation District Partnership to Restore Riparian Areas in the Lower Fourmile Creek Watershed Project ($661,541):** Riparian buffers improve water quality and ecological functions of streams. This Palouse Conservation District project will restore 30 acres of riparian areas (23,000 streambank feet) in the lower Fourmile Creek watershed, including installing up to 600 feet of streambank protection and 10 to 12 beaver dam analogs, providing technical assistance, assessing revegetation methods, installing interpretive signs, and developing place-based curriculum on riparian restoration and conservation agriculture.
- **Continued implementing the Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District One Pass at a Time- Conservation of Pine Creek Watershed ($491,156):** Palouse Rock Lake

Conservation District, in cooperation with Pine Creek Conservation District, will address nonpoint pollution throughout the Pine Creek watershed by installing 1 mile of riparian plantings; implementing 6,750 acres of conservation tillage; and providing education and outreach to members of the community.

- **Continued implementing the Palouse Conservation District Restoring Watershed Function in the Palouse River Watershed ($485,615):** The Palouse Conservation District will help restore streamflow, water quality, watershed function, and habitat in the Palouse River Watershed by implementing instream bioengineering projects, establishing new flow and water quality monitoring, and building awareness and support to improve stream channels and riparian habitat. Eight of the project sites are in the Palouse Watershed, and one is on a small unnamed tributary of the Snake River upstream from the Palouse River. Education and outreach efforts will build public awareness of water quality issues and encourage action to protect water resources.
- **Continued Implementing the Whitman Conservation District South Fork Palouse River Property Protection ($490,000):** This project will acquire approximately 125 acres in the South Fork Palouse River Watershed including 3,800 feet of the South Fork Palouse River. The land acquisition will provide Watershed protection which allows the district to implement riparian planting and provide education and outreach in the community.
- **Continued Implementing the Whitman Conservation District Palouse River Water Quality Enhancement Project ($270,000):** The Palouse River has been identified through the 303(d) list for impairments of temperature, pH, and dissolved oxygen. To address these issues, the Whitman County Conservation District has identified multiple project sites for riparian restoration in the Palouse River Watershed. Working closely with one landowner, vehicle and metal scrap was removed along approximately 650 feet of the river in the fall of 2024. Following the removal of vehicle scrap, approximately 1444 tons of gravel was used to fill and slope the bank. Conservation District staff completed riparian planting and grass seeding of the restoration area in November of 2024.
- **Continued Implementing the Whitman Conservation District Palouse River Habitat Restoration and Stabilization Project ($468,250):** The Palouse River is identified on the Washington 303(d) list for impairments of pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and bacteria. To address these issues, the Conservation District will identify project sites for riparian restoration, livestock BMPs, and direct seed in the Palouse River Watershed.

Partner Coordination

- **Attended Conservation District Board Meetings:** The Conservation District Boards primarily consist of farmers and ranchers. Staff attended 2 Whitman Conservation District Board Meetings and 1 Palouse Conservation District Meeting in 2025. Staff also met with newly hired district managers at the Pine Creek and Rock Lake Conservation District in 2025.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Performed Watershed Evaluations in Spring Flat Creek, Union Flat Creek, and Clear Creek Watersheds:** Annual surveys were conducted during the early spring season to identify livestock and dryland agricultural water pollution issues. Work was focused primarily on the Spring Flat Creek subbasin of the Palouse.
- **Performed Watershed Evaluations with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT):** Ecology staff met with WSDOT on buffer implementation along their highway infrastructure right of ways. Many of the streams in the Palouse have been historically ditched and straightened next to the State Hwy, including Spring Flat Creek.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Contacted 11 Priority Pollution Sites:** 11 new landowners with livestock or dryland agricultural water quality issues were contacted via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters were followed up with email or phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure continued communication with the landowner.
- **Created Riparian Buffer Maps for Landowners:** Staff set up site visits with contacted landowners and developed riparian buffer maps for Spring Flat Creek priority sites. The plans included visual representations and acre estimations of riparian buffers designed to fully protect water quality.

Monitoring Activities

- **Spring Flat Creek:** The Palouse Conservation District began their monitoring efforts in Spring Flat Creek in the Fall of 2025 following the completion & approval of their draft Quality Assurance Project Plan.

Priority Watershed Name: Little Spokane River Watershed

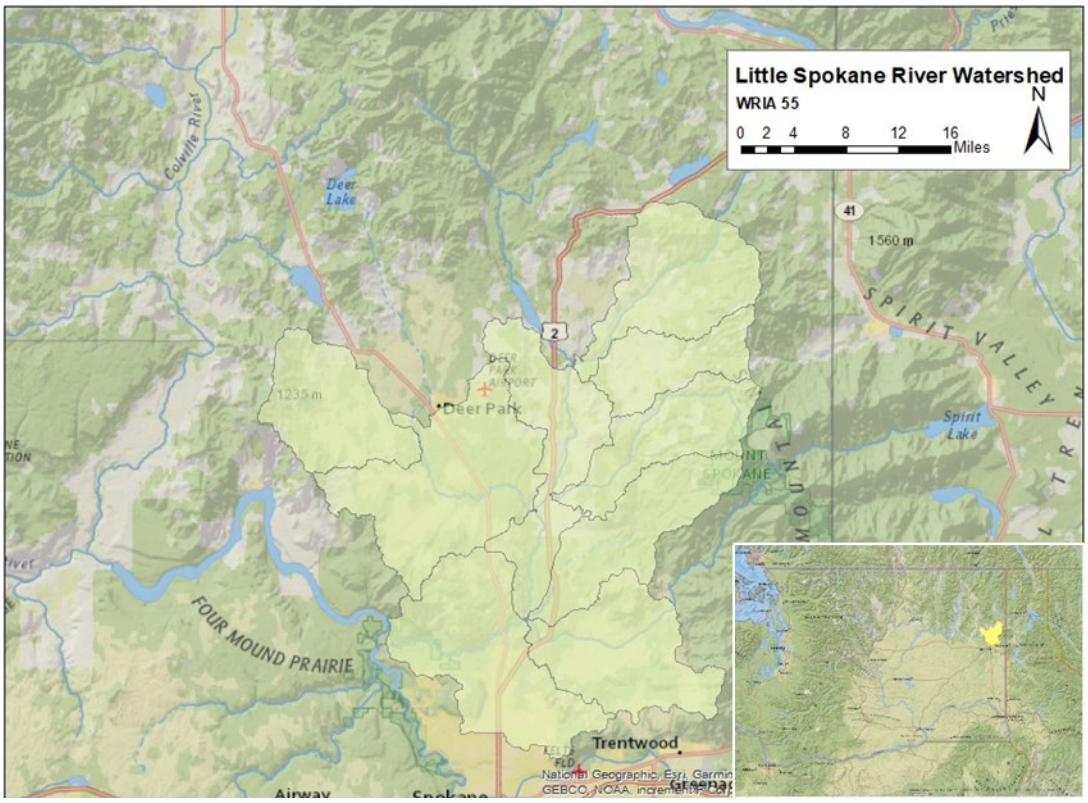


Figure 25. Little Spokane River watershed boundary.

Implementing: Little Spokane River TMDLs for bacteria, temperature, dissolved oxygen, total phosphorus, and pH

Summary/Context Information:

Ecology finalized the Little Spokane River DO, TP, and pH TMDL and submitted it to EPA in December 2020. The TMDL was approved by EPA in January 2021. Ecology is now focused on implementing this TMDL and the 2012 fecal coliform, temperature, and turbidity TMDL. The water quality impairments in the Little Spokane are primarily due to non-point pollution problems. The TMDL identifies riparian health as a key to meeting water quality standards. Implementation work is focused on protecting and restoring riparian areas and upland farming practices that deliver sediment to surface water.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Mailings:** ERO staff created and mailed 293 Earth Day postcards outlining best practices for water quality to landowners within the Dragoon Creek and Deadman Creek watersheds.

Financial Assistance

- **Continued to Implement The Inland Northwest Land Trust, Glen Tana Land Acquisition:** Ecology used $500,000 to protect 50 acres of property in the Spokane Watershed adjacent to the Glen Tana reach of the Little Spokane River. This property acquisition is part of a larger acquisition of 1,066 acres along the Little Spokane River.
- **Continued to Implement the Spokane Conservation District, *Spokane Riparian Establishment* Project ($283,500):** This project reestablishes flood plain function, sinuosity, and bank stability in Deadman Creek in the Little Spokane River Watershed. Issues with matching funds from a partner federal agency have delayed this project, but at the end of 2023 Ecology and Spokane Conservation District have successfully acquired enough project match to move forward with implementation.
- **Continued Implement The Lands Councils Riparian Restoration in the Greater Spokane River Watershed Project ($432,750):** This project enhances and restore riparian buffers, restore and stabilize streambanks and educate the public about water quality issues and the activities to address them.
- **Implemented The Lands Councils Riparian Restoration in the Little & Middle Spokane River Watersheds Project ($433,400):** This project enhances and restores riparian buffers, restores and stabilizes streambanks and educates the public about water quality issues and the activities to address them.

Partner Coordination

- **Continued Stakeholder Engagement:** Ecology continued building and maintaining positive relationships with existing stakeholders, such as working with our sister agency WDFW to develop a compliance schedule for development of a new fish hatchery facility. Engaged watershed stakeholders and positive partnerships are vital to cultivating a synergistic environment for achieving significant water quality improvements. Additionally, Ecology is committed to engage with the Spokane Tribe of Indians and local municipalities on water quality protection measures.
- **Participated in the Voluntary Stewardship Program:** Ecology continued to meet bi-monthly with stakeholders, such as the Spokane Tribe of Indians, local agricultural producers, Spokane Municipalities, CD's and interest groups to find solutions to meet water quality standards.
- **Worked on developing a Dragoon Creek Watershed Group:** Ecology staff has partnered with local citizens of this sub-watershed to share information on water quality goals and stream restoration funding opportunities.
- **Met with Watershed Partners to Build Funding Capacity:** Ecology met with watershed partners to plan and coordinate on implementing best management practices that improve and protect water quality. Ecology worked on maintaining existing funding opportunities as well as supporting and encouraging new funding opportunities for water quality improvement work.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

Performed Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation: Ecology staff documented non-point pollution problems in the watershed using the nonpoint program's watershed evaluation process. 5 nonpoint sites were prioritized from those sites using site specific criteria, such as the length of stream impacted and the severity of water quality concern.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Contacted at Least Five Priority Pollution Sites:** Approximately 5 new landowners with livestock or dryland agricultural water quality issues were contacted via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters were followed up with multiple phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure continued communication with the landowner.
- **Followed Up on Previous Years Priority Sites:** Landowners who have received technical assistance letters in previous years (same numbers as mentioned above), and who remain out of compliance, were contacted through additional phone calls and follow-up technical/financial assistance letters.
- **Developed Water Quality Protection Plans for Priority Sites:** Staff set up site visits and worked to develop BMP plans for at least five sites. The plans included riparian buffers designed to fully protect water quality.
- **Implemented Water Quality Protection Plans/Riparian Buffers:** Using a combination of technical/financial assistance as well as compliance tools, Ecology worked to ensure implementation of three miles of riparian buffer in the Little Spokane River watershed.
- **Sent Warning Letters to Priority Sites:** If a landowner has received multiple letters and continues to remain out of compliance, Ecology sent a warning letter with an expectation of response within 30 days. Ecology sent warning letters to approximately two sites.
- **Followed-up on Non-point WQ Complaints:** Staff continued to respond to any water quality complaints received from the public. Phone calls and/or letters may follow after staff have confirmed a water quality issue exists.

Monitoring Activities

- **Tracked Non-Point BMP Implementation:** Ecology staff has partnered with Gonzaga University students and The Lands Council to monitor the efficacy of BMP's, such as Beaver Dam Analog's (BDAs) to reduce total Phosphorus, increase sinuosity and bank stability.
- **Established Photo Monitoring Points:** Staff established photo monitoring points at pollution problem sites and documented riparian condition improvements over time.

Priority Watershed Name: Spokane River Watershed

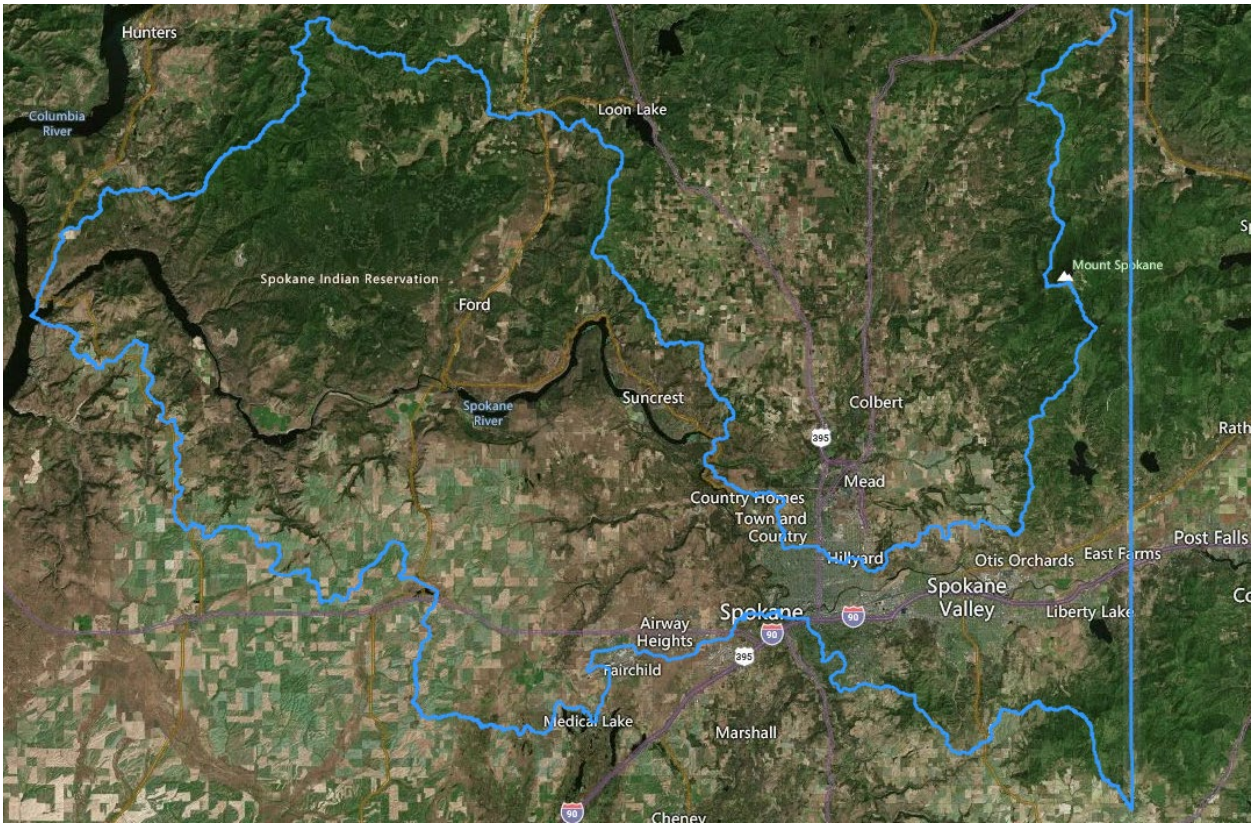


Figure 26. Spokane River watershed boundary within Washington state.

Implementing: Spokane River & Lake Spokane Dissolved Oxygen TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

Segments of the Spokane River and Lake Spokane (Long Lake) are impaired by low dissolved oxygen and harmful algal conditions that are strongly influenced by nutrient enrichment, especially phosphorus. Ecology adopted the Spokane River and Lake Spokane DO TMDL in 2010 to set waste load allocations and implementation expectations for nutrient and oxygen-demanding loads, with an explicit commitment to evaluate conditions roughly a decade into implementation.

Implementation has driven major point-source controls. The 10-year effectiveness reporting documents that point-source phosphorus discharges have been reduced on the order of ~91%, reflecting substantial treatment upgrades and operational controls among regulated dischargers. Consistent with those reductions, Ecology reports that since 2021, summertime total phosphorus entering Lake Spokane has typically been < 0.01 mg/L.

Even with point-source progress, nonpoint and tributary contributions remain central to the remaining load profile. Ecology's effectiveness summary highlights that nonpoint sources—particularly Hangman Creek—continue to represent the largest phosphorus contributions in key

periods, reinforcing the need for sustained tributary-focused implementation alongside continued point-source compliance.

Stakeholder engagement is a core component of TMDL implementation. Ecology works closely with entities such as the Spokane Tribe of Indians, Coeur d'Alene Tribe, City of Spokane, Liberty Lake Sewer and Water District, Inland Empire Paper Company, Avista Utilities, Spokane Conservation District, Spokane River Forum, and Spokane Riverkeeper to track compliance, advance nutrient-reduction strategies, and support watershed restoration efforts. Significant investments have been directed toward advanced wastewater treatment upgrades, riparian restoration, nonpoint source control projects, and long-term monitoring to evaluate dissolved oxygen trends and adaptive management needs

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Attended Spokane Conservation District Board Meetings:** to provide Hangman Creek and Spokane River implementation updates, discuss coordination for landowner outreach, align on cost-share and technical assistance delivery, and ensure messaging and project selection support nutrient and sediment reduction priorities.
- **One on One Discussions:** Ecology staff conducted two individual site visits with landowners and producers that were contacted for having water quality concerns in the Spokane watershed. These site visits typically last over an hour and contain meaningful and often difficult conversations on water quality issues. Although often challenging, these outreach activities can be incredibly beneficial for water quality education and implementation efforts.
- **Conservation District Education and Outreach Actions:** As provided in the following section, Ecology funds several projects that have an education and outreach component. Several education and outreach workshops and events took place because of this funding in the Spokane watershed in 2025.

Financial Assistance

- **Majority of financial assistance for nonpoint projects associated with Spokane watershed have been focused in the Hangman Creek watershed,** as the Hangman watershed is the highest contributor of nonpoint source pollution to the Spokane River - please see that section for more information. Ecology will begin engaging in nonpoint source pollution education and outreach next year in the Deep and Coulee Creek subbasins of the Spokane River watershed as well as conduct reconnaissance watershed evaluations in preparation for prioritizing nonpoint sites with water quality concerns in 2027 – often those efforts are the catalyst for financial assistance allocation in a watershed.

Partner Coordination

- **Spokane Salmon Recovery Collaborative:** Participated in regional coordination meetings to align TMDL implementation priorities with salmon recovery objectives, share updates on nutrient and temperature reduction efforts, and identify opportunities to integrate riparian restoration and floodplain reconnection projects within high-priority reaches.
- **Hangman Workgroup Meeting:** Engaged watershed partners to review ongoing implementation activities, discuss sediment and nutrient reduction strategies, coordinate upcoming restoration and assessment projects, and identify data gaps to inform adaptive management within the Hangman Creek watershed – the primary source of nonpoint pollution in the Spokane River watershed.
- **Meet and Greet with Conservation District and Spokane Riverkeeper:** Met with Spokane Conservation District and Spokane Riverkeeper to discuss current and planned TMDL implementation actions, strengthen collaboration on nonpoint source control efforts, and improve communication pathways for community outreach and watershed engagement.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Performed Reconnaissance Watershed Evaluation of Spokane Watershed Tributaries:** Annual surveys were conducted during the early spring season to identify livestock and dryland agricultural water pollution issues. Work was focused primarily on major tributaries to the Spokane such as Chamokane, and Deep and Coulee Creeks.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Followed up on Nonpoint WQ Complaints:** Staff continued to respond to any water quality complaints or technical assistance requests received from the public. Phone calls and/or letters may follow if staff have confirmed a water quality issue exists.

Monitoring Activities

- **Began Basin Station Monitoring on Chamokane Creek:** Initiated Basin Station Monitoring on Chamokane Creek to establish a consistent, repeatable dataset for tracking flow conditions and core water-quality parameters in support of tributary assessment and implementation planning. Monitoring includes routine field measurements and periodic nutrient sampling to inform seasonal pattern evaluation and progress tracking over time.

Priority Watershed Name: Upper Colville River Watershed

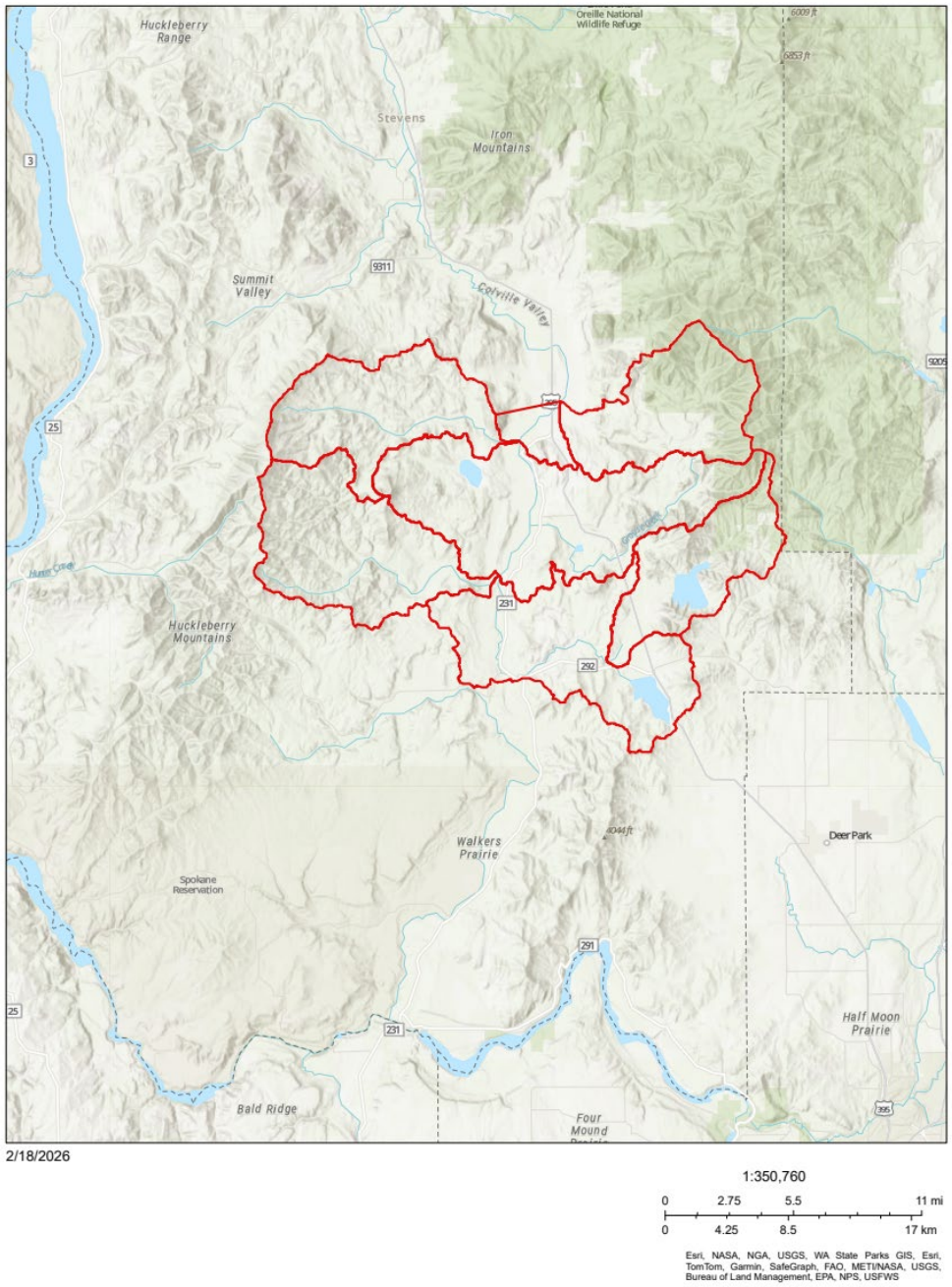


Figure 27. Upper Colville River watershed.

Implementing: Upper Colville River Straight to Implementation Strategy

Summary/Context Info

The Upper Colville River cleanup effort builds upon the Colville River Watershed Fecal Coliform Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load, which was developed and approved by EPA in 2005 to address bacteria impairments in the watershed.

Since that time, additional waterbodies have been added to the EPA 303(d) list for bacteria and other pollutants, including elevated water temperature, low dissolved oxygen, high pH and nutrients. Ecology's Nonpoint Program is now developing a Straight-to-Implementation (STI) Plan to proactively address both existing and newly identified impairments. This approach focuses on on-the-ground implementation, landowner outreach, technical assistance, and funding to accelerate water quality improvements.

The effort has included:

- Initial watershed evaluations beginning in 2023
- Follow-up evaluations in 2024 and 2025
- Ongoing outreach and site-specific implementation work
- Drafting of the STI strategy beginning in 2024–2025

The primary focus is the Upper Colville River watershed in Stevens County, including: Colville River**,** Deer Creek, Sheep Creek, Hoffman Creek, Jumpoff Joe Creek, Bulldog Creek, Beity Creek, Waitts Lake Creek, Cottonwood Creek, Huckleberry Creek

Most pollution sources are nonpoint in nature, primarily associated with livestock operations, forestry activities, and other agricultural practices affecting riparian areas and streambanks.

This effort is being implemented in coordination with federal, state, tribal, and local partners, including: Stevens County Conservation District, Stevens County Natural Resources, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Washington State Department of Natural Resources, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Spokane Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Mailings:** ERO staff created postcards introducing Ecology's work in the watershed, but distribution to landowners was pushed to 2026.
- **Provided Quarterly Updates** to legislators, commissioners, Tribes, and partners.
- **Host Monthly Upper Colville STI Interested Party meetings**: to provide progress updates and create space for partner input and coordination.

Financial Assistance

- **Shared Information**: about financial assistance opportunities to watershed partners, including Water Quality Combined Funding Program (WQC), Direct Implementation Funding (DIF), as applicable, and the Terry Hussmen Grant.
- **Sent Funding Reminders:** to watershed partners at least 2 times annually (pre-WQC application cycle and DIF round).
- **Conducted Direct Landowner Outreach:** to prioritized sites identified during watershed evaluations, referring 11 landowners to WQC or DIF funding.

Partner Coordination

- **Coordinated regularly with Stevens County Conservation District** (CD), County Commissioners, Tribes, and HQ Nonpoint staff to address priority nonpoint pollution concerns identified through watershed evaluations.
- **Attended and Participated in CD Board Meetings**, project advisory/implementation committees (PIC groups), and related local workgroups to share water quality data, discuss site-specific concerns, and align implementation strategies.
- **Facilitated Monthly UC STI Interested Party Meetings** (beginning October 2025) to provide progress updates and create space for partner input and coordination.
- **Provided Quarterly High-Level Updates** to elected officials and partner agencies to ensure transparency and alignment on pollution reduction priorities.
- **Coordinated with Partners** (CD, NRCS, Tribes, WDFW, DNR, Ducks Unlimited, County NR) to connect landowners to technical assistance and cost-share opportunities.
- **Incorporated Feedback** from Stevens County Commissioners, CD, Tribes, and interested parties during quarterly and monthly coordination meetings.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Performed Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation:** During at least one watershed evaluation, Ecology staff documented non-point pollution problems in the watershed using the nonpoint program watershed evaluation process. Nonpoint sites were prioritized from those sites using site specific criteria, such as the length of stream impacted and the severity of water quality concern.
- **Utilized the Ambient Water Quality Monitoring Data** to evaluate trends and confirm conditions in waterbody segments listed as Category 5 (303(d)) impaired waters under the Clean Water Act.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Issued Technical Assistance (TA) Letters** in response to identified or reported nonpoint pollution concerns within the STI boundary.
- **Conducted Follow-up Communications** (phone, email, in-person meetings) to clarify water quality requirements and outline voluntary compliance pathways.
- **Performed Site Visits** to review conditions, discuss corrective actions, and initiate compliance planning.
- **Worked with Landowners to Develop Site-Specific Compliance Plans** (e.g., livestock exclusion, manure management improvements, erosion control, riparian protection, operational changes).
- **Monitored Progress on Existing Prioritized Sites:**
    - 11 sites were sent TA letters (9-TA1, 2-TA2) and 10 of 11 sites are progressing toward compliance through voluntary communication and follow-up.

- 5 in-person visits conducted; compliance planning initiated and corrective action plans expected.
- 3 additional site meetings planned to initiate compliance planning.
- 2 sites resolved due to property sale and removal of the polluting operation (currently in compliance).
- 1 site potentially moving toward enforcement in late 2026 if voluntary compliance is not achieved.

Monitoring Activities

- **Coordinated with Partners:** Stevens County Conservation District, Tribes, and other partners to share available monitoring data (e.g., temperature, bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH).
- **Used Monitoring Results**: to help identify impaired reaches, prioritize follow-up sites, and evaluate potential pollutant sources.
- **Utilized Existing Ecology Ambient Monitoring Data** and partner monitoring efforts to inform watershed assessments and STI development:

Priority Watershed Name: Hawk Creek Watershed

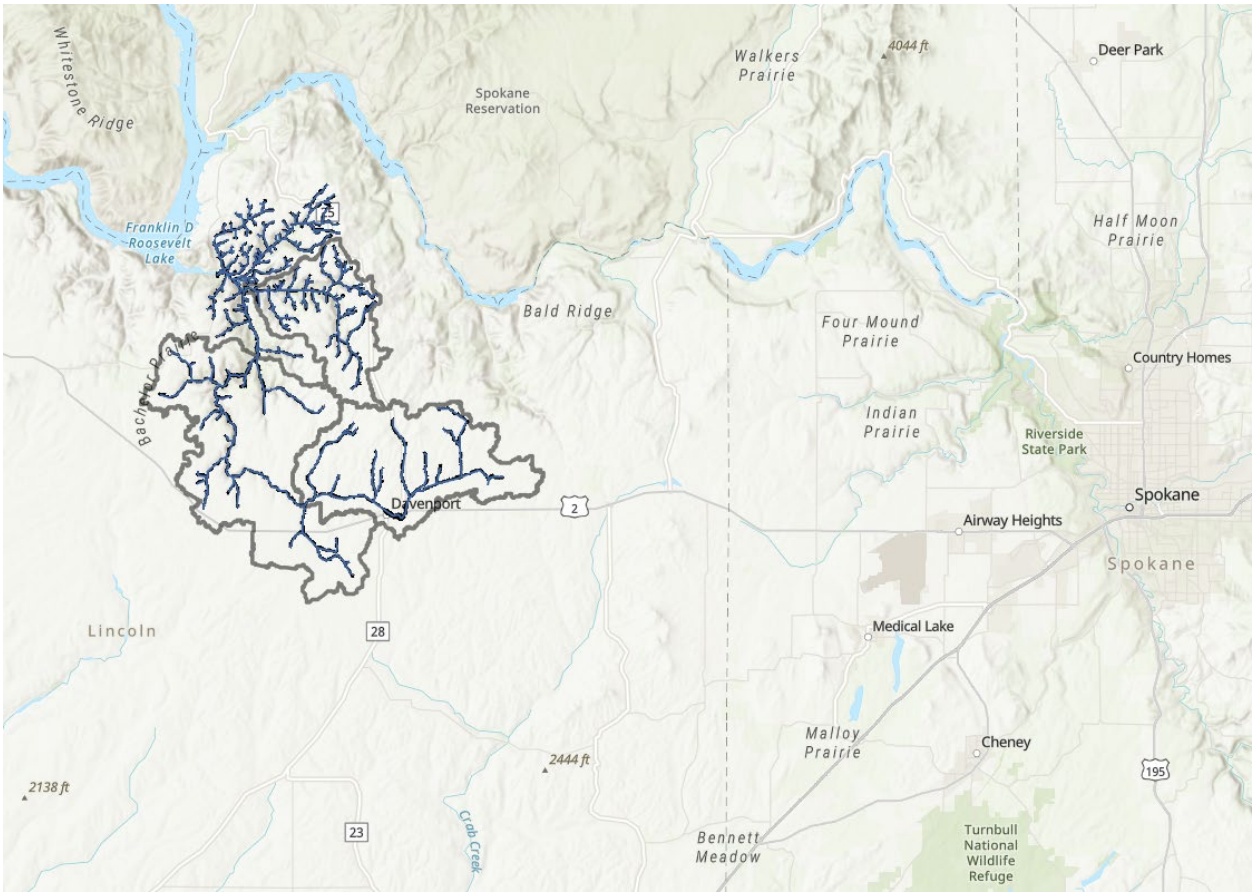


Figure 28. Map of Hawk Creek watershed boundary.

Implementing: Hawk Creek Straight to Implementation Plan

Hawk Creek is 303d listed for fecal coliform, bacteria, temperature, low dissolved oxygen, low pH, and turbidity. STI in progress to address tillage practices, livestock access to streams, and lack of riparian buffers, among other nonpoint pollution sources.

Hawk Creek Straight to Implementation plan was started in 2025 and completion is anticipated in 2026. After spring 2025 watershed evaluations, Ecology sent the first TA letters to landowners in the Hawk Creek watershed. Five letters were sent and contact was made with four landowners. Two livestock site landowners decided to implement BMPs. Lincoln County Conservation District is on the draft offer list for a 2027 project to construct cattle exclusion fences, restore riparian habitat, and build an offsite water station on both properties. The other two prioritized sites agreed to rotate a very small number of livestock (2 or 3 animals) they own to other pastures and replant along their riparian zones.

Additionally, we completed the fourth year of a direct seed project. Four thousand acres and 17 wheat growers used conservation tillage and direct seed program. Lincoln County Conservation District is included in the combined fund draft offer list for a 2027 Direct Seed project.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- As part of the Ecology funded project, Lincoln County Conservation District (LCCD) completed an outreach plan, including a list of events, dates, publications and resources shared online and in-person.
- Publications in local newspapers, newsletters, and on LCCD's social media/web pages were used to share information about the direct seed program, soil health, alternative cropping, and other related programs. Outreach events attended by LCCD staff were used as opportunities to have a booth with free educational and contact materials for the direct seed program.
- Highlights from Lincoln County Conservation District education and outreach efforts include wheat week and trout in the classroom where students learn about conservation tillage and clean water BMPs for streams in the area. Lincoln county also had a booth at the first annual Crab Creek Summit. There were presentations from farmers, conservation organizations, government entities, and Tribes all working toward cleaner Crab Creek water.

Financial Assistance

- Lincoln County CD completed the fourth and final year of a ($436,000) direct seed project. Four thousand acres and 17 wheat growers used the conservation tillage and direct seed program in Hawk Creek and Crab Creek.
- Lincoln County CD applied for 3 projects during the FY 2027 application period. They are on the draft offer list for two projects. One ($500,000) project in Hawk Creek

Watershed is to construct 14,000 ft of cattle exclusion fence, restore 22 acres riparian area, and install offsite water stations at two different landowners. The second project ($500,00) on the draft offer list is a similar direct seed/ no till project to the one that closed in 2025. The goal is to enroll 15 producers and 500 acres per property to try direct seed on their property.

Partner Coordination

- Lincoln County Conservation District has been a valuable partner in outreach and meeting with landowners. Two landowners have agreed to exclusion fence, riparian restoration, and offsite water projects funded by Ecology. Ecology has worked closely with LCCD on the details of these projects and corrective action a dredging site.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Conducted seasonal watershed evaluations (Spring and Fall annually) in the Hawk Creek Watershed to assess current water quality conditions, land use impacts, and implementation progress.
- Documented site-specific conditions including erosion, tillage practices, sediment delivery, riparian condition, livestock access, stormwater inputs, and other nonpoint pollution indicators.
- Identified and prioritized sites requiring follow-up based on observed pollutant risks and potential for water quality improvement.
- Coordinated with HQ Nonpoint and landowners to evaluate feasibility of corrective actions and voluntary implementation opportunities.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Five livestock sites had documented livestock access to Hawk Creek and were approved for prioritization. These sites were sent TA 1 letters. One site has proved unreachable, we are still attempting. Four of the sites contacted Ecology right away. Three of the livestock producers agreed to a meeting with Lincoln County Conservation District and Ecology. One site with 3 cows would not allow a meeting but talked to Ecology and Lincoln County Conservation District at length on the phone about managing livestock access and reducing impact to the riparian corridor. One prioritized site had one horse that agreed to rotate to other pastures more regularly and revegetate the riparian zone on his own. Two of the largest cattle producers agreed to the construction of exclusion fence, riparian restoration, offsite water facility and ecosystem services payments.

Monitoring Activities

- 2009 monitoring identified Hawk Creek 303D listings of temperature, dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform, E.coli and pH. Utilized the ambient water quality monitoring data to evaluate trends and confirm conditions in waterbody segments listed as Category 5 (303(d)) impaired waters under the Clean Water Act.

- The Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) set up a basin station from October 2024 to June 2025. Data is awaiting analysis and uploading to the Water Quality Atlas.

Priority Watershed: Moses Lake Watershed



Figure 29. Map of Moses Lake watershed boundary.

Implementing: Other Locally Led Partnership

Ecology is a member of the Moses Lake Watershed Council (MLWC). The Columbia Basin Conservation District (CBCD, formerly the Grant County Conservation District) leads the collaborative entity, formed in 2018 with the purpose of facilitating locally led water quality improvements in the Moses Lake Watershed. The MLWC has grown to include a diverse group of local, state, and federal stakeholders, including the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), Moses Lake Irrigation and Rehabilitation District, Grant County Health District, City of Moses Lake, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), along with representation from local tourism, businesses, and concerned citizens.

The MLWC was formed in direct response to persistent harmful algal blooms during summer months that impair the public's use of Moses Lake and poses a great risk to public health and the health of pets and livestock. The MLWC is building on several decades of efforts studying Moses Lake's poor water quality. Work conducted by the University of Washington and the EPA Clean Lakes Project in the 1980's generated a large body of data and recommendations for

improving water quality. However, long-term management plans for the lake and watershed were not developed or implemented. Ecology issued a draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan in 2002, but the TMDL process was suspended in 2004 due to a lack of political and community support. Instead of resuming the TMDL process, Ecology helped initiate a locally driven effort in 2019 to address sources of phosphorus pollution.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Implemented Public Information and Outreach Plan:** Ecology and partners continued to implement an Information and Outreach Plan, including developing an "algae tracking" website with information on cyanobacteria and how to report an algae bloom, along with information and resources for residents to take action to protect the lake.
- **Conservation District Education and Outreach Actions:** As provided in the following section, Ecology funds projects that have an education and outreach component. Several education and outreach workshops and events took place because of this funding in the Moses Lake watershed in 2025. Ecology's nonpoint education and outreach specialist and watershed implementation lead operated an information booth at the 2025 Moses Lake State of the Lake community workshop in September.

Financial Assistance

- **Implemented the fourth year of Moses Lake Shoreline Restoration and Nutrient Reduction Project ($249,979):** This project will develop and implement a shoreline nutrient assessment technical assistance program for shoreline property owners, construct a shoreline restoration exhibit, conduct education and outreach activities, and continue to support a groundwater study of phosphorus contributions to Moses Lake and identify mitigation techniques.
- **Columbia Basin Conservation District implemented the third year of a community project funding Moses Lake water quality ($3,100,000):** Ecology staff helped the Watershed Council secure federal funding for improving Moses Lake's water quality to reduce occurrences of harmful algal blooms. EutroPHIX administered the first treatment of Lanthanum-modified bentonite clay and other technologies in deeper areas of the Rocky Ford Arm to prevent the release of phosphorus and mitigate approximately 10,000 pounds of internal phosphorus loading.
- **Implemented Septic System conversion and servicing project ($453,000):** Ecology staff helped manage the grant with Columbia Basin Conservation District. Fourteen homes along Moses Lake have signed up to be converted from Septic to sewer service. Eighteen homes along the lake have signed up to have their septic system serviced. This project will also fund the construction of 4,000 feet of riparian buffer along Rocky Ford Arm of Moses Lake.

Partner Coordination:

- Participated in the Moses Lake Watershed Council: The MLWC meets monthly. Subcommittees met outside the regular meeting schedule to evaluate emerging technologies, data and monitoring, information and outreach, grants, and legislative activities. A representative from Ecology staff participated in most meetings in 2025. The Council continues to work on water quality improvement efforts.
- Provided two updated Moses Lake hatchery plans (Trout Lodge and Columbia Basin) with details on how they would reduce phosphorus output.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- Columbia Basin Conservation District has been coordinating cleanup efforts through the Moses Lake Watershed Council. Reducing phosphorus and Harmful Algae Blooms is a primary goal of the watershed council.
- In lieu of traditional watershed evaluations, staff worked with the Moses Lake Watershed Council to identify nutrient contributions to Moses Lake.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- Ensured Troutlodge Agreed Order is Implemented: Ecology continued to work with Troutlodge Inc. to implement a 2020 Agreed Order for their two fish hatcheries (ELM 1 and ELM 2) on Rocky Ford Creek. The Order requires Troutlodge to evaluate potential sources of nutrient loading to Rocky Ford Creek from the hatcheries. Since issuing the Order, Troutlodge has developed a Quality Assurance Project Plan and submitted annual monitoring reports based on nutrient and flow data collected. Under the new Finfish General Permit (reissued in October 2021), Troutlodge has now expanded their sampling to include additional nutrient parameters. Their first full year of new data collection occurred in 2023.

Monitoring Activities

- Monitoring of phosphorus in Moses Lake was conducted by Eutrophix in coordination with their lanthanum-based phosphorus sequestration treatment project. Monitoring activities supported evaluation of in-lake phosphorus concentrations and treatment effectiveness in reducing internal phosphorus loading.

Priority Watershed Name: Whitman Snake River Tributaries

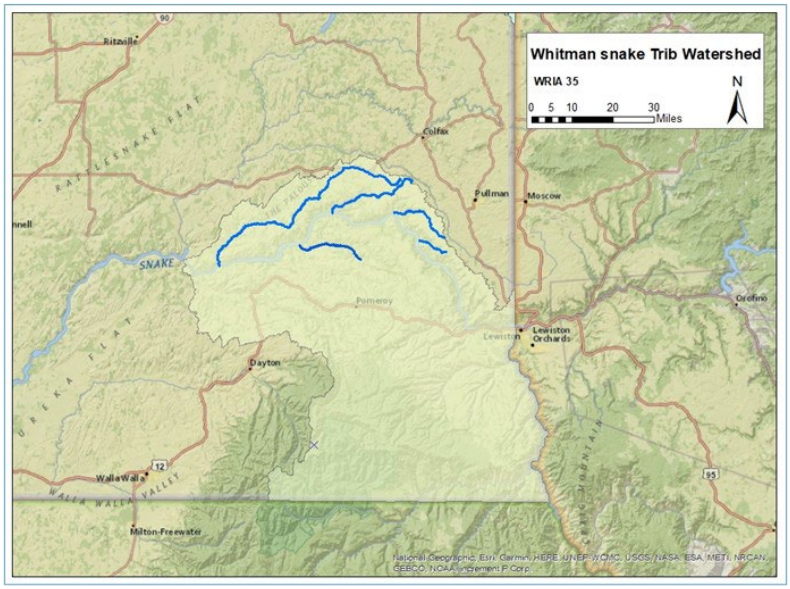


Figure 30. Map showing Snake River Tributaries in Whitman County.

Implementing: Steptoe Creek STI, Early Implementation Actions for Alkali Flat Creek STI (In development).

A number of northern Snake River tributaries in Whitman County have been identified as Category 5 on the Water Quality Assessment. Some watersheds currently have established Straight to Implementation Strategies in place (Steptoe Creek) and others currently in development (Penewawa Creek and Alkali Flat Creek). These northern tributaries are largely dominated by agricultural land-use with livestock issues often impacting the riparian habitat. Ecology has continued to work with local stakeholders through project implementation and technical assistance to further combat these issues.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Partnered with the Whitman Conservation District on Outreach to Students**: District staff visited K-12th grade classrooms giving presentations on restoration practices while university students participated in volunteer planting events.

Financial Assistance

- **Implement Whitman Conservation District's *Mud Flat Creek Restoration* ($500,000):** This grant supports water quality in Mud Flat Creek which is a main tributary of Alkali Flat Creek. Livestock exclusion fencing, riparian buffer establishment, and low tech bank stabilization will be implemented along with engineered high use areas to protect the creek.

- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District *Alkali Flat Creek Property Protection* ($1,000,000):** This project will protect 437 acres adjacent to Alkali Flat Creek. Preserving this property is important for showcasing conservation practices that promote soil health and reestablish and protect native prairie, riparian species, anadromous fish, and water quality.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District, *Supporting Sustainable Ranching on Snake River Tributaries* ($500,000):** The PCD is working with livestock producers along both Steptoe Creek and Wawawai Canyon to install livestock BMPs, increase monitoring, and provide education/outreach to local livestock producers. The grant provides funding to help install riparian buffers at livestock priority pollution sites identified by Ecology staff.
- **Finished implementing the Whitman Conservation District *Alkali Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement* ($280,000):** This project restored 21 acres of riparian buffer and 9,250 stream feet across the Alkali Flat Creek watershed. In addition to riparian plantings, 40 post assisted log structures were installed and the conservation district provided education and outreach to the community.

Partner Coordination

- **Hosted Quarterly Meetings with the Whitman Conservation District:** Ecology worked closely with the staff of Whitman CD to identify issues, coordinate plan/projects, and provide technical assistance to the public in the region.
- **Hosted Meetings with the Palouse Conservation District:** While much of the work of the Palouse CD revolves around the Palouse Watershed, their district falls within the boundaries of both Steptoe Creek and Wawawai Canyon. Ecology worked extensively with PCD staff through various project implementation, technical assistance, and events.
- **Participated with the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SRSRB):** Ecology consistently worked with various stakeholders involved in salmon recovery efforts in the region, including Whitman County Snake River tributaries. As a lead entity voting member and a member of the Regional Technical Team, Ecology assists with the SRSRB annual grant round and provides technical assistance for water quality issues as they relate to salmon recovery and habitat restoration**.**

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Performed Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation:** Annual surveys were conducted during the early spring season that identified livestock water pollution issues. Work was focused on a majority of Snake River tributaries including Alkali Flat Creek, Penawawa Creek, Almota Creek, Wawawai Canyon, and their associated tributaries.
- **Prioritize Pollution Sites for Assistance**: Sites are evaluated along with other Snake River watershed tributaries to determine new technical and financial letters to be sent out to landowners with water quality pollution issues.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Ensure Final Steptoe Order Implementation**: An administrative order was sent to a landowner in the Steptoe Creek Watershed in 2019 addressing ongoing livestock pollution issues. Since the order was sent, Ecology, in partnership with Palouse CD, has developed a plan to address the site. Most of the riparian buffer and other elements have been implemented. Additional livestock exclusion fencing and riparian planting were conducted in 2022. Except for emergency water gaps, livestock exclusion was achieved in 2023. Work and improvements under an existing grant are ongoing.
- **Contact New Priority Pollution Sites for Assistance:** Three new landowners with livestock water quality issues were contacted via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters are followed up with multiple phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure BMP plans are developed and implemented.
- **Follow-Up with Landowners of Previous Priority Sites:** Three landowners who had received technical assistance letters in previous years and who remain out of compliance were contacted again through additional phone calls and follow-up technical/financial assistance letters. If landowner has received multiple letters and continued to remain out of compliance, ERO may send a warning letter.

Monitoring Activities

- **Established Photo Monitoring Points:** Staff established photo monitoring points at pollution problem sites and document riparian condition improvements over time.
- **Continued to partner with Palouse CD on Monitoring Work:** Palouse CD has taken the lead on a large monitoring effort on the Palouse watershed and Steptoe Creek. Ecology will continue to partner with Palouse CD on that effort.

Priority Watershed Name: Blue Mountain Snake River Tributaries

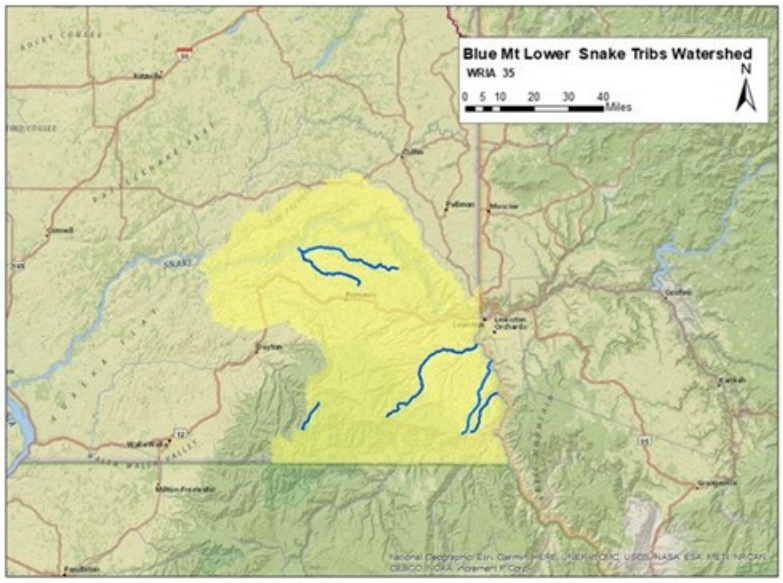


Figure 31. Map showing Snake River Tributaries (Asotin Creek, Alpowa Creek, Deadman Creek, Meadow Creek, Tenmile Creek and Couse Creek).

Implementing: Pataha Creek TMDL in development, Asotin Creek STI and Alpowa Creek, Deadman and Meadow Creeks, Tenmile Creek, and Couse Creek 4b projects.

The Blue Mountain Snake River tributaries comprise all the Lower Snake River tributaries ranging across Columbia, Garfield, and Asotin Counties. These drainages primarily originate in the Blue Mountains or foothills surrounding the region. The headwaters and upstream sections are often forested with minimal land-use and switching to agriculturally dominated lower reaches. Livestock grazing remains an ongoing concern throughout the watershed. Ecology has initiated 4b Straight to Implementation strategies in these watersheds, provided the lack of point sources and significant progress is being made to address well understood nonpoint pollution issues. Ecology is actively working in these watersheds to continue to implement projects and work with stakeholders to address these issues. In addition to implementation, TMDL data collection was completed for Pataha Creek that investigated bacteria, dissolved oxygen, and pH levels. Data collection for these parameters, as well as turbidity and temperature, occurred over a full water year.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Active Participant of Snake River Salmon Recovery Board Meetings**: Ecology staff presented and assisted with local project stakeholders on salmon recovery projects that interact with water quality BMPs. Staff assisted with identifying water quality improvements for projects looking to protect and restore salmonid habitat.
- **Partnered with the Asotin Conservation District on Outreach Efforts:** District staff will continue to produce monthly newsletters, flyers, and articles pertaining to water quality protection and BMP implementation for various groups throughout Asotin County. The district will continue to host public events through workshops and open houses focused on water quality education.
- **Presented update on TMDL data collection for Pataha Creek**: Ecology staff presented current work efforts on Pataha Creek's TMDL development at a Snake River Salmon Recovery Regional Technical Team meeting. This presentation focused on data collection, preliminary trends, and next steps.

Financial Assistance

- **Implemented the Asotin County Conservation District *Water Quality Enhancement Project* ($333,333):** This grant implements various BMPs across 40,000 stream feet of Asotin County tributaries including planting 35,835 trees and installing 20,677 feet of fencing. Over 230 in-stream structures were installed, and 4 outreach events were sponsored. This grant was active through January 2026.
- **Negotiated and started Asotin County Conservation District Water Quality Enhancement and Monitoring ($478,511):** The CD will work with landowners along

waterways in Asotin County to plan and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to improve water quality. BMPs implemented will include riparian buffers, fencing, off-steam watering, streambank stabilization, instream structures, and grazing management plans. This project supports implementation at priority sites identified via Ecology watershed evaluations. Water quality monitoring where BMPs are implemented will be conducted, and targeted water quality education and outreach to the local community will also occur.

Partner Coordination

- **Participated on the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board (SRSRB) Regional Technical Team (RTT)**: Ecology consistently works with various stakeholders involved in salmon recovery efforts in the region. As a lead entity voting member and a member of the RTT, Ecology assists with the SRSRB annual grant round and provides technical assistance for water quality issues as they relate to salmon recovery and habitat restoration.
- **Held Pataha Creek's TMDL Partnership Group Meeting:** The Snake River Salmon Recovery Board's RTT group is serving in an advisory role, helping to ensure that the TMDL's Implementation Plan will be successful. Another meeting was held, and brief updates given to the group as they arose throughout the year.
- **Participated in Snake River Local Working Group Meeting**: Ecology staff participated in this basin wide working group focused on identifying local priorities for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).
- **Hosted Asotin County Conservation District Coordination Meetings:** Ecology works closely with the staff at Asotin CD to identify issues, coordinate plan/projects, and provide technical assistance to the public in Asotin County.
- **Hosted Pomeroy Conservation District Coordination Meetings:** Ecology works closely with the staff at Pomeroy CD to identify issues, coordinate plan/projects, and provide technical assistance to the public in Garfield County.
- **Partnered with the Columbia Conservation District:** Ecology is developing a working relationship with CD staff to identify issues, coordinator plan/projects, and provide technical assistance to the public in Columbia County.
- **Attended Columbia and Snake Rivers Temperature TMDL Implementation Plan Advisory Committee meetings:** Listened into advisory committee meetings to help keep partners up to date on progress. Facilitated the author of the Implementation Plan's attendance at a Snake River Salmon Recovery Board meeting to provide the Technical Team with an opportunity to ask them questions directly.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Performed Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation:** Annual surveys were conducted during the early spring season to identify livestock water pollution issues. Work was focused on a majority of Snake River tributaries including Deadman Creek, Meadow Creek, Alpowa Creek, Pataha Creek and associated tributaries.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Followed-up on Non-point WQ Complaints:** Staff responded to three water quality complaints received from the public. Phone calls and/or letters were made to confirm a water quality issue existed, and to help resolve the issue.
- **Contact New Priority Pollution Sites for Assistance:** Three new landowners with livestock water quality issues were contacted via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters were followed up with multiple phone calls (if contact number was available) throughout the year to ensure BMP plans are developed and implemented.

Monitoring Activities

- Completed TMDL Data Collection for Pataha Creek: A monitoring effort on Pataha Creek was completed in September 2025 that compiled data for a full water year. Data was collected on current levels of bacteria, dissolved oxygen, and pH. Additional information on temperature and turbidity was also measured. The data collected will be compared to previously documented impairments and help to identify the drivers of impairment. Updated water quality data will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of BMP implementation, and direct where future focus is needed. Analysis and modeling of the newly collected data was started.

Priority Watershed Name: Walla Walla River Watershed

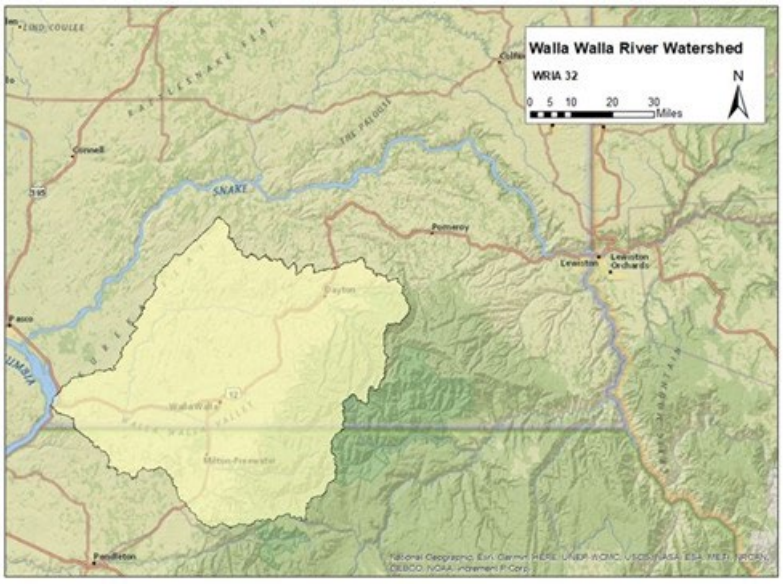


Figure 32. Map of the Walla Walla River watershed.

Implementing: Walla Walla River Watershed Multiparameter TMDLs (Bacteria, Temperature, pH, DO, Toxics).

Ecology's Eastern Region Office is an active participant in the collaborative Walla Walla Water 2050 Strategic Plan. This effort is aimed at balancing the basin's ecosystem health with the human water uses within the basin. Ecology's Water Quality program continues to implement the Walla Walla Watershed Multiparameter TMDL Water Quality Implementation Plan, and connect the goals of the TMDL to those within the Walla Walla 2050 process. Outside of this effort, an effectiveness monitoring study was completed in 2021 for the watershed. Ecology has been active throughout the watershed through collaborating with stakeholders, funding restoration projects, and identifying new and ongoing water quality concern sites through annual watershed evaluations. The evaluations identify parcels with pollution problems. Regional staff then work with landowners and local partners to implement appropriately sized riparian buffers.

Priority Actions Completed in 2025:

Education and Outreach

- **Attended Conservation District Board Meetings:** The CD boards are made up of area farmers and ranchers. Staff attend a board meeting to inform the CD board of on-going water quality work in the Walla Walla watershed, collaborate on project implementation, and answer questions on efforts to implement Walla Walla 2050 prioritized actions.
- **Partnered with Kooskooskie Commons on Farm BMP Outreach:** Ecology will partner on enhanced technical assistance outreach for environmental farm practices and riparian buffer management in the Walla Walla watershed. Kooskooskie Commons and Ecology will hold various meetings, workshops, and tours in the region.
- **Participated in Policy, Funding and Outreach (PFO):** PFO is a subgroup within the Walla Walla 2050 effort. This work group is comprised of local organizations and interested community members, focused on implementing public engagement and education.
- **Presented program overview to the Walla Walla 2050 Implementation Working Group:** Ecology partnered with Washington Department of Agriculture to present an overview water quality related efforts occurring within the watershed. The presentation covered efforts to address nonpoint source pollution, as well as results from groundwater monitoring and resources available.

Financial Assistance

- **Began implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Touchet River Mile 35 Restoration – Phase 1 Project ($500,000):** Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 1 of a restoration project on a one-mile reach of the Touchet River west of Prescott, WA. Phase 1 restoration activities include installing in-stream and bank bio-engineered log structures, enforced log jams, and other large woody material; as well as planting bank vegetation. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain

inundation, and sediment deposition, which will improve water and salmonoid habitat quality.

- **Began implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Lower Mill Creek River Mile 4.0 – Phase 1 Project ($500,000):** Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 1 of a restoration project on a 1.5-mile stretch of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Walla Walla River, thereby improving its ecological function and addressing existing water quality impairments. Phase 1 restoration activities include installing various logjam and habitat structures, and planting riparian and wetland buffers. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain inundation, and sediment deposition.
- **Began implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Touchet River Mile 42 Restoration – Phase 1 Project ($480,000):** Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 1 of a restoration project on a 1.4-mile reach of the Touchet River west of Waitsburg, WA. Phase 1 restoration activities include installing enforced log jams, pile fields, and other large woody material; completing side channel pilot cuts; and planting bank vegetation. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain inundation, sediment deposition, and side channels, all which will improve water and salmonoid habitat quality.
- **Continued implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Canopy Cover Improvements on the Touchet River – Phase 2 Project ($312,864):** Active through June 2026, this grant works to address temperature issues in the Touchet River by removing invasive false indigo and planting 2.5 miles of riparian vegetation.
- **Completed implementation of the Walla Walla County Conservation District, *Mill Creek Debris Removal Project* ($49,750):** This grant was funded by water quality penalties money, and was a priority to the local community. The grant removed and disposed of an abandoned house that was washed into Mill Creek following a destructive flood in 2020. The house debris in the channel was continuing to deposit waste downstream, and was originally reported as an ERTS that became a collaborative effort to address.
- **Completed implementation of the Walla Walla County Conservation District, *Dry Creek Riparian Enhancement and Erosion Control* ($54,307):** This grant was funded by water quality penalties money, and helped to address severe bank erosion where floodplain reconnection is not able to occur. A gap in riparian vegetation left a section of Dry Creek vulnerable to erosion, this grant funded a soft structure to stabilize the bank and plant a woody riparian buffer to protect the channel integrity into the future. This project site is a historic CREP contract, and has good floodplain connection downstream. Where the erosion was occurring was a threat to water quality due to the adjacent land use.
- **Started implementation of the Emergency South Fork Russell Creek Post-Fire Planting ($50,000):** This grant is funded as an emergency grant from water quality penalties. Approximately 39 acres along 2.5 stream miles of previously forested riparian buffer that burned in July 2025 will undergo stabilization plantings. This critical area planting uses a

combination of hydro-seeding, broadcast seeding, and drill seeding to control erosion and mitigate agricultural runoff.

Partner Coordination

- **Participated in Walla Walla 2050 Efforts:** Ecology's Office of the Columbia River are partnering with local stakeholders in the Walla Walla Watershed to develop new ways to protect water resources, water quality, and habitat. Ecology staff participated in workgroups and drafting of plans focused on water quality aspects of this effort.
- **Hosted Meetings with the Walla Walla County Conservation District:** Ecology staff work closely with the conservation district staff in planning and implementing Ecology grant funded projects.
- **Participated on the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board Technical Team:** Ecology works with various stakeholders involved in salmon recovery efforts in Walla Walla. As a lead entity voting member and a member of the Regional Technical Team, Ecology assists with the SRSRB annual grants and provides technical assistance to the group for water quality issues.
- **Participated in Snake River Local Working Group Meeting**: Ecology staff participated in this basin wide working group focused on identifying local priorities for the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS).
- **Collaborated with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife:** Ecology staff worked closely with Habitat Biologists to address water quality concerns in the area that were identified via the Environmental Reporting Tracking System.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation

- **Performed Annual Watershed Evaluations:** Surveys were conducted during the early spring season of 2025 that identified water pollution issues resulting from crop production. Work was focused on the highly erodible soils identified in the TMDL Implementation Plan. These soil types are located north of the Walla Walla River and east of the Touchet River.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities

- **Followed up on Non-point Complaint Sites:** Contacted two valid complaint sites with non-point pollution issues and scheduled site visits to provide technical and financial assistance. Phone calls and/or letters followed with the goal of developing a plan for water quality protection and implementing the plan.
- **Contacted Two Priority Pollution Sites:** Two new landowners with water quality issues resulting from crop production were contacted via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters were followed up with multiple phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure continued communication with the landowner.

Monitoring Activities

- **Partnered with Kooskooskie Commons to Collect Baseline Water Quality Data:** Yellowhawk Creek, Caldwell Creek, Russell Creek, Whitney and Lasiter Spring Creek, and the West Little Walla Walla Creek were monitored. The hope is to continue examining this unique watershed and spring upwelling effects on temperature, DO, pH, conductivity, turbidity, and fecal coliform.

3.1.3 Complaint Response

Nonpoint specialists across the state use a similar approach to complaint response as in watershed evaluation work. In contrast to watershed evaluation work, in which nonpoint staff have focal watersheds they work within, staff respond to environmental complaints within all watersheds in their region. We first verify the complaint in the field by confirming the water quality problem. We then document the water quality problems and reach out to the owner of the site offering technical and financial assistance to implement appropriate fixes. Our regulatory tools serve as a backstop if water quality pollution problems cannot be addressed with proactive assistance.

During 2025, Ecology responded to a multitude of nonpoint source pollution related complaints received by our agency. Complaints, and follow-up to complaints, were tracked in the agency's Environmental Reporting and Tracking System (ERTS). Ecology receives a variety of complaints on a wide range of nonpoint activities including, but not limited to:

- Livestock
- Dairy/Waste
- Debris/Garbage
- Mud/silt/sediment/turbidity
- Herbicide/pesticide application
- Fertilizer
- Manure
- Tillage Pollution
- Stream Dredging

In total, Ecology nonpoint staff responded to 86 agriculture-related ERTS complaints and received 198 other types of nonpoint complaints across the state.

3.1.4 Support No Discharge Zone Implementation for Puget Sound

Program Overview

This section summarizes implementation of the Puget Sound Vessel Sewage No Discharge Zone (NDZ) during 2025, and where applicable includes metrics for the 2023–2025 reporting period, including pumpout gallonage and outreach materials distributed.

In 2025, Ecology continued implementation of the No Discharge Zone (NDZ), adopted April 9, 2018, and effective May 10, 2018, under Chapter 173-228 WAC.

The NDZ includes all marine waters of Washington State inland from the line between New Dungeness Lighthouse and Discovery Island Lighthouse to the Canadian border, as well as Lake Washington, Lake Union, and the connecting waters to Puget Sound.

The NDZ prohibits the discharge of treated or untreated sewage from vessels within the zone. Vessel operators must retain sewage for disposal at approved onshore or mobile pumpout facilities or discharge only when outside the NDZ and beyond three miles from shore. As of May 10, 2023, all commercial vessels are also prohibited from discharging sewage into Puget Sound.

NDZ implementation during this reporting period focused on the following key program elements:

- Strategic coordination among partner agencies
- Sustained outreach and education to recreational and commercial boaters
- Infrastructure awareness and pumpout access
- Program Evaluation to assess effectiveness
- Pumpout gallonage
- Ongoing enforcement coordination

NDZ Outreach and Education

Vessel Sewage Education Committee Leadership

Ecology convened the Vessel Sewage Education Core Team on a bi-monthly basis from 2023 through 2025, resulting in 18 coordination meetings during the reporting period. The group includes key partners such as Washington Sea Grant, Washington State Parks Clean Vessel Act Program, Pierce County's South Sound Mobile Pumpout Program, and the Washington Department of Natural Resources, along with other regional boating stakeholders.

These meetings support multi-agency alignment, coordinated education and outreach efforts to promote proper vessel sewage management, reinforce pumpout use, and advance implementation of the No Discharge Zone. This coordination ensures that NDZ education is not delivered in isolation, but as part of a unified regional effort.

Pump Out, Don't Dump Out Campaign

Ecology continued implementation of the **"**Pump Out, Don't Dump Out campaign[8]**"** during peak recreational boating seasons. The campaign promotes proper vessel sewage management by increasing awareness of pumpout infrastructure and reinforcing clean boating norms among recreational boaters. Through digital outreach, print media, and partner amplification, the campaign supports voluntary compliance with the Puget Sound No Discharge Zone.

Key campaign components included:

- **Social Media Outreach and Engagement**
  Ecology and partners used targeted social media messaging to promote clean boating practices, highlight pumpout resources, and reinforce the "Pump Out, Don't Dump Out

[8] https://ecology.wa.gov/ecologys-work-near-you/river-basins-groundwater/puget-sound/no-discharge-zone/pump-out-dont-dump-out

campaign" message. Content included educational posts, seasonal reminders during high boating activity periods, and coordination with partner organizations to expand message reach.

- **Magazine Advertisements**
  The campaign included advertisements in regional boating magazines to reach recreational boaters and cruising communities. These ads reinforced the clean boating message and directed readers to available resources on pumpout locations and best practices.
- **Promotion of the Pumpout Nav App**
  Outreach efforts promoted the Pumpout Nav app[9], which helps boaters quickly locate nearby pumpout and dump station facilities. Increasing awareness and use of this tool helps reduce barriers to proper sewage disposal and supports compliance with NDZ rule.

Collectively, these outreach efforts help normalize responsible vessel sewage management and encourage boaters to make pumpout use a routine part of their boating practices.

Boating Event Outreach

In 2025, Ecology conducted in-person education and outreach at major boating events and regional marina gatherings to increase awareness of the NDZ and proper vessel sewage management. These events provide an opportunity to directly engage recreational boaters.

Ecology staff and outreach partners participated in several high attendance boating events, including:

- **Seattle Boat Show** – 9 days of outreach with approximately 2,413 direct interactions with boaters and marine industry participants. Across the 2023–2025 reporting period, Ecology and partners engaged directly with approximately 6,168 boaters at the Seattle Boat Show.
- **Anacortes Boat Show** – more than 1500 direct interactions with recreational boaters and marina visitors.
- **Port Townsend Wooden Boat Festival** – approximately 2,500 direct interactions with boat owners and maritime enthusiasts.
- **Shilshole Boat Fest** – approximately 300 direct interactions and engagement with regional boating community members.
- **Additional regional marina tabling events** – over 1,800 direct interactions with boaters at local marinas and boating gatherings.

[9] https://apps.apple.com/us/app/pumpout-nav/id1148752109

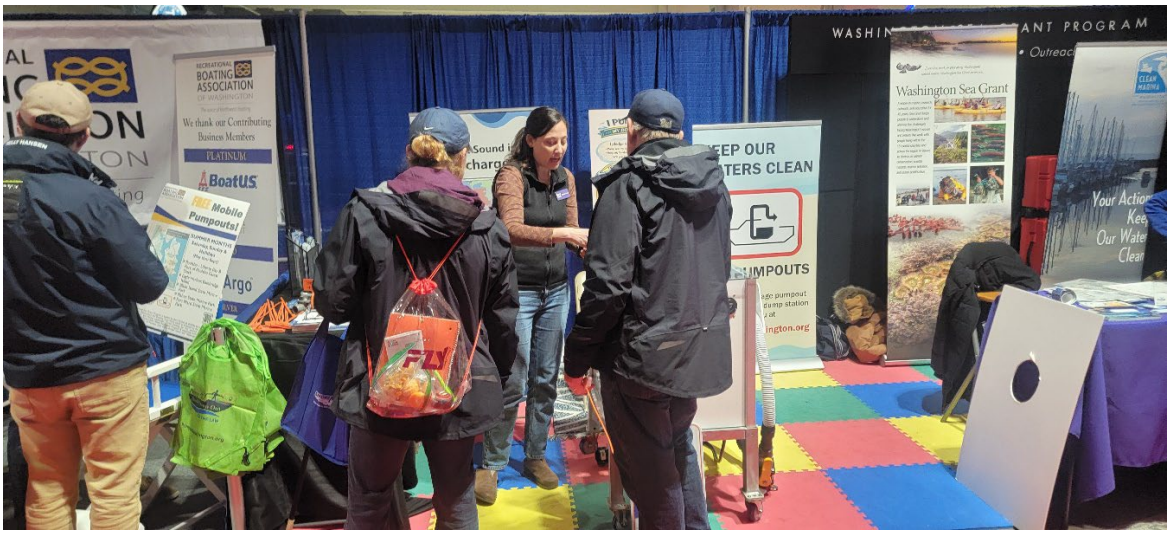


Figure 33. No Discharge Zone informational booth at a boating outreach event.

Across these events, Ecology staff provided face-to-face education and technical assistance to boaters. Outreach activities included distributing educational materials, answering questions about NDZ requirements, demonstrating the Pumpout Nav mobile application, and discussing best practices for pumpout use and Y-valve compliance.

In-person engagement at boating events is a key component of the program's outreach strategy. These interactions allow staff to address common misconceptions, provide practical guidance on locating pumpout facilities, and encourage boaters to adopt clean boating practices that help protect Puget Sound.

NDZ Educational Materials

Ecology distributed educational tools and printed materials designed to support learning, reinforce proper vessel sewage management practices, and increase awareness through outreach events, marina partnerships, and partner organizations during the reporting period.

The following totals represent materials distributed between 2023 and 2025**.**

- **Branded Y-valve zip ties** – **7,500 distributed** to encourage proper securing of Y-valves in compliance with NDZ requirements.
- **NDZ branded tote bags with the NDZ geographic map** – **2,500 distributed**
- **Dye tablets** – **2,000 distributed** to assure holding tanks and related equipment are not leaking into the waters.
- **NDZ brochures** – **700 distributed** explaining NDZ regulations, pumpout requirements, and clean boating practices
- **Y-Valve Rack cards** – **1,600 distributed** highlighting the Y-valve and why it matters and support NDZ compliance.
- **NDZ placemats** – **3,500 distributed** through marina and boating events to raise awareness among recreational boaters including how it protects shellfish areas.

- **Hands-free pumpout adapters** – **thousands** distributed to support easier and cleaner use of pumpout stations.

Collectively, more than 16,000 educational materials were distributed through marinas, boating events, and partner outreach activities across Puget Sound during the reporting period. These materials support NDZ implementation by increasing awareness of the NDZ rule, promoting proper sewage management practices, and directing boaters to available pumpout resources.



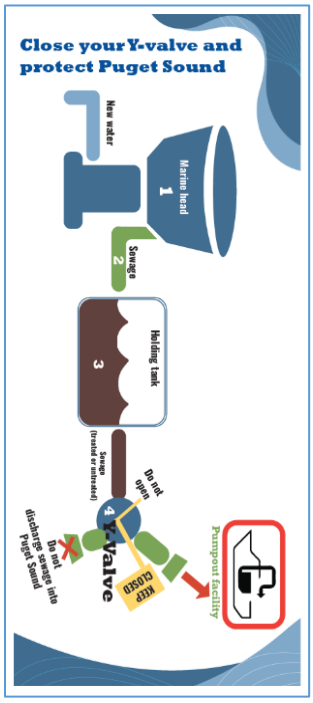
Figure 34. NDZ branded materials (zip ties, tote bag, brochures) used to educate boaters



Figure 35. NDZ branded placemats



Figure 36. NDZ online and print advertisements.



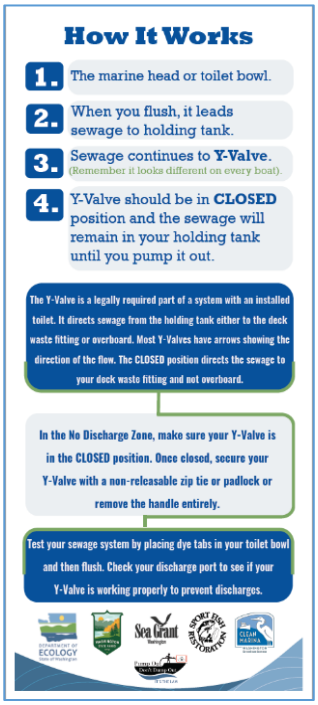




Figure 38. Left: example of NDZ educational information. Right: No Discharge Zone program logo.

No Discharge Zone Signage

With support from Clean Vessel Act (CVA) grant funding, Ecology continued to expand the visibility of the No Discharge Zone through signage and educational materials distributed to marinas, boat launches, and boating partners throughout the reporting period.

Ecology has distributed over 800 aluminum NDZ signs free of charge to marinas and public boat launch locations across Puget Sound. These durable signs provide permanent visual reminders that vessel sewage discharge is prohibited in Puget Sound and reinforce compliance expectations at key boating access points. By placing signage where boaters launch, moor, and access pumpout facilities, the program ensures that NDZ messaging remains visible throughout the boating season and across the boating community.

By combining permanent signage with portable educational tools, the program reinforces NDZ rule at multiple points along the boating experience—from marinas and boat launches to outreach events and boating publications. This approach strengthens marina-based education efforts and supports voluntary compliance.





Figure 39. Examples of NDZ sign at Washington marinas (left: Drayton Harbor Marina; right: Friday Harbor Marina)

Program Evaluation

Program evaluation was a major milestone during this reporting period and represents an important step in strengthening the effectiveness of the No Discharge Zone Education and Outreach Program. In 2025, Ecology contracted with an independent evaluation consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of the program's education and outreach efforts.

The evaluation was designed to assess the effectiveness of current outreach strategies, identify areas for improvement, and provide recommendations to help guide the next phase of NDZ education efforts. The review focused on how well the program communicates NDZ requirements to recreational boaters, how effectively outreach tools support compliance, and how partner coordination contributes to program outcomes.

Evaluation Components

The evaluation used a mixed-methods approach that incorporated qualitative and programmatic review elements, including:

- **Stakeholder interviews** with agency partners and program collaborators involved in vessel sewage education and enforcement
- **Partner surveys** to gather feedback from organizations participating in NDZ outreach efforts
- **Review of outreach materials** including signage, printed materials, and digital communications
- **Assessment of event engagement** and in-person outreach strategies used at boating events and marinas
- **Review of coordination with enforcement partners** to understand how education supports compliance efforts
- **Analysis of message clarity and consistency** across outreach platforms and materials

Key Findings

The evaluation identified several program strengths that support NDZ education and compliance efforts across Puget Sound:

- **Strong interagency coordination.** Partners reported effective collaboration between Ecology, Washington Sea Grant, Washington State Parks, local governments, and other boating outreach organizations.
- **High awareness among engaged boating audiences.** Boaters who interact with outreach programs—such as those attending boat shows and marina events—demonstrate strong awareness of proper vessel sewage management practices.
- **Effective use of signage and in-person outreach.** NDZ signage and direct engagement with boaters were identified as valuable tools for communicating regulations and reinforcing compliance expectations.
- **Broad recognition of the "**Pump Out, Don't Dump Out campaign[10]**".** The campaign has become a recognizable message within the recreational boating community and supports the broader clean boating education effort.

The evaluation also identified several opportunities to strengthen program effectiveness and further support NDZ compliance:

1. **Increase clarity of NDZ geographic boundaries.** Some boaters remain uncertain about the exact extent of the NDZ, suggesting a need for clearer mapping and communication tools.
2. **Increase emphasis on social norms.** Messaging that highlights responsible boating as the expected and common behavior may help reinforce voluntary compliance.
3. **Strengthen visibility of pumpout infrastructure.** Increased promotion of pumpout locations and resources can reduce barriers to proper sewage disposal.
4. **Provide clearer reporting pathways for suspected violations.** Improved communication about where and how boaters can report potential violations may support enforcement and community stewardship.

This evaluation represents an important step toward data-informed program improvement, ensuring that NDZ education strategies remain responsive to boater needs while continuing to support water quality protection throughout Puget Sound.

Programmatic Refinement Based on Evaluation Findings

Findings from the 2025 NDZ Education Program evaluation are informing the next phase of outreach and education efforts. The program is incorporating these insights to refine

[10] https://ecology.wa.gov/ecologys-work-near-you/river-basins-groundwater/puget-sound/no-discharge-zone/pump-out-dont-dump-out

messaging, improve outreach tools, strengthen coordination with partners, and focus education efforts on the behaviors most critical to NDZ compliance.

Ecology is refining its outreach approach to place greater emphasis on norms-based messaging and behavior-focused strategies designed to make responsible vessel sewage management the visible and expected standard within the boating community. This approach builds on existing education efforts while strengthening communication strategies that reinforce positive boating behaviors and reduce barriers to pumpout use.
Key areas of strategic refinement include:

- **Public commitment tools** such as pledge boards and interactive outreach activities that encourage boaters to publicly affirm clean boating practices
- **Social norm messaging** that highlights responsible behaviors within the boating community (e.g., "Most boaters pump out before leaving the dock.")
- **Expanded engagement with marina staff** to support peer-to-peer education and reinforce compliance messaging at key boating access points
- **Greater emphasis on mobile pumpout services** to increase visibility and awareness of pumpout access throughout Puget Sound
- **Improved visualization of NDZ boundaries** and reporting non-compliance through clearer maps and communication tools

These refinements will guide program planning and outreach investments for the 2026–2028 program period, ensuring that NDZ education efforts continue to evolve based on evaluation findings and emerging outreach opportunities.

Gallonage of Recreational Vessel Sewage Pumped (2023–2025)

Access to pumpout services is a critical component of implementing the No Discharge Zone. Pumpout infrastructure and services ensure that recreational vessel sewage is properly disposed of at treatment facilities rather than discharged into marine waters. Together, fixed pumpout stations and mobile pumpout programs provide boaters with multiple options for responsible sewage disposal throughout Puget Sound.

Pumpout services in Puget Sound are supported through three primary program components:

1. **South Sound Mobile Pumpout Program**

The South Sound Mobile Pumpout Program provides on-the-water pumpout services directly to recreational boaters in South Puget Sound. The service travels to marinas, mooring fields, and popular anchorages, allowing boaters to pump out without leaving their vessels. Mobile pumpout services are particularly valuable in areas where fixed infrastructure may be limited or where boaters are anchored away from shore-based facilities.

The South Sound Mobile Pumpout Program is a project of Pierce County in partnership with the Washington State Parks Clean Vessel Act Program. Funding is provided by the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service. Additional funding partners include the City of Gig Harbor, Minterbrook Oyster Co., Washington Sea Grant, and the Recreational Boaters Association of Washington.

2. West Sound Mobile Pumpout Program

In 2023, pumpout service coverage expanded with the launch of the West Sound Mobile Pumpout Program. This program provides similar on-the-water services to boaters in West Puget Sound and represents an important expansion of pumpout access across the region. By bringing pumpout services directly to boaters, the program helps reduce barriers to proper sewage disposal and supports compliance with NDZ regulations.

The West Puget Sound (Kitsap) Free Mobile Pumpout Program serves Liberty Bay, Port of Poulsbo, Eagle Harbor, Blake Island, Illahee, Fort Ward, and surrounding areas.

This program is managed by the Recreational Boating Association of Washington (RBAW) and funded through Clean Vessel Act grants (75%) and local partnerships.

3. Fixed Pumpout Stations

Fixed pumpout stations located at marinas and boat launches remain the backbone of the region's pumpout infrastructure. These stations provide reliable access points where boaters can dispose of vessel sewage before leaving the dock or while visiting marinas throughout Puget Sound. Together with mobile services, fixed stations help ensure that pumpout access is available across a wide range of boating locations.

The table below summarizes estimated gallons of recreational vessel sewage pumped through these programs in Puget Sound during the 2023–2025 reporting period.

Table 7. Recreational vessel sewage pumped in Puget Sound 2023-2025.

Program	2023	2024	2025
South Sound Mobile Pumpout Program	17,234 gallons	18,079 gallons	17,779 gallons
West Sound Mobile Pumpout Program	6,039 gallons	11,725 gallons	25,420 gallons
Fixed Pumpout Stations	705,196 gallons	9,317,565 gallons	10,090,785 gallons
Total Gallons Pumped	**728,469 gallons**	**9,347,369 gallons**	**10,133,984 gallons**

Overall, these programs pumped out a total of more than 20.2 million gallons of recreational vessel sewage during the 2023–2025 reporting period.

Together, fixed pumpout stations and mobile pumpout programs help ensure that large volumes of vessel sewage are properly managed rather than discharged into Puget Sound waters. By maintaining fixed pumpout infrastructure while expanding mobile pumpout services, the region continues to strengthen its ability to support NDZ compliance and protect marine water quality, shellfish resources, and public health.

NDZ Enforcement

In 2021, Ecology finalized the NDZ Enforcement Strategy, which includes an Enforcement Plan, supporting materials such as a model county marine sewage ordinance, and guidance on partner agency roles. Ecology also provided training to SWRO and NWRO ERTS Coordinators to improve documentation of vessel-related sewage discharge reports.

In 2025, Ecology received a few Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS) reports related to potential vessel sewage discharges. Ecology followed up on reports with sufficient information and coordinated with local entities to support investigation and response.

Ecology also worked closely with local jurisdictions to address known issues, including vessel-related sewage concerns in Seattle houseboat communities. In most cases, these issues were resolved at the local level, with Ecology providing coordination and technical support as needed.

Through ongoing coordination with local governments and enforcement partners, Ecology supports compliance with the NDZ through a combination of education, investigation, and enforcement actions where appropriate. These efforts support ongoing protection of Puget Sound water quality, shellfish resources, and public health.

More information about the Puget Sound NDZ, including guidance for recreational and commercial boaters, can be found on the NDZ webpage[11].

3.1.5 Support implementation of the Dairy Nutrient Management Program; Ecology and WSDA continue to work on the gaps identified in the Dairy Nutrient Management Act

In 2025, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) and Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) continued to operate under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to address livestock-related water quality issues. The MOU was established as a coordinating document, to address Ecology and WSDA's overlapping regulatory responsibilities for water quality compliance related to livestock activities, namely dairy operations.

In 2025, the WSDA Dairy Nutrient Management Program (DNMP) notified Ecology staff that two dairies discharged to state waters. When former dairy facilities have cancelled their milking license and Ecology is notified, nonpoint staff will provide follow-up technical assistance and work to ensure management of livestock and manure on the site is adequate to protect nearby surface water. Agency staff also continue to coordinate and collaborate on

[11] https://ecology.wa.gov/ecologys-work-near-you/river-basins-groundwater/puget-sound/no-discharge-zone

efforts to address livestock and manure related nonpoint source pollution issues. An ongoing challenge that Ecology and DNMP staff continue to coordinate on is the export of dairy manure to non-dairy agricultural fields. These applications are not regulated under DNMP, and it is a challenge to ensure that exported material is handled using responsible manure management practices that prevent discharges to waters of the state.

3.1.6 Support education and outreach

Education and outreach is essential to communicate about water quality concerns, provide information about solutions and assistance available, and support statewide and local partnerships. In 2025, Ecology's Nonpoint Program delivered a wide range of education and outreach activities, supporting pollution identification, BMP implementation, and community engagement. Staff collaborated with local governments, Tribes, conservation districts, and nonprofits to provide partner-to-partner education, host public webinars and meetings, develop educational materials, attend community events, and provide direct landowner engagement. A summary of these efforts include:

- Partner coordination
    - Regularly attend partner meetings with Tribes, conservation districts (CDs), and other watershed implementation groups
    - Provide partner education on the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture, ERTS workflows, and Ecology's Nonpoint Program
    - Attend regional conferences and symposiums
- Public outreach & community engagement
    - Attend community meetings, festivals, and fairs
    - Host community townhalls or office hours
    - Develop and share educational materials (mailers, handouts, newsletters, etc.)
    - Support youth education through local curriculum and statewide art contest
    - Develop and maintain program and project-specific webpages
    - Host project-specific informational webinars and comment periods
- Landowner engagement & assistance
    - Develop and update educational materials for BMP implementation
    - Review language access and translations for technical assistance letters

Refer to section 3.1.2 for further details on regional education and outreach activities.

3.2 Goal 2: Ensure Clear Standards

3.2.1 Identify best management practices (BMPs) and measures designed to comply with the Water Quality Standards and contribute to the protection of beneficial uses of the receiving waters and ensure compliance with state and federal law. Utilize best available science.

Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture

The development of clear, standalone, clean water BMP guidance for agricultural sources is a key enhancement for our nonpoint source (NPS) pollution program. The Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture (Clean Water Guidance/CWG) is a technical resource for the agricultural community that complements existing guidance on agricultural conservation practices, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guides (FOTGs). Compared to other guidance documents, its focus is on how BMPs can protect water quality and support meeting the Washington state water quality standards.

To develop the guidance, Ecology worked with an advisory group that included representatives from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Conservation Districts, Washington State Department of Agriculture, State Conservation Commission, Washington State University, farmers, dairies, cattle groups, US Environmental Protection Agency, the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, and other agricultural and conservation experts. This group supported our evaluation of BMP effectiveness, helped us to develop BMP recommendations and outline implementation considerations by reviewing materials, providing written feedback, and through discussion during workgroup meetings.

The guidance's focus is on evaluating different types of BMPs for their effectiveness, developing recommendations for how to implement them to protect water quality, and then assembling the BMPs into combinations that adequately address all sources of pollutants for a particular land use. The guidance covers a range of conservation practices and includes topics such as nutrient management, sediment control, water management, livestock management, and riparian buffers. Each chapter addresses different conservation practices and provides information on:

- Practices that best prevent water pollution and protect water quality.
- How well BMPs perform in reducing specific pollutants.
- Considerations for when implementing BMPs, such as costs and equipment requirements.

Currently, five chapters have been submitted and are supported by EPA:

- Cropping Methods: Tillage and Residue Management
- Livestock Management: Pasture and Rangeland Grazing

- Sediment Control: Soil Stabilization and Sediment Capture (Structural)
- Riparian Areas and Surface Water Protection
- Livestock Management: Animal Confinement, Manure Handling, and Storage

The remaining chapters, which were submitted to EPA[12] in early 2026, include:

- Agricultural Facility Runoff Management
- Irrigation Management
- Pesticide Management
- Sediment Capture (Vegetative)
- Nutrient Management
- Crop Systems
- Subsurface Drainage Management
- Suites of Practices

These scientifically-based guidance chapters provide assurances for landowners; when landowners and operators implement practices that are consistent with the BMPs included in the CWG, it is presumed that water quality is adequately protected and the site is compliant with state and federal law. The guidance is utilized by regional field staff to inform recommendations given to agricultural landowners needing to make improvements to address nonpoint source pollution from their operations. Additionally, this guidance is used to inform our nonpoint funding programs, and the development of new TMDLs, ARPs, STIs, and associated implementation plans.

See section 3.3.1 for information on receiving feedback and public outreach associated with the development of the final Clean Water Guidance chapters.

See section 3.1.6 for information about our outreach strategies related to the Clean Water Guidance.

More information on the BMP guidance[13] can be found at the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture webpage[14].

[12] Our settlement agreement with NWEA that the remaining chapters of the CWG were due to EPA by December 31, 2025. Following agreement from NWEA to extend the deadline, we submitted the final chapters to EPA on February 12, 2026.

[13] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2010008.html

[14] https://ecology.wa.gov/About-us/Accountability-transparency/Partnerships-committees/Voluntary-Clean-Water-Guidance-for-Agriculture-Adv

3.2.2 Implementation of forest practices rules statewide: periodic reviews of the Forest Practices Rules adaptive management program and the Clean Water Act Assurances.

Ecology helps ensure that the Forest Practices Rules are effective in protecting water quality and meeting federal and state water quality standards. These rules help protect streams, wetlands, and other bodies of water in or near forest areas and in-stream fish habitat.

Ecology provides:

- Field inspectors to help the Department of Natural Resources ensure rules are followed.
- Forest practices effectiveness monitoring and policy analysts who participate in the Forest Practices Adaptive Management Program[15].

The Forest Practices Rules provide standards to:

- Preserve trees in streamside areas to keep the water cool, filter sediment from uplands, provide nutrients, and keep streambanks stable.
- Improve in-stream fish habitat by providing woody debris and controlling pesticide use near water bodies.
- Encourage proper construction and care of forest roads to prevent silt and sediment from entering water.

In 2025, regional staff/inspectors engaged in the following activities to support the implementation and enforcement of the forest practice rules:

- Participated in field review and data collection of forest practice activities to determine compliance with rules and approved Forest Practices Applications (FPA). Inspectors worked throughout all six DNR Regions. Prior to field visits inspectors conducted in-office FPA reviews.
- Reviewed individual Forest Practices Application proposals.
- Reviewed and provided input on Compliance Monitoring Program reports and documents and participated in site-compliance inspections.
- Participated in meetings and work sessions to implement a stream typing prioritization plan and procedures for coordinating between landowners and reviewers prior to stream protocol surveys.
- Performed field inspections of selected streams, providing concurrence or recommendations for alternate points to be used to define where fish habitat exists, and where the end of perennial water occurs in order to apply different harvest prescriptions.

[15] Covered below in section 3.2.2.

- Provided staff to assist DNR in evaluating readiness of counties to assume jurisdiction for forest practices within their urban growth boundaries.
- Collaboratively participated with DNR, and WDFW staff and representatives of affected Tribes, to identify the need for and participate in interdisciplinary teams and field inspections for conducting site-specific evaluation of compliance with the forest practices rules.
- Responded to citizen reports of environmental harm, submitted via the statewide Environmental Report Tracking System (ERTS), to address reports related to individual forest practices activities.

Support updates to the Forest Practices Rules

Under Washington state law (Chapter 90.48 RCW) forest practices rules are to be developed to achieve compliance with the state water quality standards and the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). Ecology established Clean Water Act assurances (CWA assurances) for the state's forest practices program in 1999 as part of the Forests and Fish Report (FFR) and subsequent legislation known as the Forests and Fish Law. This legislation amended the existing Forest Practices Act (Chapter 76.09 RCW).

The CWA assurances established that the state's forest practices rules and programs, as updated through a formal adaptive management program, would be used as the primary mechanism for bringing and maintaining forested watersheds into compliance with the state water quality standards.

Taken in total, the forest practices Adaptive Management Program (AMP) provides a substantial framework for ensuring forest practices are complaint with the water quality standards. In 2009, as part of a review of the AMP, Ecology concluded it is in the best interests of water quality, and is consistent with legislative intent, to work together with cooperating agencies and local entities to make needed improvements to the existing program. Ecology therefore conditionally extended the CWA assurances with the intent to stimulate the needed improvements to the forest practices program and AMP.

Ecology, in consultation with key engaged parties, established specific corrective milestones. The extension of these assurances was conditioned on meeting these administrative and research milestones by the specific target dates described. With these corrective milestones in place, Ecology extended the CWA assurances until 2019.

Progress towards completing the remaining corrective milestones has remained slower than intended but continued to move forward. The causes of not meeting the scheduled target dates include new and competing priorities; such as, the additional work related to ensuring forestry is not increasing the risk of mass wasting, work on a large proposal to establish separate requirements for small forest landowners, and a renewed focus on developing field methods for identifying points on streams that represent the end of fish habitat (with fish habitat receiving higher protection under the rules).

On December 2, 2019, Ecology Director Bellon sent a letter to the Forest Practices Board (available upon request) granting a second extension for two years (ending December 2021) based on the completion or near completion of several key Type N research projects providing enough information for the Board to consider new rulemaking with regard to riparian buffers on non-fish bearing perennial waters. As a result of the completion and acceptance of one of the studies a technical workgroup was contracted to develop recommended harvest prescriptions to help inform rulemaking. The workgroup completed its work and presented the final report to TFW Policy at the June 2021 Policy meeting.

On February 23, 2021, the Washington State Auditor's Office issued a performance audit report describing issues that continue to plague the AMP. The Auditor's Office concluded that the program is not "operating as intended" and that, without needed changes, the "program would continue to languish." The Audit Report contains several recommendations designed to get the program on track so that it can perform its functions as intended. The Forest Practices Board (Board) has committed to addressing many of these recommendations and the Department of Natural Resources included a funding request in 21-23BN budget.

In consideration of the continued progress at Policy and the Board's commitment to the Auditors Report Ecology Director Watson issued in a memo to the Board (available on request), an additional one-year extension of the CWA Assurances. This extension was contingent on the AMP making measurable progress on implementing the 2021 Audit Report and Policy making a final recommendation on Type Np buffer prescriptions to the Board, with the Board directing staff to develop a rule package and prepare a CR102.

Despite a lengthy dispute resolution process, where a consensus recommendation to the Board was not reached, a minority and majority report were forwarded to the board for consideration at their November 2022 meeting. The Board chose to move the majority recommendation forward for draft rule development and CR102. Additionally, the adaptive management program has been making steady progress on program and process improvements as recommended in the SAO Audit Report. Due to these measures of the 2021 extension by Director Watson, Ecology has extended the assurances pursuant to progress related to the Type Np CR 102 development, leading the Board to approving new Type Np prescriptions that, if adopted into rule will provide greater protection to stream temperature than the current rule.

Ecology's Water Quality Program completed a draft Tier II antidegradation analysis of the Board's proposed western Washington Type Np waters buffer rule in the spring of 2025. The Board held a public comment period for the proposed Type Np buffer rule during the summer of 2025, with Ecology holding a concurrent public comment period for the associated draft Tier II analysis. Ecology provided the final Tier II antidegradation analysis to the Board and the public prior to the Board's November 2025 regular meeting. The Forest Practices Board voted to adopt

the new riparian buffer rule for Type Np streams in western Washington on November 12, 2025. The new rule is scheduled to go into effect August 31, 2026.

Appendix B shows a table of corrective milestones, and their status as was reported to the Washington Forest Practices Board at their August 2025 meeting. There have been no significant changes to the status of the corrective milestones since the last report.

3.3 Goal 3: Develop and Strengthen Partnerships

3.3.1 Strengthen Relationships and Receive Input

Ecology recognizes the need for strong partnerships and input from interested parties, partners, and the public to effectively implement our nonpoint source program. Many of those efforts are detailed in other sections of this report. A focus for our program this year was development of the Nonpoint Plan update and Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture (Clean Water Guidance). In addition to the details below regarding engagement processes for these two deliverables, we strived to provide program updates at meetings with partners, including Tribes and Tribal organizations, conservation districts (CDs), and committees such as the Agriculture Advisory Committee.

Nonpoint Plan Update Outreach and Engagement

This year, we completed the 2025 update of Washington State's Water Quality Management Plan to Address Nonpoint Sources of Pollution (Nonpoint Plan). In 2024 we spent considerable time and effort on outreach and engagement with partners, local and interested entities, and Tribes, and in 2025 we continued to build upon these outreach efforts, summarized below:

- In late January 2025, we shared an information-gathering survey to Tribes, conservation districts, Puget Sound Lead Entities, and Lead Integrating Organizations, with the hope of getting a better sense of the nonpoint issues these groups encounter, how they work with Ecology staff to address nonpoint issues, and how they engage with the BMPs within the Clean Water Guidance. We were also looking to learn from their successes as they work to address nonpoint pollution and any innovative approaches taken. We presented on this opportunity and the update process during meetings with CDs, LEs, LIOs, and Tribes. We included a discussion of the survey results from conservation districts and Tribes in the 2025 Nonpoint Plan update; lead entities and lead integrating organizations did not provide a high enough response rate to support a written summary.
- Washington state Tribes were provided with an early draft of the Nonpoint Plan, ahead of the public release, as well as a Tribal-only informational webinar.
    - Following the comment period, we continued conversations with Tribal representatives via the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission as we incorporated Tribal comment into Plan edits.
- We held a 100-day public comment period from May 22 – August 29, 2025.
    - An announcement about draft material, public comment period, and informational webinar was shared via Ecology's WQ Improvement email list.
    - We held an informational public webinar on June 11th.
    - We held a webinar for CDs on June 17th to provide an opportunity for partner-to-partner information sharing and to answer questions.
    - We received 64 comments from a variety of agricultural organizations, state agencies, Tribes and Tribal organizations, and individuals from across the state.
    - We responded to each comment received, and made updates to the Nonpoint Plan in response to comments. See the Response to Comments[16] document for this information.

Clean Water Guidance Chapters Development Outreach and Engagement

Throughout 2025, we also worked on finalizing the remaining Clean Water Guidance chapters. As with the Nonpoint Plan, coordination with partners was a large part of the guidance development process. Chapters were drafted in coordination with our advisory groups, including representatives from Producer Groups, Washington State University Extension,

[16] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2510040.html

Conservation Districts, the State Conservation Commission, Washington State Dept. of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service, Environmental Protection Agency, Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission, and other agricultural and conservation experts.

To allow as much time to review material as possible, we began releasing draft chapters online as available on a rolling basis from June - October, 2025. Announcements about draft materials available to review and comment on were sent via Ecology's WQ Improvement email list. We held an informational webinar on November 5th, to share about the guidance and answer questions. Comments on all chapters were due by Dec. 5, 2025. We received 36 comment submissions including responses from producer groups, Tribes, agriculture organizations, and individuals. Our Response to Comments document is available online[17].

3.3.2 Agriculture Advisory Committee (formerly Agriculture and Water Quality Advisory Committee)

The Agriculture and Water Quality Advisory Committee was established to provide the Ecology Director with a direct line to producers and producer groups to discuss how we can both support a healthy industry and protect clean water. The committee provides input to help guide the director's efforts to improve Ecology's relationship with the agricultural community and inform us on how we can do our work to better respond to concerns from producers. A broad array of agriculture entities participate on our committee.

This committee provides an open forum for agriculture producers and environmental interest groups to meet our staff and learn about our work. They provide valuable feedback as we tackle the challenge of insuring that working lands keep working in an environmentally friendly way.

In 2025, the committee agreed to broaden its scope to include environmental sectors outside of just water quality and renamed the committee to the "Agriculture Advisory Committee". The committee has been successful at further improving our agency's relationship with the agricultural community and creating a more positive environment to implement our nonpoint program including increased acceptance and support for our watershed evaluation and TMDL implementation work, and support for the creation of the Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for agriculture.

The committee held one meeting on October 8 in Yakima WA with the agenda including:

- 2025 Nonpoint Pollution Plan & Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture Updates
- Regional nonpoint work and priorities
- Recently funded nonpoint projects
- General permit updates: CAFO and fresh fruit packing general permit
- Roundtable discussion on past committee achievements/priorities and the future scope of the committee

[17] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2010008.html

- Climate Pollution Reduction Program recent work

You may view more detailed information on each meeting and the committee on the Agriculture and Water Quality Advisory Committee webpage[18].

3.3.3 Financial Assistance Council (FAC) and Water Quality Partnership (WQP)

The FAC and WQP continue to be key forums for informing interested parties on our nonpoint program. These groups continue to be successful in helping us coordinate and build relationships with key partners and collaborators.

The (FAC) is convened by Ecology and consists of a group of representatives from cities, counties, Tribes, conservation districts, special purpose districts, environmental groups, and state and federal agencies to provide Ecology Water Quality Financial Management Section advice and guidance for the effective and efficient administration of state and federal grant and loan programs. Ecology held 2 FAC meetings in 2025 on April 9th and November 19th. For more information see the FAC webpage[19].

The Water Quality Partnership is the standing engagement group for Ecology's Water Quality Program, with the goal of helping the WQ Program to maintain a dialogue with key interests and to give those key interests regular access to decision makers in the WQ Program. We held four WQP meetings in 2025 in March, June, October, and December. Please visit the Water Quality Partnership webpage[20] for more information on meetings.

3.3.4 Puget Sound Nutrient Forum (Forum)

This effort focuses on building and strengthening relationships with regional entities, Tribes, the regulated community, industry, and the public. Nutrient management efforts in other large U.S. coastal estuaries have emphasized the importance of focused engagement to build a common understanding of nutrient over-enrichment problems and potential solutions. We believe that a successful outcome for Puget Sound will rely in large part upon this engagement process, and the feedback we have received from attendees has been largely positive.

We held four Nutrient Forums in 2025. Two of these meetings were held virtually and focused on presenting final results of our Optimization Phase 2 modeling scenarios and a detailed presentation on contents of the Nutrient Reduction Plan. The other two meetings

[18] https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/accountability-transparency/partnerships-committees/agriculture-and-water-quality-advisory-committee

[19] https://ecology.wa.gov/about-us/accountability-transparency/partnerships-committees/water-quality-financial-assistance-council

[20] https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/view_our_committees_water_quality_partnership/37053/water_quality_partnership.aspx

were held in person, one in Mount Vernon and the other in University Place. The in-person meetings were focused on the draft Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan contents and structured to facilitate direct engagement on plan contents with attendees. For more information on the Forum meetings, please visit the Puget Sound Nutrient Source Reduction Project EZView webpage[21].

3.3.5 Regional Conservation Partnership Program

We have continued to support the Palouse Conservation District's implementation of RCPP. In 2021, USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) renewed the Palouse River Watershed (WRIA 34) Implementation Partnership and provided an additional $5.5 million to improve water quality, soil health, and habitat in the Palouse River Watershed. This builds on the $5.5 million that was awarded to the Partnership at the program's inception in 2014. Palouse River Watershed RCPP is a voluntary program directed through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) designed to benefit water quality, soil health, and habitat within the Palouse River Watershed. The primary practices targeted with RCPP include conservation tillage (reduced tillage/ no till), nutrient management, integrated pest management, cover crops, and riparian forest buffers.

In the fall of 2025, the RCPP held its annual RCPP signup. PCD engaged with partners to conduct multiple outreach events across the Palouse Watershed. The primary practices that producers are interested in included conservation tillage, nutrient management, and integrated pest management. PCD will run another RCPP signup in 2026. Ecology staff track their time spent working in the Palouse Watershed and report hours to the Palouse CD. Ecology staff time as well as our grant funding our used to meet the match requirements of the RCPP. Ecology staff also participate in periodic RCPP partner meetings.

3.3.6 Strengthen Relationships with Tribes

Coordination between Tribal, state, and local governments is important to the successful management of resources, including water quality. In 2022, in an effort to better coordinate with Tribal natural resource management staff we started hosting virtual meetings to highlight what projects we are working on related to our 303d program (TMDLs/WQ Standards/Assessment) and nonpoint program, and we continued those meetings in 2025. Additionally, in 2025:

- We collaboratively participated with DNR and WDFW staff and representatives of affected Tribes, to identify the need for and participation in interdisciplinary teams and field inspections for conducting site-specific evaluation of compliance with the forest practices rules.
- We hosted two statewide Tribal water quality staff meetings to provide updates on the state of our 303(d) and nonpoint programs. Nonpoint related agenda items

[21] https://www.ezview.wa.gov/DesktopDefault.aspx?alias=1962&pageid=37106

included: Voluntary Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture updates, 2025 Nonpoint Plan updates, updates on Columbia and Snake River TMDL implementation plan development and workgroup meetings, and draft Puget Sound Nutrient Reduction Plan and the state Forest Practices Board Type Np streams rule. These meetings were attended by over 20 different federally recognized Tribes, Tribal organizations, and representatives.

- See section 3.1.2 for information on coordination between regional staff and Tribal natural resource management staff.
- See section 3.3.1 for details on engagement with Tribes throughout 2025 as we worked on updating the Nonpoint Plan and completing the Clean Water Guidance.

3.3.7 Communicating Nonpoint Successes

We did not complete any success stories this year. Recognizing the importance of communicating about our work, we have committed to completing two per year beginning in 2026, with this milestone included in our updated Nonpoint Plan.

3.3.8 Looking to Better Align Grant Programs

We will continue to update our funding guidelines to incorporate accepted chapters of the Clean Water Guidance. We have designed the guidelines and our funding programs to support compliance with the state Water Quality Standards and law. Additionally, we continue to look for new partnerships and additional ways to incentivize implementation of the full site potential tree height buffer. However, we have limited grant dollars to dedicate to riparian buffers compared to other federal and state agencies. To try to better align funding programs and encourage other agencies to support implementation of the nonpoint program, in 2023 we provided feedback and recommended changes to riparian grant programs managed by NRCS, WSCC, and RCO (see the 2023 Annual Report for our comment letters to NRCS and WSCC to encourage alignment and support of buffers that are supportive of water quality). In 2025, we continued to engage with other programs and agencies around the work of the state's nonpoint program.

In 2024, Ecology's Shoreline and Environmental Assistance (SEA) Program developed a grant program to support improving the climate resiliency of riparian systems in Puget Sound, the Puget Sound Riparian Systems Lead (PSRSL) program. This $17 million grant was awarded by EPA, through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Puget Sound Recovery National Program Office, and is a partnership coalition between Ecology, WSCC, and Bonneville Environmental Foundation, to promote innovative, sustainable, reach-scale approaches to riparian management. The funding program launched in November of 2024. The program's funding guidelines utilizes the BMPs of the Clean Water Guidance, including the riparian buffer chapter, to promote full protection of water quality. We are optimistic that this alignment with Clean Water Guidance BMP recommendations will promote implementation of projects that are fully protective of water quality and support achieving the goals of the

PSRSL funding program. In 2025, as a part of this effort, Ecology's SEA program staff worked in partnership with the Washington State Conservation Commission to contract with an economics consulting group to further the understanding of the economics related to riparian incentives, specifically payments made to landowners to motivate participate in voluntary incentive programs. Although the outcomes of this effort did not result in a framework of incentive programming, there are valuable outcomes and information learned that have the potential to support various organizations in the state to continue to iterate on incentive-based programs.

3.3.9 Supporting Partner Programs to Improve Water Quality

Irrigation Districts

Across the state, irrigation districts are inextricably linked to water quality, and, through the authorities granted to them under RCW 87.03, may participate and expend revenue on cooperative watershed management actions for the purposes of water quantity, water quality, and habitat protection and management. In Washington state, an example of irrigation district engagement in TMDL implementation is the Roza-Sunnyside Board of Joint Control (RSBOJC), which is an umbrella entity created to plan, implement, and administer joint projects and/or programs of the Roza Irrigation District and the Sunnyside Division Board of Control. In both the Granger Drain and Wilson Creek watersheds, both of which drain to the Yakima River in central Washington, the RSBOJC coordinates actively with Ecology nonpoint staff to monitor and address activities that are contributing pollution to these waterways.

In 2025, in the Granger Drain watershed, RSBOJC collected turbidity, fecal coliform, and *E. coli* samples, to evaluate progress towards the goals of the TMDLs within the irrigation district jurisdictions, and to help identify where pollution may be entering the waterways managed by the irrigation districts. These activities will continue into 2026, and should potential pollution sources be identified, the RSBOJC staff will coordinate with Ecology nonpoint staff to address pollution concerns.

In the Wilson Creek watershed, Ecology monitors turbidity and coordinates with Kittitas County Water Purveyors (KCWP) to discuss potential pollution concerns. In 2025, no significantly elevated measures of turbidity were recorded. Activities will continue into 2026, and Ecology is seeking to add an additional monitoring station to supplement recent data collection and compare the data to the Wilson Creek TMDL goals. Ecology staff will continue to collaborate with KCWP to identify and address new or expanded pollution inputs into Wilson Creek.

Due to the scope of nonpoint pollution across the state and the limited resources of Ecology's nonpoint source program, partnerships such as these are vital for successful implementation of TMDLs and other watershed cleanup plans. In these cases, Ecology is able to provide a regulatory backstop, as needed, to support the efforts of partners on the ground who are working to identify and control nonpoint sources of pollution.

Pollution Identification and Correction Programs

When the right social, financial, and technical resource conditions arise in a watershed, Ecology takes advantage of other opportunities to achieve on-the-ground implementation. The Hood Canal Regional Pollution Identification and Correction Program and the Whatcom County Clean Water Program are examples where we are building on the momentum of concern over shellfish bed closures to promote clean water BMPs. Ecology continues to support these and other local Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) programs. This work targets watersheds in the Puget Sound area where a local entity has taken a key role in identifying pollution concerns and addressing pathogen and nutrient pollution from a variety of nonpoint sources. These sources include on-site sewage systems, farm animals, pets, sewage from boats, and stormwater runoff.

In watersheds with PIC groups, nonpoint field staff will partner with these organizations to work together to improve water quality, with Ecology's nonpoint staff often working to provide a regulatory backstop when voluntary and incentive-based work of PIC groups are unsuccessful. More details on PIC partnerships within focal watersheds are provided within section 3.1.2, which describes the work of regional nonpoint staff in 2025.

The 2022 Nonpoint Plan included a milestone to establish four PIC programs in accordance with DOH and Ecology guidance. Currently, the majority of existing PIC groups in the state are located within the Puget Sound area, as that is where there is dedicated funding to support these programs. In recent years, the focus has been on implementing the existing programs, with not much need or movement towards adding new programs; within the time frame covered by the 2022 Nonpoint Plan, one new PIC program was developed, the Mason County Clean Water District. To support the focus on implementation, the 2025 update to the Nonpoint Plan reflects the emphasis, with continued support of the work of PIC groups, including via regulatory backstop assistance. Though no longer a milestone in the Nonpoint Plan, should any watershed partners or local health jurisdictions strive to establish a new PIC group, Ecology will support the development of new PIC programs in accordance with established guidance.

3.4 Goal 4: Monitor Waters for Nonpoint Source Impairments, and Program Effectiveness

3.4.1 Continue Monitoring Efforts/Effectiveness Monitoring

The 2022 Nonpoint Plan includes a milestone of initiating 3 effectiveness monitoring studies per year in TMDL/STI watersheds. During this reporting period (2023-2025), our TMDL effectiveness and long-term monitoring efforts include:

- Ohop Creek (TMDL monitoring): 2024-2025 (completed, report in review)
- Skokomish River (TMDL monitoring): 2024-2025 (completed, report being finalized)
- Middle Snake River (STI monitoring): 2023-2025, temperature monitoring ongoing, within the following waterbodies:

    - Asotin Creek
    - Alpowa Creek
    - Couse Creek
    - Deadman Creek
    - Meadow Creek
    - Tenmile Creek
- Puyallup/Lower White (TMDL monitoring): 2019-2029
- Snoqualmie River (TMDL monitoring): 2025-2027 (QAPP in review)
- Railroad Creek (toxic cleanup long-term monitoring): 2009-ongoing
- Newaukum River (TMDL and salmon recovery, long-term monitoring): 2017-ongoing
- Skookumchuck River (salmon recovery, long-term monitoring): 2019-ongoing

Ecology's TMDL, nonpoint, and monitoring programs coordinate closely to determine priorities across the three programs. We must allocate limited resources between general monitoring, cleanup plan development, cleanup plan implementation, and effectiveness monitoring. With the primary goal of improving water quality to achieve water quality standards, Ecology has focused resources on the implementation of cleanup plans. Additionally, we have a number of long-term monitoring studies that are also associated with TMDL implementation, and to which we continue to allocate resources. In the reporting period, we initiated monitoring projects within 9 waterbodies and continued implementing 4 monitoring projects.

Ecology policy 22-01 requires that "A Quality Assurance Project Plan is prepared for each environmental study/activity that acquires or uses environmental measurement data." More information on Ecology's guidance for developing effectiveness monitoring studies can be found in Guidance for Effectiveness Monitoring of Total Maximum Daily Loads in Surface Water[22].

General Monitoring

Information on Ecology's monitoring work can be found on our website:

- River & stream monitoring - Washington State Department of Ecology[23]
- Lake water quality monitoring - Washington State Department of Ecology[24]
- Puget Sound & marine monitoring - Washington State Department of Ecology[25]

Effectiveness Monitoring

Ohop Creek

Ohop Creek effectiveness monitoring study was conducted from June 2024 through May 2025, and results showed that bacteria conditions improved compared to the 2003 TMDL study, but the watershed still was not fully meeting state bacteria standards. All four core

[22] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/documents/1303024.pdf
[23] https://ecology.wa.gov/research-data/monitoring-assessment/river-stream-monitoring
[24] https://ecology.wa.gov/research-data/monitoring-assessment/lake-water-quality
[25] https://ecology.wa.gov/research-data/monitoring-assessment/puget-sound-and-marine-monitoring

monitoring areas showed reductions in bacteria concentrations, and one area met both the geometric mean and upper-threshold criteria and was recommended for reassignment to Meets Tested Standards. However, the other three core areas still had exceedances, with bacteria concentrations generally higher during the dry season. The study also found that high-flow, high-turbidity storm events likely contributed to the largest bacteria spikes, pointing to ongoing sediment and stormwater-related inputs as continuing concerns. Overall, the findings suggest that restoration and implementation efforts have helped, but additional work is still needed to address remaining bacteria problems, especially those linked to sediment sources and possible septic influences. Much of the riparian planting implementation has not yet reached maturity, and we may see additional benefits as buffers increase in effectiveness as trees age.

Snoqualmie River

In 2025 we began to prepare for data collection throughout the Snoqualmie River and its tributaries. From July 2026 through October 2027, Ecology will collect water samples for nutrients and measure basic water quality parameters (e.g., temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH) at monitoring stations. Additionally, continuous dissolved oxygen monitoring will be conducted at a subset of these stations during the summer low-flow season to assess potential dissolved oxygen impairments. Ecology will also review and analyze secondary data from other agencies to compare current conditions with those from the 2003–2005 study and evaluate long-term trends.

Since the late 1980s, the Washington State Department of Ecology has conducted multiple studies in the lower Snoqualmie River watershed to identify water quality issues during the summer low-flow season. These studies revealed several pollution concerns, including elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria, low dissolved oxygen and pH, and high nutrient concentrations. In response, Ecology developed Total Maximum Daily Load targets for these parameters and initiated cleanup efforts.

Between 2003 and 2005, Ecology carried out an effectiveness monitoring study to evaluate the impact of these cleanup actions. Despite numerous efforts to improve water quality, the study found that portions of the Snoqualmie River and its tributaries still failed to meet Washington State water quality standards for the targeted parameters. Since then, cleanup activities in the watershed have continued, with a particular focus on enhancing habitat and water quality for salmonid species. As a result, further monitoring is necessary to assess the effectiveness of these efforts in protecting and restoring water quality.

The Quality Assurance Project Plan outlines the study design, methods, data quality objectives, and other key details for a new effectiveness monitoring study in the Snoqualmie River watershed. The primary goals are to address water quality impairments related to dissolved oxygen and nutrients and to evaluate whether conditions have improved since the 2003–2005 study.

Skokomish River Basin

For the Skokomish River Basin Bacteria TMDL Effectiveness Monitoring study, we conducted twice monthly sampling of twelve sites on the Skokomish River and its tributaries from July 2024 to June 2025. For several of the sampling dates, we also collected side-by-side samples with Skokomish Tribe DNR staff to compare methods and allow for comparison of our results with their long-term monitoring program conducted at many locations in the Skokomish Valley.

Provisional assessment of Ecology's data indicates no exceedances of freshwater bacteria standards during the study year, but some exceedances are present in the Skokomish DNR data during that timeframe. Same-day averaging of side-by-side samples in a combined assessment of the datasets may result in standards being met overall or in most cases. Analysis of Ecology's data provisionally indicates that TMDL fecal coliform concentration targets were met during the study year, as well as loading targets on the mainstem at Hwy 101. Inclusion of the Skokomish Tribe dataset in the analysis may yield different results. Trend analysis will also be completed for select long-term sites including Ecology's Freshwater Monitoring Unit's long-term station at Hwy 101 as well as Skokomish Tribe DNR sites where sufficient data are available. Final analysis results will be presented in the study report.

This is the first Effectiveness Monitoring study conducted in a TMDL area with a shellfish focus since the E. coli indicator transition. The process of planning and implementing this project led to fruitful conversations between Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program, Water Quality Program's Headquarters staff, and Water Quality Program regional staff about the nuances of the bacteria indicator transition and its impact on existing TMDLs and listings.

Middle Snake River

In 2023, Ecology initiated effectiveness monitoring efforts in several historically polluted tributaries to the Middle Snake River (WRIA 35), in eastern WA. The goal of the monitoring is to evaluate effectiveness of several years of best management practices implementation under our "Straight to Implementation" (also known as 4B) clean-up approach in these watersheds. We collected bacteria, pH, and dissolved oxygen data from June 2023 through May 2024 and have continued to deploy continuous temperature loggers at 9 sites across the following watersheds:

- Asotin Creek
- Alpowa Creek
- Couse Creek
- Deadman Creek
- Meadow Creek
- Tenmile Creek

All data are currently available via our EIM database[26] (EIM Study ID WQ_MidSnakeSTI_EM). The temperature data collected in 2025 will be analyzed in our next statewide Water Quality Assessment to evaluate progress towards achieving water quality standards.

Puyallup River and Lower White River

In 2025, Ecology continued effectiveness monitoring for the Puyallup River Tributaries Bacteria and Lower White River pH TMDLs on three tributaries to the White River, located on the Enumclaw plateau. This monitoring data is used to evaluate and advise the implementation of best management practices under each of these TMDLs. Monthly monitoring started in July of 2019 and will continue through June of 2029. This effectiveness monitoring includes field measurements such as dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, turbidity, and conductivity, as well as sampling for bacteria (*E. coli* and fecal coliform) and nutrients (Total Phosphorous, Orthophosphate, Ammonia, Nitrate-Nitrite, and Total Persulfate Nitrogen). Nutrient sampling is limited to long-term downstream sites on each tributary while the other parameters are sampled at numerous locations on each subbasin. More information about this monitoring effort, including data results, can be found on the Puyallup River Watershed Improvement Project webpage[27].

Arkansas Creek

During the summer and fall of 2025 Ecology completed field work and began modeling analysis on Arkansas Creek, a tribary to the Cowlitz River. This work revolves around temperature impairments in this watershed. Continuous water and air temperature was collected at twelve locations. Effective shade and stream channel measurements were collected during these continuous temperature deployments. Using the observed temperature data combined with field measurements, modeling tools including Ttools, Shade model, and PointWQ are being used to: a) quantify the existing effective shade in the watershed, b) quantify site potential effective shade if the project area was fully restored with mature forest canopy, and c) model response stream temperatures in the fully restored scenario to assess whether or not the stream will meet applicable water quality criteria for temperature. This work will be used to develop a Source Assessment report. That report will then be used to develop and Advanced Restoration Plan for Arkansas Creek to address temperature impairments.

Big Quilcene River

Beginning late spring going until late summer 2025, Ecology collected continuous temperature data at four locations on the Big Quilcene river in Jefferson County. This monitoring will enable the assessment of any impact to stream temperatures from a large-

[26] https://ecology.wa.gov/research-data/data-resources/environmental-information-management-database
[27] https://www.ezview.wa.gov/site/alias__1962/37699/puyallup_river_watershed_improvement_project.aspx

scale stream restoration project happening in 2026-2027. This project, called the Moon Valley Restoration Project, is rerouting the mainstem of the river from its current incised and straight alignment against the south valley wall up into the historic floodplain where it can meander and create higher quality salmon spawning and rearing habitat, and potentially increase groundwater interaction. This relatively low-effort monitoring is capitalizing on this unique opportunity to assess how a modification of this scale may or may not affect stream temperatures during critical low flow periods.

3.5 Goal 5: Administering the Nonpoint Source Program effectively and efficiently as possible

3.5.1 Nonpoint & Implementation Tracking System

To assist Ecology's efforts to reduce nonpoint source pollution and implement TMDLs, field staff routinely conduct watershed evaluations in priority watersheds to assess conditions that may be negatively affecting water quality. These staff also respond to water quality related environmental complaints from the public.

When field staff conduct watershed evaluations and complaint responses, they typically document conditions that lead to nonpoint pollution and collect a variety of site information such as field notes and photographs. These efforts to address nonpoint pollution also require staff to manage additional information, such as communications with property owners and related documents such as letters or other correspondences. To meet both staff and programmatic needs to better collect, store and track nonpoint data in a consistent and streamlined manner, and manage data in a way that can be integrated with other water quality efforts such as TMDLs, the Water Quality Program invested in the development of a state-wide system to collect and store nonpoint data.

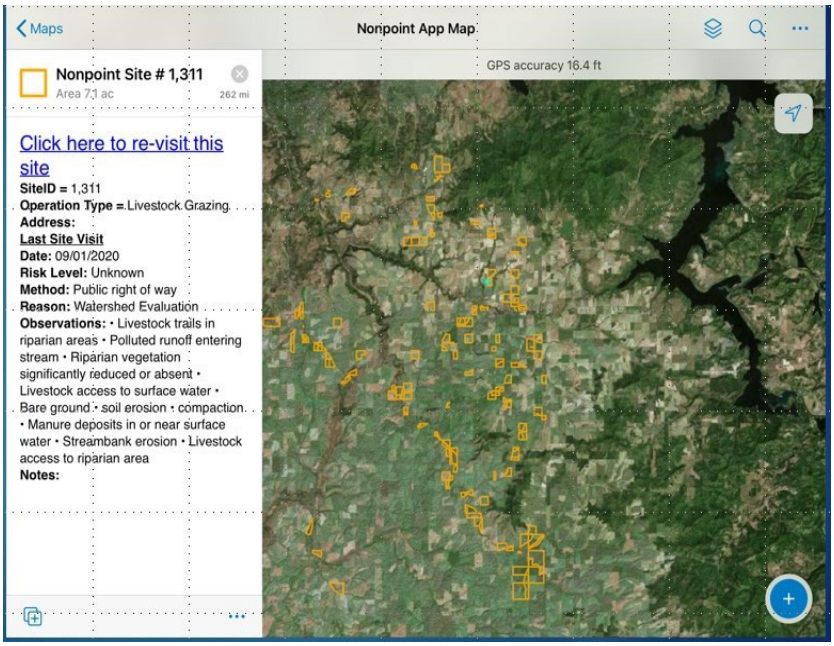


Figure 40 Screen view of the Nonpoint Collector Application shows how Ecology staff can track site visits at particular locations.

The statewide system includes the following components:

- Mobile applications to view, collect and submit data in the field via cloud-based services.
- Web application to view, manage, track, and report data.
- Internal database to store all records/data.

Key nonpoint data to be collected and managed includes:

- Field observations and notes.
- Photographs (geo-located).
- Communications with property owners.
- Best management practice implementation.

Benefits of this system are:

- Streamlined data collection in the field and reduction in equipment needed.
- Increased data quality and consistency (across all regional offices).
- Simplified data management, including data automation.
- Field access to important information.
- Ability to input, store and manage all nonpoint data in a single Ecology database.
- Centralized location for pulling nonpoint data and information.
- Improved ability to track efforts, produce reports and evaluate progress.
- Increased ability to utilize, integrate and synthesize data e.g., spatial information.
- Elimination of the need for long-term, cloud-based data storage.

Nonpoint staff use the system as their primary tool for data collection and management and are trained to utilize NPI for information tracking. We also continually update the system to meet staff and programmatic needs, and training and support documents are available to assist system users.

A single, statewide system for nonpoint data management has many clear advantages. It supports better data consistency and quality, creates predictability in the way nonpoint field work is conducted and significantly increases data accessibility to both staff and management. It also helps with continuity and gaps when staff turnover occurs. Equally important is the actual data that is collected and managed. This information allows users to better assess changes over time at the site and watershed levels to help determine if water quality is improving and can easily be integrated into other watershed level activities such as TMDLs, effectiveness monitoring, source identification monitoring and other project planning and implementation efforts. The system also helps us collect information necessary to meet our reporting requirements found in the settlement agreement.

In 2025, our primary focus was on training and ensuring both new and existing staff became proficient in using the system. In 2026, we will continue hosting NPI workgroup meetings and use these meetings to identify and prioritize system enhancements that further support the Nonpoint Program's work.

3.5.2 Administer grants and loans

Chapter 2 of this report includes information on our program administration and identifies funded activities and BMPs related to our Section 319 Grant. Please review that chapter for more information on the progress we made on Goal 5. Additionally, information has been reported through the Grants Reporting and Tracking System (GRTS).

3.5.3 Keep the Nonpoint Program up-to-date

Nonpoint Program Staff Training

Due to statewide budget freezes, no nonpoint trainings were held in 2025. We hope to resume trainings in 2026.

Completed the 2025 Nonpoint Plan Update

In 2025 we completed an update to Washington State's Water Quality Management Plan to Control Nonpoint Sources of Pollution (Nonpoint Plan). This update was originally due to EPA by December 31, 2025 (per a settlement agreement with Northwest Environmental Advocates), however, Ecology obtained an extension, postponing the due date to February 2026.

More information on the public engagement aspects of the update process can be found in section 3.1.1. A high level overview of content and changes to the Nonpoint Plan can be found in the 2025 Nonpoint Plan Update Reading Guide[28].

The 2025 Nonpoint Plan can be found on Ecology's Nonpoint Pollution webpage[29].

Chapter 4: Conclusions

In 2025, the State of Washington continued to make progress in protecting water quality from nonpoint source pollution. In Washington State one of our greatest strengths is that we have dedicated staff and partners who are committed to working collaboratively to reduce the scope and scale of NPS pollution. This cooperative, solution-oriented environment encourages innovation and adaptation in addressing both longstanding and emerging water quality challenges.

Throughout our NPS management strategy, there is a focus on implementation and clear standards. Moreover, there is an increased emphasis on greater regulatory clarity around what actions are necessary to prevent pollutants from reaching state waters and ensuring compliance with the water quality standards. This year we made a significant step forward in providing more clarity on agricultural BMPs, as we completed the remaining eight chapters of the Clean Water Guidance, submitted to EPA in early 2026.

As EPA is well aware, water quality protection efforts inherently face significant ongoing social, financial, and technical challenges. We are continuing to better refine the right balance of technical assistance, financial assistance, and the use of enforcement tools. Our approach of actively identifying pollution sources in watersheds through watershed evaluations, and then contacting producers and landowners continues to be more standardized around the state. We continue to place a strong emphasis on educating the public about the role they play in protecting water quality to the benefit of their communities. Recognizing the need to provide complex information in a broadly accessible manner, we continue to work with our regional staff to develop outreach materials for use in the field with landowners and partners. Providing technical assistance and promoting available financial assistance to encourage the implementation of effective BMPs represents the bulk of our work.

However, technical and financial assistance will only get us so far. It is critical to have an active and consistent regulatory presence in watersheds in order to be successful in restoring and protecting water quality. This need for a regulatory backstop was again highlighted this year. In watersheds where we use regulatory tools there is more proactive implementation of effective BMPs across the watershed. We continue to utilize our regulatory backstop to support our proactive technical assistance and financial assistance

[28] https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2510042.html
[29] https://ecology.wa.gov/water-shorelines/water-quality/nonpoint-pollution#plan

efforts. In 2025, Ecology nonpoint staff issued 15 warning letters, two administrative orders, and one notice of penalty to agricultural producers with track records of noncompliance and an unwillingness to take advantage of technical and financial assistance resources.

Utilizing the full suite of tools (technical assistance/financial assistance/enforcement) is the key to success. Again, if staff only use technical assistance and financial assistance tools, implementation is generally limited to those that are predisposed to resource protection and willing to change how they manage their land. Likewise, if we only act in an enforcement role, we sacrifice our long-term ability to effectively work in a watershed. It is not effective to be confined to an adversarial role—being able to also wear both technical assistance and financial assistance hats allows us to act in a more collaborative and problem-solving role and maintain constructive partnerships in the watersheds where we work.

The enormity of the NPS pollution problem in Washington State requires that we continually strive to improve our programs, policies, and tools. The many advancements outlined in this report show that we are on the right track. In 2026, we will begin implementing the updated Nonpoint Plan and look forward to continuing our nonpoint efforts through monitoring, watershed evaluations, water cleanup implementation, and grants. This plan update has an emphasis on engagement and continuing to build and develop relationships with partners across the state. We have increased milestones related to outreach and education, and in the five years covered by the new Plan we will complete outreach materials and/or implementation guides for all chapters of the Clean Water Guidance. With the completion of the remaining Voluntary Clean Water Guidance chapters, this guidance will continue to serve as an important asset in efforts to reduce NPS pollution from agricultural sources, informing the technical assistance provided by nonpoint field staff and informing future funding guidance.

Nevertheless, we can and will do more to advance water quality protection in Washington State. We know that opportunities exist to build on our successes, and we continue to work towards improving the following elements of our nonpoint program:

- Better communicate our strategy and goals to the public.
- Further refine the tools we use to document and track water quality problems in watersheds.
- Iteratively improve the strategies we use to achieve clean water goals in priority watersheds.
- Continue to develop external partnerships and facilitate coordination and alignment between funding program guidelines, to support programs that promote compliance with state water quality standards.
- Better communicate the successes achieved by our NPS management program in order to facilitate further acceptance and adoption of effective NPS pollution controls throughout the state.

In all these regards, the continued financial and technical support we receive from EPA has been and will remain critical to supporting both the staff and the actions needed to implement our Nonpoint Source Management Plan and achieve clean water goals throughout the State of Washington.

Appendix A. Ecology's Integrated Grant and Loan Program- project details

Direct Implementation Fund (DIF) Projects

No DIF projects were awarded in 2025.

Table 8. Active Direct Implementation Fund projects.

Agreement Number	Organization	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Funding
WQOG-2023-PaloCD-00003	Palouse Conservation District	Spring Flat Creek Buffer Incentive Program	Palouse Temperature TMDL	Spring Flat Creek is identified as impaired for temperature, dissolved oxygen, bacteria, and pH. The RECIPIENT will establish the Spring Flat Creek Buffer Incentive Program to provide competitive rental rates with long-term contracts for agricultural riparian land taken out of production. The RECIPIENT will enroll multiple landowners into this program, restoring approximately 25 acres of riparian area within the Spring Flat Creek Watershed.	$300,000 (Centennial)
WQOG-2023-SpoCoD-00005	Spokane Conservation District	Hangman Creek Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program Phase 2 – DIF	Hangman Creek Watershed Multiparameter TMDL	This project will continue the Hangman Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program – a hybridized riparian incentive program that builds upon existing conservation programs and producer-reported barriers to participation. This agreement will fund the development and implementation of two contracts to restore approximately 139 acres of riparian area across two dryland agricultural farms in the Hangman watershed to address temperature, turbidity, nutrient, DO and pH parameters.	$1,963,538 (Centennial)

Agreement Number	Organization	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Funding
WQOG-2024-ClarCD-00006	Clark Conservation District	Lacamas Creek – Andersen Riparian	Lower Columbia Salmon Recovery and Fish & Wildlife Subbasin Plan	The RECIPIENT will conserve riparian land, improve water quality in the Lacamas Creek Watershed, and strengthen watershed partnerships by implementing recommended actions from the Lacamas Creek Source Assessment. Riparian forest buffer implementation will occur along Lacamas Creek and associated tributaries improving temperature, bacteria, and DO water quality. Project success will demonstrate the effectiveness of partnership cooperation to conserve riparian land and protect water quality.	$300,000 (Centennial)
WQOG-2024-SpoCoD-00007	Spokane Conservation District	Hangman Watershed – Rock Creek Tributary Livestock BMPs	Hangman Creek Watershed Multiparameter TMDL	The Hangman watershed is currently impaired by excess fecal coliform bacteria, turbidity, pH, nutrients, and low dissolved oxygen. The RECIPIENT will improve water quality by implementing livestock best management practices (BMPS) on a farm located along an unnamed tributary to Rock Creek within the Hangman Creek watershed in Spokane County, WA.	$69,561 (Centennial)

Agreement Number	Organization	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Funding
WQOG-2024-KCWLRD-00008	King County - Water and Land Resources Division	Soos Creek Riparian Restoration Project	Soos Creek multi-parameter (in progress)	This project will improve water quality in Soos Creek by revegetating the riparian zone in a degraded reach of Soos Creek on a property owned by the RECIPIENT. The RECIPIENT will plant 14 acres of 100-215-foot-wide riparian buffer with native trees and shrubs to reduce temperatures in Soos Creek, increase dissolved oxygen levels and improve habitat.	$196,000 (Centennial)
WQOG-2024-ChCoNR-00009	Chelan County - Natural Resource Department	Reindeer Farm Chumstick Creek RM 0.5 Riparian Restoration	Wenatchee River Watershed Temperature TMDL	The RECIPIENT will install 545 riparian plants within a 75-foot-wide riparian buffer across 560 stream feet and 0.82 acres at a reindeer farm along Chumstick Creek near Leavenworth, WA. Installation of these best management practices (BMPs) will address 303d listings for bacteria, dissolved oxygen, and temperature in the Chumstick.	$35,061 (Centennial)
WQOG-2024-KCWLRD-00010	King County - Water and Land Resources Division	Seawest Granston, Middle Bear Creek Riparian Restoration	Little Bear Creek Fecal Coliform Bacteria TMDL	The RECIPIENT will restore four acres including 1,000 linear feet of 200-foot riparian buffers along Bear Creek in Redmond, in Middle Bear Creek Natural Area (Cedar-Sammamish Watershed - WRIA 8). This project is the second phase of a larger ongoing project to improve groundwater connectivity and increase cool base flows during summer. The project benefits water quality in this urbanized watershed, which has temperature, dissolved oxygen, and bacteria	$100,000 (Centennial)

Agreement Number	Organization	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Funding
				impairments being addressed by two TMDLs.	
WQOG-2024-KCWLRD-00011	King County - Water and Land Resources Division	Ward Property Boise Creek Riparian Revegetation	Puyallup River Fecal Coliform TMDL	The RECIPIENT will plant 5.2 acres (1,600 linear feet) of riparian zone on Boise Creek, a tributary to the Lower White River in the Puyallup watershed. Boise Creek is listed as impaired for bacteria, temperature, and pH. The reach to be planted is a high-priority reach within a high-priority subbasin for nonpoint source reduction in two separate TMDL watershed clean-up plans. The project is expected to help shade the stream and reduce pollutant inputs from runoff.	$110,000 (Centennial)

Nonpoint Source Watershed Projects Awarded Grants and Loans in SFY2026

The following projects were offered funding for the SFY2026 Water Quality Combined Funding Program funding cycle. Agreement negotiations began July 1st, 2025.

Table 9. Projects offered funding for SFY 2026.

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-Adopta-00384	Adopt A Stream Foundation	French Creek Water Pollution Prevention Project	Snohomish River Estuary Multiparameter TMDL (Approved)	This project will improve water quality on 303(d) listed French Creek by restoring Cripple Creek, a tributary currently routed to a 1500' ditch adjacent to US Highway 2, to its original trajectory. Cripple Creek will be directed to a new, approx. 950' long meandering channel through its original floodplain. The new channel, and an additional 170' downstream of the new confluence, will be enhanced with up to 15 fish habitat structures and up to a 215' wide planted riparian buffer.		$500,000.00
WQC-2026-AsotCD-00379	Asotin Conservation District	Asotin County Water Quality Enhancement and Monitoring	Snake River Salmon Recovery Plan	The RECIPIENT will work with landowners to plan and implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce water quality issues. BMPs will include streambank stabilization, riparian buffers, exclusion fencing, off-steam watering, instream structures, grazing management plans, and cross fencing. The RECIPIENT will conduct water quality monitoring at strategic locations throughout Asotin County. The RECIPIENT will also provide targeted water quality education and outreach to the local community.	$478,511.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-CascCD-00239	Cascadia Conservation District	Improving Wenatchee Watershed with Restoration and Livestock Practices	Wenatchee River Watershed Multiparameter TMDL	Improving Wenatchee Watershed with Restoration and Livestock Practices Project will increase salmon habitat through stream restoration projects, landowner assistance, and multi-generational watershed education. At least 8.98 acres of riparian buffer will be restored, a waste storage facility and heavy use area will be installed, 10 previous restoration projects will be monitored and maintained, 3 farms will receive Salmon-Safe certifications, and watershed education will be conducted.	$500,000.00	
WQC-2026-ChCoNR-00216	Chelan County - Natural Resource Department	Multi-Phased Water Quality Improvement in Leavenworth Watersheds Project	Wenatchee River Watershed Multiparameter TMDL	The Multi-Phased Water Quality Improvement in Leavenworth Watersheds Project allows for the continuation of a strategy to address 27 temperature, DO, instream flow, pH and bacteria listings in the Chumstick and Icicle watersheds. The project includes 2.27 acres of riparian and floodplain planting and 1500 feet of alluvial water storage restoration in the Chumstick watershed, bank stabilization design for 160 feet of a severely eroded bank on Icicle Creek, monitoring, maintenance, and outreach.	$367,404.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-ClaPUD-00273	Clark Public Utility District	Schaefer Restoration Project 2	East Fork Lewis River TMDL Alternative	The project will restore 30 acres of riparian and wetland habitat, converted to pastureland many years ago, along 2300 feet of stream and side channel to the East Fork Lewis River by removing non-native reed canarygrass monoculture and planting native trees and shrubs that will reduce shade deficit and cool the water. This project complements work implemented upstream recently by Clark Public Utilities and in the vicinity of Clark County and Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership projects.	$273,720.00	
WQC-2026-ClCHHS-00371	Clallam County - Health and Human Services	Clallam County Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) in Dungeness	Puget Sound Action Agenda	Clallam County and other PIC partners will work together in the Dungeness watershed to improve water quality in freshwater streams, Dungeness River and Sequim Bay. There are shellfish closures due to exceedances of fecal coliform for water quality standards in both Dungeness and Sequim Bays.	$484,001.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-ClCoPW-00350	Clark County - Public Works Department	Cougar 3 Enhancement Project Phase 1	Salmon Creek Temperature TMDL	The Cougar 3 Enhancement Project reconnects the incised Cougar Creek channel to its floodplain using valley spanning wood structures, increases wetland and riparian habitat, and reduces bank erosion. Cougar Creek is a tributary to Salmon Creek, an anadromous fish-bearing stream with ongoing TMDLs. The existing Cougar Creek channel is confined, straightened, and disconnected from its floodplain. Its OWQI status is poor, however trends analysis shows that it has improved over that last 20 years.	$230,000.00	
WQC-2026-FoCrCD-00362	Foster Creek Conservation District	North Central Washington Cover Crop and Water Quality Initiative	Moses Coulee and Foster Creek Watershed Plan	The RECIPIENT will continue to improve water quality in North Central Washington to address 303(d) listings for temp, pH and DO. This demonstration project provides cost share to producers interested in trying cover cropping practices, technical assistance for these practices, and monitors soil health and water quality. Outreach and education tools will be developed to share findings of the project and promote adoption of cover crops in the Inland Pacific Northwest.	$500,000.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-InNWLT-00338	Inland Northwest Land Trust	Hobbs Property 700-ac. Conservation Easement for healthy rivers and forests	Pend Oreille River Watershed Temperature TMDL	Matt and Susan Hobbs cherish their 700 acres of highly buildable family land fronting a mile of the Pend Oreille River. They're willing to sell a conservation easement to preclude further subdivision and development, safeguard water quality, and guarantee sustainable forest management that protects the land and waters above and beyond what state law requires. 500k will cover transaction costs and partial payment for a protective easement on 2 million of land.		$499,659.00
WQC-2026-KCWLRD-00268	King County - Water and Land Resources Division	Cemetery Pond Wetland Protection & Restoration	May Creek Basin Plan	The project improves water quality in May Creek by restoring Cemetery Pond wetland through removal of historic fill and establishment of wetland buffers, while also strengthening community partnerships to continue wetland stewardship. Restoring more than 3 acres of newly established wetland & buffer improves the ecological services it provides - increased residence time help to alleviate downstream flows while also improving water quality and providing benefits to Clean Water & Healthy Habitat.	$500,000.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-LuInBC-00378	Lummi Indian Business Council	Skookum Creek Restoration Project, South Fork Nooksack River	South Fork Nooksack Temperature TMDL	To improve temperature and habitat complexity for ESA listed salmonids in WRIA 1, Lummi Nation will construct 33 engineered logjams (ELJs), 23 floodplain ELJs, restore 2.9 acres of floodplain, and plant 11.6 riparian acres in Skookum Creek, a tributary to a temperature impaired reach of the mainstem South Fork Nooksack River. The goal of the project is to restore natural processes to maintain salmonid spawning, rearing and holding habitat, while improving thermal refugia and reduce fine sediment	$494,154.00	
WQC-2026-OkanCD-00325	Okanogan Conservation District	Building Partnerships for Holistic Riparian Resilience and Water Quality	Okanogan Watershed Plan	Okanogan Conservation District in collaboration with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and local landowners, will restore riparian zones in impaired areas of Okanogan County. The project will stabilize stream banks, shade surface waters, and enhance water quality. Workshops on agricultural best practices and community outreach will foster stewardship, ensuring sustainable watershed health and resilience.	$480,411.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-PaloCD-00210	Palouse Conservation District	Riparian Restoration for Healthier Waters in the Palouse River Watershed	Palouse River Watershed Temperature TMDL	This project aims to enhance water quality in multiple tributaries of the Palouse River watershed. The Palouse Conservation District will plan and implement vegetative riparian restoration activities across eight sites and lead education and outreach efforts. Outcomes include the installation of 19.11 acres of riparian buffers, two bio-engineering projects, and the engagement of 3,000 community members.	$472,058.00	
WQC-2026-PaloCD-00326	Palouse Conservation District	Riparian Moo-vement: Udderly Important Restoration at Knott Dairy	Palouse River Watershed Temperature TMDL	Palouse Conservation District will plan and implement vegetative riparian restoration, fencing, monitoring, and maintenance activities on 3,104 streambank feet of Wilbur Creek, a tributary of Union Flat Creek and the Palouse River. The riparian management zone will encompass 9.55 acres at Washington State University's Knott Dairy Center in Pullman. Activities will reduce pollution runoff, improve water quality, and maximize impact by ensuring downstream benefits in the Palouse River Watershed.	$289,843.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-SnCoCN-00296	Snohomish County Conservation Natural Resources Department	Middle Pilchuck Restoration	Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan	This project seeks to address temperature impairments in the Pilchuck River Temperature & Dissolved Oxygen TMDL by adding large woody debris in the mainstem Pilchuck River, enhancing river complexity with bank edge habitat and pools, increasing connectivity to the floodplain and side channels, and increasing conifers. River flow velocities will also be reduced, reducing erosion. This project addresses a lack of habitat for juvenile salmon within the Pilchuck River and reduces local flood risks.	$500,000.00	
WQC-2026-SnohCD-00256	Snohomish Conservation District	Eagle Creek Riparian Restoration Phase II	Stillaguamish River Watershed Temperature TMDL	Snohomish Conservation District will address impaired water quality that threatens ESA-listed Chinook salmon and other salmonids and aquatic life through riparian restoration. This project will restore 5.5 acres of reed canarygrass riparian wetland on Eagle Creek and complete riparian planting maintenance on 6 acres planted during Phase I. Eagle Creek is a tributary and cold water source to the South Fork Stillaguamish River, where water temperature and dissolved oxygen exceed standards.	$297,213.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-SnVWID-00241	Snoqualmie Valley Watershed Improvement District	Cherry Creek Floodplain Reconnection	Snoqualmie River Watershed Temperature TMDL	The project is Phase II of a floodplain reconnection initiative in the Snoqualmie Valley Agricultural Production District. Phase I, completed in 2020, addressed impacts from a 2018 avulsion on Cherry Creek. Phase II aims to enhance water quality by restoring floodplain functions to 5 acres of frequently flooded agricultural land. This will provide filtration of sediment and contaminants, sediment storage, temperature stabilization, erosion reduction, and habitat improvement.	$500,000.00	
WQC-2026-SpoCoD-00292	Spokane Conservation District	PNW Cover Crop & Agronomy Support Demonstration Project	Little Spokane River DO and pH TMDL	This program will support at least 12 farmers in adopting sustainable practices through both financial assistance and agronomic support. The program provides 70 per acre for up to 100 acres per year for three years to incentivize the use of cover crops. In addition to the cost-share, the program will partially fund two regional regenerative agronomists that will provide support and TA through a partnership with experienced farmers from the Spokane Conservation District BioFarming program.	$499,873.00	

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-SpoCoD-00397	Spokane Conservation District	Rock Creek Confluence Stabilization Project - Phase I	Hangman (Latah) Creek Watershed FC, Temp, and Turbidity TMDL	The Spokane Conservation District will work with cooperative adjacent landowners near the confluence of Rock Creek and Hangman Creek to stabilize approximately 1,000 linear feet of unstable and actively eroding stream banks. This project will implement Phase I of restoring/stabilizing a high sediment contribution source of this confluence area. The project will address turbidity from stream bank erosion and build upon previous, planned, and future work in the reach.	$500,000.00	
WQC-2026-SpRiKe-00301	Spokane Riverkeeper	Hangman Creek Riparian and Water Quality Improvement Pilot Project	Hangman Creek Watershed Multiparameter TMDL	The Spokane Riverkeeper will restore water quality, targeting turbidity and temperature in Hangman Creek by piloting innovative methods of planting native riparian vegetation and adapting them to the Hangman Creek watershed. The project will monitor the effectiveness of this project by creating a network of quality monitoring stations, distributing instantaneous data to the public via our website with associated outreach efforts and materials.		$303,160.00

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-SqIsTr-00274	Squaxin Island Tribe	Deschutes Estuary Restoration and 5th Avenue Dam Removal Project	Budd Inlet DO TMDL	The Budd Inlet Dissolved Oxygen TMDL states that removing the 5th Avenue Dam is "the single most important action to restore water quality in Budd Inlet." This grant would fund dam removal design, which is a key part of the larger Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project. The Department of Enterprise Services is implementing this project in close partnership with the Squaxin Island Tribe and with the support of local jurisdictions that would benefit, including Olympia, LOTT, and the Port.	$500,000.00	
WQC-2026-StePar*-00236	Stewardship Partners	Snoqualmie Stewardship Livestock Exclusion and Riparian Restoration	Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan	The Snoqualmie Stewardship Livestock Exclusion and Riparian Restoration project improves water quality by installing 3,500 linear feet (.66 miles) of livestock exclusion fencing and restoring 3,650 linear feet (~9 acres) of riparian habitat along the mainstem Snoqualmie River, an intermittent channel and an oxbow lake with 3 voluntary landowners. The project promotes Best Management Practices (BMPs) as part of Stewardship Partners voluntary incentive-based approach to landowner stewardship.		$246,648.00

Application Number	Applicant	Project Title	Watershed Plans	Project Short Description	Centennial Grant	Section 319 Grant
WQC-2026-WWCoCD-00208	Walla Walla County Conservation District	Touchet RM 35 Restoration Phase 2	Walla Walla River Watershed Temperature TMDL	The Walla Walla County Conservation District (WWCCD) will construct phase 2 on a one-mile reach and create a feasibility report and design for 2.25 miles of the Touchet River west of Prescott, WA. The Touchet River is on the WA State 303(d) list of impaired waterways. Water quality impairments in the Touchet River affect the ecosystem health within the Touchet River corridor and downstream in critical habitats in the Walla Walla and Columbia Rivers.	$500,000.00	
WQC-2026-WWCoCD-00240	Walla Walla County Conservation District	Lower Mill Creek Restoration Phase 2	Walla Walla River Watershed Temperature TMDL	Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct phase 2 on a 0.5-mile stretch of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Walla Walla River in southeast Washington. This project will address existing water quality impairments while improving Mill Creek's ecological function. Restoration activities include installing various logjam and habitat structures and reconnecting side channels. The primary outcome is to reduce TMDL inputs through installing engineered log jams.	$499,996.00	

Summary of pollutant and load reductions per project in 2025.

Table 10 Summary of Load Reductions in 2025.

Pollutant	Total Load Reduction Estimate
Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD)	348,886 LBS/YR
Nitrogen	355,539LBS/YR
Phosphorus	89,270 LBS/YR
Sedimentation-Siltation	56,512 TONS/YR

Table 11 Load Reductions per Project in 2025.

Pollutant	State Project No.	Estimated Load Reduction	Unit of Measure
BOD	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	1585	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	1584	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	4553	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	73	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	8770	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	8168	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	22415	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	301137	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2024-MSRF-00100	400	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	201	LBS/YR
BOD	WQC-2025-Adopta-00162	0.19	LBS/YR

Pollutant	State Project No.	Estimated Load Reduction	Unit of Measure
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	8441	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	8441	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-OkHiAl-00185	33	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	2284	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	41	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	4403	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	4101	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	11319	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	149531	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2023-SpRiKe-00137	0.29	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	166356	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2024-MSRF-00100	2.79	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	101	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2024-SoSaSo-00210	0.01	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2024-SpoCoD-00120	215	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2025-Adopta-00162	4.17	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	248	LBS/YR
Nitrogen	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	12	LBS/YR

Nitrogen	WQC-2025-SpoCoD-00190	5.89	LBS/YR

Pollutant	State Project No.	Estimated Load Reduction	Unit of Measure
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	3129	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	3128	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-OkHiAl-00185	13	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	883	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	14	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	1703	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	1587	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	4408	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	54990	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2023-SpRiKe-00137	0.05	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	19200	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2024-MSRF-00100	0.39	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	39	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2024-SoSaSo-00210	0.01	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2024-SpoCoD-00120	81	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2025-Adopta-00162	0.31	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	88	LBS/YR

Pollutant	State Project No.	Estimated Load Reduction	Unit of Measure
Phosphorus	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	4.46	LBS/YR
Phosphorus	WQC-2025-SpoCoD-00190	2.12	LBS/YR

Pollutant	State Project No.	Estimated Load Reduction	Unit of Measure
Sediment	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	2476	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	2475	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-OkHiAl-00185	24	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	711	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	11	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	1370	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	1276	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	3502	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	43245	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2023-SpRiKe-00137	0.03	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	1254	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2024-MSRF-00100	0.2	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	31	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2024-SoSaSo-00210	0.01	TONS/YR

Sediment	WQC-2024-SpoCoD-00120	65	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2025-Adopta-00162	0.03	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	67	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	3.43	TONS/YR
Sediment	WQC-2025-SpoCoD-00190	1.67	TONS/YR

Best Management Practices implemented in 2025

Table 12. Summary of BMPs Implemented in 2025.

BMP Type	Total Acres / Linear Length
Conservation Tillage Residue Management	1040 Acres
Cut Bank Stabilization	4.5 Acres 1050 Feet
Fence	2973 Feet
Heavy Use Area Protection	150 Square Feet
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	6967Feet 51 Acres
Natural Channel Restoration	6422 Feet 2.57 Acres
Riparian Forest Buffer	35,274 Feet 92.75 Acres
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	3000 Feet 3.5 acres
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	5871 Feet 31.4 Acres
Tree/Shrub Establishment	9578 Feet 15.4 Acres
Watering Facility	100 Square Feet
Wetland Enhancement	1500 Feet 0.8 Acres

Table 13. Best Management Practices Implemented per Project in 2025.

BMP	State Project Number	Project Title	Installed	Unit of measure
Conservation Tillage Residue Management	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	Operation Residue: (Under)cover Crops & Direct Seeding on the Palouse	1040	AC
Cut Bank Stabilization	WQC-2025-SpoCoD-00190	Hangman Creek Composite Toe Stabilization Project	1050	FT
Cut Bank Stabilization	WQC-2025-SpoCoD-00190	Hangman Creek Composite Toe Stabilization Project	4.5	AC
Fence	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	Newaukum Creek Revegetation 2.0	2973	FT
Heavy Use Area Protection	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	Newaukum Creek Revegetation 2.1	150	SQUARE FEET
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2023-SFEG-00162	Little Carey's Stream and Wetland Restoration	1167	FT
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2023-SFEG-00162	Little Carey's Stream and Wetland Restoration	7.59	AC
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2024-SoSaSo-00210	Segelsen Stillaguamish Riparian Restoration Phase II	1600	FT
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2024-SoSaSo-00210	Segelsen Stillaguamish Riparian Restoration Phase II	9.52	AC
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2025-WashPW-00077	Washougal city of - Public Works Department	1900	FT
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2025-WashPW-00077	Washougal city of - Public Works Department	11.2	AC

BMP	State Project Number	Project Title	Installed	Unit of measure
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2026-ClaPUD-00273	Schaefer Restoration Project 2	2300	FT
Invasive Species/Noxious Weed Control	WQC-2026-ClaPUD-00273	Schaefer Restoration Project 2	23	AC
Natural Channel Restoration	WQC-2023-BellPW-00074	Padden Creek 24th-30th Streets Restoration Phase 2	875	FT
Natural Channel Restoration	WQC-2023-BellPW-00074	Padden Creek 24th-30th Streets Restoration Phase 3	49347	SQUARE FEET
Natural Channel Restoration	WQC-2023-ChCoNR-00088	Peshastin Watershed Alluvial Water Storage and Riparian Restoration	2765	FT
Natural Channel Restoration	WQC-2023-ChCoNR-00088	Peshastin Watershed Alluvial Water Storage and Riparian Restoration	36000	SQUARE FEET
Natural Channel Restoration	WQC-2025-ChCoNR-00136	Chumstick Basin Integrated Water Flow and Temperature Improvement	2782	FT
Natural Channel Restoration	WQC-2025-ChCoNR-00136	Chumstick Basin Integrated Water Flow and Temperature Improvement	26907	
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2022-ChCoNR-00070	Nason Creek TMDL and Thermal Refuge	762	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2022-ChCoNR-00070	Nason Creek TMDL and Thermal Refuge	0.98	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2022-SoSaSo-00004	Ladd Carpenter Creek Riparian Restoration	1200	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2022-SoSaSo-00004	Ladd Carpenter Creek Riparian Restoration	8.94	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2022-SoSaSo-00005	Anderson's Bambooland Riparian Restoration Phase I	1850	FT

BMP	State Project Number	Project Title	Installed	Unit of measure
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2022-SoSaSo-00005	Anderson's Bambooland Riparian Restoration Phase I	6.2	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-ChCoNR-00039	Leavenworth Watersheds - Phased Water Quality Improvement Project	582	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-ChCoNR-00039	Leavenworth Watersheds - Phased Water Quality Improvement Project	0.57	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-ChCoNR-00088	Peshastin Watershed Alluvial Water Storage and Riparian Restoration	2126	FT

BMP	State Project Number	Project Title	Installed	Unit of measure
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-ChCoNR-00088	Peshastin Watershed Alluvial Water Storage and Riparian Restoration	0.85	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	Water Quality Improvements on Yellowhawk Creek	6150	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-KooCom-00055	Water Quality Improvements on Yellowhawk Creek	9.16	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	Operation Residue: (Under)cover Crops & Direct Seeding on the Palouse	2100	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00005	Operation Residue: (Under)cover Crops & Direct Seeding on the Palouse	9.6	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	Partnership to Restore Riparian Areas in the Lower Fourmile Creek Watershed	6578	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	Partnership to Restore Riparian Areas in the Lower Fourmile Creek Watershed	14.4	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-SFEG-00162	Little Carey's Stream and Wetland Restoration	1167	FT

Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-SFEG-00162	Little Carey's Stream and Wetland Restoration	2.35	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-SpRiKe-00137	Rock and Hangman Creeks Riparian Restoration and Water Quality Improvement	1050	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2023-SpRiKe-00137	Rock and Hangman Creeks Riparian Restoration and Water Quality Improvement	2.3	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	Newaukum Creek Revegetation 2.1	3200	FT

BMP	State Project No.	Project Title	Installed	Unit of Measure
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	Newaukum Creek Revegetation 2.1	13	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2024-MSRF-00100	Methow Riparian and Cold Water Restoration Project - Phase 1	2390	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2024-MSRF-00100	Methow Riparian and Cold Water Restoration Project - Phase 2	7.29	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2024-SoSaSo-00210	Segelsen Stillaguamish Riparian Restoration Phase II	1600	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2024-SoSaSo-00210	Segelsen Stillaguamish Riparian Restoration Phase II	9.52	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2025-Adopta-00162	West Fork Quilceda Creek Water Quality Partnership Tulalip Tribes & AASF 2	1719	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2025-Adopta-00162	West Fork Quilceda Creek Water Quality Partnership Tulalip Tribes & AASF 3	4	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	Riparian Restoration in the Greater Spokane River Watershed	1300	FT
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2025-LandCo-00017	Riparian Restoration in the Greater Spokane River Watershed	1.8	AC
Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2025-MCFEG-00142	Improving Lower Yakima River Water Quality through Riparian Restoration	1500	FT

Riparian Forest Buffer	WQC-2025-MCFEG-00142	Improving Lower Yakima River Water Quality through Riparian Restoration	1.8	AC
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	Spring Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement	3000	FT
Riparian Herbaceous Cover	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	Spring Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement	3.5	AC

BMP	State Project No.	Project Title	Installed	Unit of Measure
Stream Channel Stabilization	WQC-2024-SpoCoD-00120	Hangman Creek Agricultural Sediment Abatement Project	2100	FT
Stream Channel Stabilization	WQC-2024-SpoCoD-00120	Hangman Creek Agricultural Sediment Abatement Project	15.8	AC
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	WQC-2023-LoCFEG-00134	SF Toutle Lower Bronwell Riparian Restration	4171	FT
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	WQC-2023-LoCFEG-00134	SF Toutle Lower Bronwell Riparian Restration	30.2	AC
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	WQC-2025-WashPW-00077	Washougal city of - Public Works Department	1700	FT
Stream Habitat Improvement and Management	WQC-2025-WashPW-00077	Washougal city of - Public Works Department	1.2	AC
Tree/Shrub Establishment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	Partnership to Restore Riparian Areas in the Lower Fourmile Creek Watershed	6578	FT

Tree/Shrub Establishment	WQC-2023-PaloCD-00009	Partnership to Restore Riparian Areas in the Lower Fourmile Creek Watershed	14	AC
Tree/Shrub Establishment	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	Spring Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement	3000	FT
Tree/Shrub Establishment	WQC-2024-PaloCD-00045	Spring Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement	1	AC

BMP	State Project No.	Project Title	Installed	Unit of Measure
Watering Facility	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	Newaukum Creek Revegetation 2.1	0	FT
Watering Facility	WQC-2024-KiCoDi-00167	Newaukum Creek Revegetation 2.1	100	SQUARE FEET
Wetland Enhancement	WQC-2025-WashPW-00077	Washougal city of - Public Works Department	1500	FT
Wetland Enhancement	WQC-2025-WashPW-00077	Washougal city of - Public Works Department	0.8	AC

Appendix B. Forest Practices Adaptive Management Program Results

The following document includes the status of CMER and Non-CMER Clean Water Act milestones as of July 2025. The 2025 milestones update to the Board was delivered at the August 2025 Board meeting.

STATE OF WASHINGTON

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

PO Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600 • 360-407-6000

July 23, 2025

TO: Forest Practices Board

FROM: Chris Briggs, Forestry Policy Lead, Washington Department of Ecology

SUBJECT: Clean Water Act Assurances Milestones Update

The Washington State Department of Ecology committed to providing the Forest Practices Board with periodic updates on progress to meet corrective milestones established to retain Clean Water Act 303(d) Assurances (Assurances) for the Forest Practices Rules (Title 222 WAC) and Forest Practices Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP, 2006). The last update to the Board was delivered in August 2024. Ecology continues to support the adaptive management program (AMP) and track the progress of the corrective milestones.

Over the last year, the following two additional milestones have been completed:

- Scoping for the Water Temperature and Amphibian Use in Type Np Waters with Discontinuous Surface Flow Project, and
- Final report for the Westside Type F Riparian Management Zone Exploratory Study (Westside Type F Exploratory Study)

In addition to the milestones identified in this memo, Ecology continues to monitor the Board's rulemaking process to improve water quality protections for non-fish perennial streams in Western Washington. Ecology will continue to actively participate in this rulemaking process and provide feedback to the Board and DNR when appropriate. Based on the findings of the Hard and Soft Rock studies, and consistent with the need for action as recommended by TFW Policy consensus, progress on a new Type Np buffer rule remains critical for improving water quality protection on Forest Practices HCP-covered lands.

Attached are two tables showing the milestones and their status. Points of note are in red font and reflect changes since our last update in 2024:

- Table 1 lists the CMER Research Milestones. Status notes indicate progress of the Clean Water Act (CWA) project. Note that some CWA project activities may have

completed scoping and study design but be delayed or off-track for implementation or completion.

- Table 2 shows the non-CMER project milestones. These milestones are implemented outside of the Cooperative Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research (CMER) program and are largely within the control of the Forest Regulation Operations Section of the DNR or the Timber, Fish and Wildlife Policy Committee (Policy).

Please contact me with any questions or concerns at (360) 890-5882.

Attachments: Table 1. Summary CMER Research Milestones and their status.

Table 2. Summary Non-CMER Project Milestones and their status.

Table 14. Summary CMER Research Milestones and their status..

Year	Description of Milestone	Status as of July 2025
2009	Complete: Hardwood Conversion – Temperature Case Study (Completed as data report)	**Completed** June 2010
	Study Design: Wetland Mitigation Effectiveness	**Completed** October 2010
2010	Study Design: Type N Experimental in Incompetent Lithology	**Completed** August 2011
	Complete: Mass Wasting Prescription-Scale Monitoring	**Completed** June 2012
	Scope: Mass Wasting Landscape-Scale Effectiveness	**Milestone Eliminated**
	Scope: Eastside Type N Effectiveness	**Completed** November 2013
2011	Complete: Solar Radiation/Effective Shade	**Completed** June 2012
	Complete: Bull Trout Overlay Temperature	**Completed** May 2014
	Implement: Type N Experimental in Incompetent Lithology	**Completed** October 2017
	Study Design: Mass Wasting Landscape-Scale Effectiveness	**Milestone Eliminated**
2012	Complete: Buffer Integrity-Shade Effectiveness	**Completed** November 2018
	Literature Synthesis: Forested Wetlands Literature Synthesis	**Completed** January 2015
	Scoping: Examine the effectiveness of the RILs in representing slopes at risk of mass wasting.	**Completed** April 2017
	Study Design: Eastside Type N Effectiveness	**Completed** March 2018

Year	Description of Milestone	Status as of July 2025
2013	Scoping: Forested Wetlands Effectiveness Study	**Completed** December 2016
	Wetlands Program Research Strategy	**Completed** January 2015
	Scope: Road Prescription-Scale Effectiveness Monitoring	**Completed** March 2016
	Study Design: Examine the effectiveness of the RILs in representing slopes at risk of mass wasting.	**Completed** Study is being designed and implemented in five separate projects. September 2023
	Implement: Eastside Type N Effectiveness	**Underway** Study should be complete by 2028.
2014	Complete: Type N Experimental in Basalt Lithology	**Completed** August 2017
	Study Design: Road Prescription-Scale Effectiveness Monitoring	**Completed** February 2017
	Scope: Type F Experimental Buffer Treatment	**Completed** December 2015
	Implementation: Examine the effectiveness of the RILs in representing slopes at risk of mass wasting Renamed: Unstable Slopes Criteria - Empirical Evaluation of Shallow Landslide Susceptibility, Frequency, and Runout by Landform	**Underway** Final report expected in 2026.
	Study Design: Forested Wetlands Effectiveness Study	**Completed** December 2019
2015	Complete: First Cycle of Extensive Temperature Monitoring	**Completed** April 2019
	Scope: Watershed Scale Assess. of Cumulative Effects	**Off Track** Project intended to follow other effectiveness monitoring studies. Funding to begin in 2029.

Year	Description of Milestone	Status as of July 2025
	Scope: Amphibians in Intermittent Streams Renamed: Water Temperature and Amphibian Use in Type Np Waters with Discontinuous Surface Flow Project	**Completed** November 2024
2017	Study design: Watershed Scale Assess. of Cumulative Effects	**Off Track** Expected 2029
2018	Complete: Roads Sub-basin Effectiveness	**Not Progressing** Project to be re-scoped in 2029 with completion in 2032
	Implement: Watershed Scale Assess. of Cumulative Effects	**Off Track** Implementation in 2030
	Complete: Type N Experimental in Incompetent Lithology	**Completed** August 2021
	Complete: Type F Experimental Buffer Treatment (Pilot study phase named: Westside Type F Riparian Prescription Effectiveness Project Pilot Study) Renamed: Westside Type F Riparian Management Zone Exploratory Study	**Completed** February 2025
2019	Complete: Eastside Type N Effectiveness	**Underway** Projected completion in 2028
2019	Complete: Forested Wetlands Effectiveness Study	**Underway** Expected June 2028
2024	Complete: Examine the effectiveness of the RILs in representing slopes at risk of mass wasting.	**Underway** Study is being implemented in five separate projects. Expected 2028

Table 15. Summary Non-CMER Project Milestones and their status.

Year	Summarized Description of Milestone	Status as of July 2025
2009	July 2009: CMER budget and work plan will reflect CWA priorities.	**Completed** October 2010
	September 2009: Identify a strategy to secure stable, adequate, long-term funding for the AMP.	**Completed** October 2010
	October 2009: Complete Charter for the Compliance Monitoring Stakeholder Guidance Committee.	**Completed** December 2009
	December 2009: Initiate a process for flagging CMER projects that are having trouble with their design or implementation.	**Completed** November 2010
	December 2009: Compliance Monitoring Program to develop plans and timelines for assessing compliance with rule elements such as water typing, shade, wetlands, haul roads and channel migration zones.	**Completed** March 2010
	December 2009: Evaluate the existing process for resolving field disputes and identify improvements that can be made within existing statutory authorities and review times.	**Completed** November 2010
	December 2009: Complete training sessions on the AMP protocols and standards for CMER, and Policy and offer to provide this training to the Board. Identify and implement changes to improve performance or clarity at the soonest practical time.	**Completed** May 2016
2010	January 2010: Ensure opportunities during regional RMAP annual reviews to obtain input from Ecology, WDFW, and tribes on road work priorities.	**Completed** September 2011
	February 2010: Develop a prioritization strategy for water type modification review.	**Completed** March 2013
	March 2010: Establish online guidance that clarifies existing policies and procedures pertaining to water typing.	**Completed** March 2013

Year	Summarized Description of Milestone	Status as of July 2025
	June 2010: Review existing procedures and recommended any improvements needed to effectively track compliance at the individual landowner level.	**Completed** November 2010
	June 2010: Establish a framework for certification and refresher courses for all participants responsible for regulatory or CMP assessments.	**Completed** September 2013
	July 2010: Assess primary issues associated with riparian noncompliance (using the CMP data) and formulate a program of training, guidance, and enforcement believed capable of substantially increasing the compliance rate.	**Completed** August 2012
	July 2010: Ecology in Partnership with DNR and in Consultation with the SFL advisory committee will develop a plan for evaluating the risk posed by SFL roads for the delivery of sediment to waters of the state.	**Completed** December 2018
	July 2010: Develop a strategy to examine the effectiveness of the Type N rules in protecting water quality at the soonest possible time that includes: a) Rank and fund Type N studies as highest priorities for research, b) Resolve issue with identifying the uppermost point of perennial flow by July 2012, and c) Complete a comprehensive literature review examining effect of buffering headwater streams by September 2012.	**Underway** Part 'b' to be addressed after water typing system rule and Board Manual work is completed (BM 23 part 3).
	October 2010: Conduct an initial assessment of trends in compliance and enforcement actions taken at the individual landowner level.	**Completed** November 2010
	October 2010: Design a sampling plan to gather baseline information sufficient to reasonably assess the success of alternate plan process.	**Completed** December 2014
	December 2010: Initiate process of obtaining an independent review of the Adaptive Management Program.	**Completed** February 2021

Year	Summarized Description of Milestone	Status as of July 2025
2011	December 2011: Complete an evaluation of the relative success of the water type change review strategy.	**Completed** March 2013
	December 2011: Provide more complete summary information on progress of industrial landowner RMAPs.	**Completed** September 2011
2012	October 2012: Reassess if the procedures being used to track enforcement actions at the individual landowner level provides sufficient information to potentially remove assurances or otherwise take corrective action.	**Completed** June 2012
	Initiate a program to assess compliance with the Unstable Slopes rules.	**Completed** October 2017
2013	November 2013: Prepare a summary report that assesses the progress of SFLs in bringing their roads into compliance with road best management practices, and any general risk to water quality posed by relying on the checklist RMAP process for SFLs.	**Completed** June 2024

Status terminology:

"Completed" Milestone has been satisfied (includes those both on schedule and late).

"On Track" Work is occurring that appears likely to satisfy milestone on schedule.

"Underway" Work towards milestone is actively proceeding, but likely off schedule.

"Earlier Stage Underway" Project initiated but is at an earlier stage (off schedule) then the listed milestone.

"Not Progressing" No work has begun, or work initiated has effectively stopped.

"Off Track" 1) No work has begun and inadequate time remains, 2) key stakeholders are not interested in completing the milestone, or 3) attempt at solution was inadequate and no further effort at developing an acceptable solution is planned.

Appendix C. Priority Watersheds for 2026

Planned work within each focal watershed is described below. See section 3.2.1 for an introductory overview of the work of nonpoint field staff. For watersheds where staff conducted work in 2025, see section 3.2.1 for introductory information and maps for each watershed; in the interest of conciseness, we have elected not to repeat that information in this section. In the case that a priority watershed has been newly added for 2026, a brief introduction and map will be provided.

SWRO Priority Watersheds

Priority Watershed: Annas Bay and Skokomish River

Implementing: Puget Sound Partnership Action Agenda, Skokomish River Basin Fecal Coliform TMDL

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Ecology staff will provide landowners and local community members with resources outlining nonpoint water quality education, by distributing outreach materials such as mailers and brochures.
- In-person town hall meeting open to the public where staff will present on nonpoint work in the area and answer questions. Two meetings are scheduled for 2026.

Financial Assistance:

- Ecology staff will provide landowners with information regarding financial assistance through local partners for BMP implementation, and grant funding opportunities.

Partner Coordination:

- Staff will meet with Mason CD to discuss ongoing work and sites of concern via informal meetings scheduled as needed.
- Staff will meet with Mason Environmental Health to discuss ongoing work and exchange data via informal meetings scheduled as needed.
- Staff will regularly attend Mason Clean Water District Advisory Committee to share updates on ongoing work and receive data; these meetings are held quarterly.
- Staff will meet with Skokomish Tribe to discuss sites of interest and ongoing work via informal meeting scheduled as needed.
- Staff will meet with Squaxin Island Tribe quarterly to discuss sites of interest and ongoing work.
- Staff will regularly attend the Hood Canal Coordination Council PIC meeting which is held quarterly to update partners on ongoing work and receive data from partners.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Ecology staff will conduct at least one watershed evaluation primarily during the rainy season (October-May). Additionally, evaluations will also be conducted throughout the year as shellfish pollution concerns arise and complaints are referred to Ecology.

- Staff will respond to verified nonpoint reported concerns in the area submitted through Ecology's complaint system (ERTS).

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Ecology Staff will follow nonpoint program procedures to respond to sites identified during watershed assessments or via reported concerns. If local partners are not currently working with the responsible party, staff will respond by phone, email, or letter after deeming the site of concern to protect water quality.

Monitoring Activities:

- Ecology Staff will utilize monitoring data from Department of Health, Squaxin Island Tribe, and Mason County Environmental Health to prioritize areas within the watershed.

Priority Watershed: Boise, Pussyfoot, and Second Creeks—Lower White River, Enumclaw Plateau Tributaries

Implementing: Puyallup Watershed Fecal Coliform TMDL; Lower White River pH TMDL

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

Ongoing:

- **Continue to maintain and update Enumclaw Partnership webpage:** This webpage compiles reports and data, as well as Partnership meeting minutes and presentation slides. The page is a resource both for Partnership members and for landowners.
- **Translations:** Ensured that all E & O materials are translated into Spanish.

Projected:

- **Scope a mailer campaign project:** Working with SWRO Nonpoint's Education and Outreach Specialist, design a mailer. Identify targeted areas where a joint mailer and/or a door-knocking campaign may be warranted. Use data along with Ecology field observations to determine areas where a mailer may have positive outcomes. Use information from the 2022 mailer campaign to inform future efforts.
- **Scope what it would take to overhaul and combine several current public-facing webpages about water quality cleanup efforts on the Enumclaw Plateau.** Working with SWRO Nonpoint's Education and Outreach specialist and ECY IT, determine the possibility of creating such a website, the anticipated timeline and costs, etc.
- **Scope a town hall-style meeting:** Working with SWRO Nonpoint's Education and Outreach Specialist and others, we will use the Town Hall Meeting template developed in Thurston County to scope a similar meeting series in the Enumclaw area. The purpose of this meeting would be to give community members an opportunity to ask questions of Ecology and to share our work throughout the watershed.

Financial Assistance:

Ongoing:

- **Provide partners with front-end feedback on grant proposals:** In an effort to encourage and assist our partners to draft successful grant proposals, we will coordinate with grants staff to provide grantees with the option to submit a notice of intent and receive feedback prior to the fall submittal deadline for the Water Quality Combined grant program. If additional Direct Implementation Fund (DIF) money becomes available, facilitate partner applications.
- **Provide information to landowners**: We will continue to provide information about technical and financial assistance available to landowners as they move forward with BMP implementation.
- **Manage awarded Direct Implementation Fund (DIF) grant project**: We will continue to work with awardee King County Water and Land Resources Department to manage the $110,000 grant for the riparian project on Boise Creek.

Partner Coordination:

Ongoing:

- **Continue to hold sites of concern prioritization meetings with partners:** Coordinate and facilitate meetings with partners directly involved with BMP implementation on the plateau to discuss and receive feedback about future and ongoing enforcement activities. This will include standing, recurring 1:1 meetings with Muckleshoot Tribe natural resources staff, 1:1 meetings with WSDA staff to coordinate on dairy properties and those undergoing CAFO permitting, quarterly and ad-hoc small group meetings with King Conservation District staff, and frequent communication with King County Stormwater Services staff.
- **Hold quarterly watershed partnership meetings:** Continue to hold quarterly meetings with Tribal, federal, state, and local water quality monitoring staff to share data, facilitating the coordination and prioritization of implementation efforts.
- **Continue to participate in monthly King County Peer-to-Peer engagement meetings:** Provide feedback and direction to the peer-to-peer engagement group.
- **Continue to host monthly interagency task force meetings:** Convene various agency staff to share information on a complex site where many violations are taking place. These meetings will continue until the case is resolved.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

Ongoing:

- **Continue to identify sites of concern:** Continue to work in the field to check on existing sites of concern and identify additional sites of concern that have not yet been prioritized. Systematically identify and document sites of concern in the NPI database.
- **Continue to use monitoring data to refine nonpoint efforts:** As additional monitoring data becomes available, staff will use it to refine the existing prioritization scheme for contacting sites of concern.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

Ongoing:

- **Provide technical assistance and compliance follow-up to area livestock owners:** Ecology will work to connect with area livestock owners to provide technical assistance, following the priorities laid out in

the reach prioritization scheme developed in 2024. We will simultaneously continue to work with landowners who have already received contacts.

- **Compliance steps:** Meanwhile, nonpoint staff will continue working on compliance steps for properties that have previously received TA1, TA2, and warning letters and have been in conversation with Nonpoint staff. Staff will send warning letters for several properties that have not achieved voluntary compliance, work on administrative orders for select sites, and prepare additional penalties for a property with an administrative order that has not followed the order and has not paid previous penalties.
- **Site visits:** Ecology staff will conduct in-person site visits—sometimes joint site visits with King Conservation District staff or other partners—on parcels that have been identified as sites of concern. When necessary, site visits will be conducted with an interpreter onsite as some landowners on the Plateau are Spanish speakers. Site visits have led to landowners taking recommended steps or Ecology taking further enforcement actions.
- **Continue to increase language access in technical assistance and compliance actions**: Continue to include Spanish translation taglines in letters to Enumclaw residents, as well as translated versions of handouts (such as the Landowner Self Assessment Tool) and translated versions of the letters themselves. Continue to use LanguageLink or on-site interpretation services with Spanish-speaking landowners. Continue to use State translation vendor contracts to translate documents such as farm plans. Staff will continue to prioritize facilitating language access so that all landowners on the Plateau, regardless of language, can help us protect water quality in the Lower White River watershed.
- **Evaluate and respond to incoming ERTS complaints:** Continue to respond directly or coordinate with WSDA, King County, and City of Enumclaw staff to address nonpoint-related pollution sources.

Monitoring Activities:

- Investigatory Collection: Ecology staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis.
- Ecology TMDL staff will perform monthly monitoring as a part of the TMDL, and King County staff will perform bi-monthly monitoring as part of their stormwater permit obligations. Both sets of data will be used by Ecology Nonpoint staff to help inform where to focus landowner education, outreach, and enforcement efforts.

Priority Watershed: Deschutes River, Percival Creek, & Budd Inlet Tributaries

Implementing: Deschutes River, Percival Creek, & Budd Inlet Tributaries Multiparameter TMDL

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

Projected:

- **Participate in biannual Town Hall-style meetings:** Nonpoint staff will execute on the plan for a Town Hall 'Meet Your Regulators' meeting in partnership with Thurston County, Thurston Conservation District, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service. The town hall meeting will occur on January 22, 2026 at Brighton Hall Grange in Tumwater, WA. The group of partners has decided to move forward with two such meetings each year. The following meeting will be in September 2026. Ecology Nonpoint staff may participate as panelists (a la the January 2026 pilot), have outreach tables available, or participate in another way.
- **Scope a mailer campaign project:** Working with SWRO Nonpoint's Education and Outreach Specialist, design a mailer. Identify targeted areas where a joint mailer and/or a door-knocking campaign may be warranted. Use Thurston County Environmental Health ambient monitoring and stream segmentation data along with Ecology field observations to determine areas where a mailer may have positive outcomes. Possible options include Reichel Creek and Chambers Creek.
- **Scope a website about Deschutes River nonpoint pollution cleanup efforts, aimed at the public.** Working with SWRO Nonpoint's Education and Outreach specialist and ECY IT, determine the possibility of creating such a website, the anticipated timeline and costs, etc.

Financial Assistance:

Ongoing:

- **Provide partners with front-end feedback on grant proposals:** In an effort to encourage and assist our partners to draft successful grant proposals, we will coordinate with grants staff to provide grantees with the option to submit a notice of intent and receive feedback prior to the fall submittal deadline for the Water Quality Combined Funding Program. We will also coordinate with grants staff to evaluate whether implementation projects at nonpoint sites of concern would be appropriate for a DIF funding application.
- **Provide information to landowners**: We will provide information about technical and financial assistance available to landowners as they move forward with BMP implementation.

Partner Coordination:

Ongoing:

- **Hold sites of concern prioritization meetings with state and local partners and stakeholders:** Ecology staff will coordinate and facilitate meetings with partners directly involved with BMP implementation to discuss and receive feedback about future and ongoing enforcement activities. This will include 1:1 meetings with Squaxin Island Tribe natural resources staff, 1:1 meetings with WSDA staff to coordinate on dairy properties and those undergoing CAFO permitting, and every-other-month 1:1 meetings with Thurston Conservation District staff. In addition, we will meet with Thurston County Environmental Health program staff as needed to coordinate on parcels of concern.
- **Continue to facilitate multi-agency Task Force**: Beginning in 2024, Ecology staff brought together partners from several Thurston County programs, WDFW, DNR, Thurston Conservation District, WSDA, Olympic Region Clean Air Agency, and Ecology programs such as SEA, HWTR, Water Resources, Construction Stormwater, and Toxics Cleanup Program to coordinate regarding a particularly challenging compliance case. These monthly meetings are ongoing and are a chance for programs to keep each other updated and stay on the same page regarding the case. Ecology staff will continue to facilitate the meetings until the case is resolved.
- **Attend partner meetings to build relationships and knowledge about goings-on in the watershed:** Ecology staff will attend monthly WRIA 13 Lead Entity meetings as well as quarterly Thurston Shellfish Protection District Pollution Identification and Control meetings.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

Ongoing:

- **Watershed evaluations:** Staff will re-check select sites of concern as needed this season, and next season begin the process of re-checking all sites. Staff will document sites of concern in the Nonpoint Implementation (NPI) database.
- **Sites of concern ranking/prioritization:** Staff prioritize sites following watershed evaluations and will continue to reassess site risk and reassign risk as needed.

Projected:

- **Explore options for viewing more parcels:** Many parcels along the Deschutes, a navigable river, are not visible from the public right-of-way. Explore the possibility of wading or floating sections of the Deschutes. Cycling along sections of the public Chehalis-Western Trail and Yelm-Tenino Trail may also afford views that could not be obtained by car. Partners at the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group and the Squaxin Island Tribe will assist in this effort as they are familiar with most of the river sections we are interested in, and are interested in collaborating with us.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

Ongoing:

- **Provide technical assistance to area livestock owners:** Ecology will work to connect with area livestock owners to provide technical assistance.
- **Letters and other communications:** Staff will continue following up with properties that have received letters but still need to implement BMPs.

- **Site visits:** As we talk with landowners, the opportunity for site visits may arise. We will try to encourage as many site visits as possible, preferably joint site visits with technical service provider partners.
- **Compliance steps:** Nonpoint staff will continue to work on one complex property that has received an administrative order and has appealed the order. We may levy a penalty on the property or may work on a settlement, depending on how the appeal litigation progresses. We will evaluate if further compliance action is needed on this and other properties. Several properties in the basin are due for warning letters and one other property may be due for an administrative order.
- **Evaluate and respond to incoming ERTS complaints:** Nonpoint staff will respond directly to or coordinate with WSDA and Thurston County to address nonpoint-related pollution sources.

Projected:

- **New technical assistance letters:** Staff will select five to ten of the highest-risk properties that have not received letters from Ecology yet. These properties will receive initial TA letters.

Monitoring Activities:

- Investigatory Collection: Ecology staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis.

Priority Watershed: Lacamas Creek Watershed

Implementing: Lacamas Creek Partnership for Clean Water Action Agenda

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

Ongoing:

- **Public Events:**
    - Ecology staff will continue to coordinate with the Clark County Conservation District, Clark County Public Health, Clark Public Utilities on water quality workshops and participate in public outreach events, when appropriate.
    - Ecology staff will present at the April 25, 2026, Earth Day event in the City of Washougal.

Financial Assistance:

Ongoing:

- **Funding:** Ecology may continue to fund the Poop Smart Clark Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program. Expect a determination in summer of 2026. The program is currently on hold.
- **Information sharing**: Ecology staff will continue to provide landowners with financial assistance opportunities for BMP implementation on their properties and assist local partners with grant funding opportunities.

Partner Coordination:

Ongoing:

- **Lacamas Creek Partnership:** SWRO staff will continue to collaborate and attend annual meetings with Clark County, City of Camas, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Clark Conservation District, and the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service.
- **Conservation District:** SWRO staff will continue to attend monthly Clark Conservation District Board Meetings and coordinate with CD staff on addressing pollution concerns.
- **PIC:** SWRO staff will continue to participate in monthly PIC "Poop Smart" meetings and provide updates on compliance activities.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

Ongoing:

- **Watershed evaluation**: Ecology staff will conduct watershed evaluations primarily during the rainy season with a goal of five evaluations.
- **Complaint/referral response**: Ecology staff will continue to respond to nonpoint water quality concerns via partner referrals or through ecology's complaint system. Staff will continue to assess progress on existing sites of concern.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

Ongoing:

- **Complaint Response:** Staff will continue to verify and respond to nonpoint concerns submitted through Ecology's reporting system (ERTS).
- **Technical Assistance:** Staff will provide Technical Assistance letters to landowners identified as having nonpoint concerns identified during watershed evaluations and through ERTS.
- **Landowners:** We will continue to provide water quality related educational materials to landowners within the watershed with an estimated 10 site visits per year by either Ecology staff or referred to the Conservation District's Working Lands Program Manager.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Investigatory collection:** Staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis.

Priority Watershed: Oakland Bay and Johns Creek

Implementing: Oakland Bay, Hammersley Inlet, & Selected Tributaries Fecal Coliform Bacteria Total Maximum Daily Load Water Quality Improvement Report and Implementation Plan

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Share educational outreach resources**: Staff plan to create and send a mailer to the residents in Oakland Bay detailing the nonpoint work that Ecology is doing in the area. They'll answer all of the responses and provide additional educational materials accordingly.

Financial Assistance:

- **Information sharing**: Ecology staff will provide landowners with information regarding financial assistance through local partners for BMP implementation and grant funding opportunities.

Partner Coordination:

- **Conservation District**: Ecology staff will participate in Mason Conservation District (MCD) board meetings to identify water quality concerns and uphold working connections.
- **Squaxin Island Tribe**: Ecology staff will continue to regularly attend meetings with the Tribe to update them on any updates and water quality concerns found in the watershed.
- **Mason County Clean Water District**: Ecology staff will continue to participate in these meetings to share monitoring data found throughout the watershed.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Watershed evaluation**: Ecology staff will conduct watershed evaluations primarily during the rainy season. Evaluations will also be conducted throughout the year as shellfish pollution concerns deem further assessments necessary.
- **Complaint/referral response**: Ecology staff will continue to respond to nonpoint water quality concerns via partner referrals or through ecology's complaint system. Staff will continue to assess progress on existing sites of concern.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Responding to responsible parties**: Ecology staff will continue to respond to sites identified as sites of concern through windshield assessments or reported from a third party. If local partners are not currently working with the responsible party, staff will respond by phone, email, or letter after deeming the site a priority of concern to protect water quality.

Monitoring Activities:

Water quality monitoring: Staff will meet regularly with partners in the watershed, who share their local water quality monitoring data.

Priority Watershed: Sequim Bay

Implementing: Sequim Bay TMDL/ARP (in development)

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Informational mailers:** Staff plans to create and send a mailer to the residents in Sequim Bay detailing the nonpoint work that Ecology will be doing in the area. They'll answer all of the responses and provide additional educational materials accordingly.

Financial Assistance:

- **Information sharing:** Ecology staff will provide landowners with information regarding financial assistance through local partners for BMP implementation and grant funding opportunities.

Partner Coordination:

- **Conservation District:** Staff will attend regular meetings with the Clallam Conservation District to discuss sites of concern and updates in the watershed.
- **Dungeness Clean Water Work Group**: Staff will attend regular meetings with the work group to discuss sites of concern, updates in the watershed, and water quality monitoring data. Included in this group are members from the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, and the Streamkeepers of Clallam County.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Watershed evaluation**: Ecology staff will conduct watershed evaluations primarily during the rainy season. Evaluations will also be conducted throughout the year as shellfish pollution concerns deem further assessments necessary.
- **Complaint/referral response**: Ecology staff will continue to respond to nonpoint water quality concerns via partner referrals or through ecology's complaint system. Staff will continue to assess progress on existing sites of concern.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Responding to responsible parties**: Ecology staff will continue to respond to sites identified as sites of concern through windshield assessments or reported from a third party. If local partners are not currently working with the responsible party, staff will respond by phone, email, or letter after deeming the site a priority of concern to protect water quality.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Water quality monitoring:** Staff will meet regularly with partners in the watershed, who share their local water quality monitoring data.

Priority Watershed: South Sound Shellfish Growing Areas

Implementing: South Sound Partnership Action Agenda; Puget Sound Nutrient Source Reduction Project

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Ecology staff will provide landowners and local community members with resources outlining nonpoint water quality education, by distributing outreach materials such as mailers and brochures.
- Ecology staff will attend in-person public shellfish meetings held in Burley Hall on Key Peninsula held by Tacoma Pierce County Environmental Health
- Ecology staff will attend an in-person town hall meeting held in Thurston County by Thurston Environmental Health to introduce the public to nonpoint work in the area and answer questions.
- Ecology staff will attend the Nisqually Education Program's water quality sampling day to teach students about water quality issues in their area.

Financial Assistance:

- Information Sharing: Staff will provide information to:
    - Landowners regarding financial assistance opportunities through local partners (i.e. conservation district cost-sharing programs).
    - Local partners regarding grant funding opportunities.

Partner Coordination:

- Staff will regularly update and schedule meetings with the Conservation District and County Environmental Health to update them on site status and ongoing work
- Staff will attend PIC meetings (held quarterly) to discuss ongoing work and receive monitoring data

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Ecology staff will conduct at least one watershed evaluation primarily during the rainy season (October-May). Additionally, evaluations will also be conducted throughout the year as shellfish pollution concerns arise and complaints are referred to Ecology.
- Staff will respond to verified nonpoint reported concerns in the area submitted through Ecology's complaint system (ERTS).

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Ecology Staff will utilize respond to sites identified during watershed assessments or via reported concerns. If local partners are not currently working with the responsible party, staff will respond by phone, email, or letter after deeming the site of concern to protect water quality.

Monitoring Activities:

- Staff will utilize monitoring data from Department of Health, Squaxin Island tribe, and Thurston County Environmental Health to guide work in the area. Data will be regularly received via PIC meetings and informal meetings with external partners.

Priority Watershed: Willapa Bay

Implementing: Willapa River Watershed Temperature TMDL/ Willapa River Dissolved Oxygen TMDL

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Create and Distribute Joint Mailer:** Mailers will be distributed to the Willapa Bay watershed residents and landowners. These mailers will reinforce the work that Ecology is doing in the area.
- **Mailer Response:** Staff will track and respond to phone calls, e-mails, and requests for site visits from landowners who received the mailer to provide educational materials and refer to appropriate partner agencies as appropriate.

Financial Assistance:

- Staff will provide information to:
    - Landowners regarding financial assistance opportunities through local partners (i.e. conservation district cost-sharing programs).
    - Local partners regarding grant funding opportunities.

Partner Coordination:

- Staff will coordinate with partners to facilitate working with parcels that have been identified as potential pollution sources.
- Staff will participate in an in-person meeting with partners to explain compliance pathways and establish a connection with local partners. Staff will attend regular meetings with partners to update them about sites of concern.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Staff respond to verified nonpoint reported concerns in the area submitted through Ecology's complaint system (ERTS).
- Watershed assessment will be conducted primarily in the wet season. Windshield surveys will also take place if monitoring data show areas exceeding water quality standards and threatened shellfish growing areas. Staff will complete at least one watershed evaluation before the end of December 2026.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Ecology Staff will respond to sites identified during watershed assessments or via reported concerns. If local partners are not currently working with the responsible party, staff will respond by phone email, or letter after deeming the site of concern to protect water quality.

Monitoring Activities:

- Staff will receive data from partner agencies to guide work and will monitor higher in the watershed when partner ambient sites show exceedances downstream.

Priority Watershed Name: East Fork Lewis River Watershed

Implementing: East Fork River Alternative Restoration Plan

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Public Events:**
    - Participate in public outreach events, including attending at least one community event or town hall style meeting in the watershed.
    - Present at the April 25, 2026, Earth Day event in the City of Washougal.

Financial Assistance:

- **Funding:** Ecology may continue to fund the Poop Smart Clark Pollution Identification and Correction (PIC) program. Expect a determination in summer of 2026. The program is currently on hold.
- **Information sharing**: Ecology staff will continue to provide landowners with financial assistance opportunities for BMP implementation on their properties and assist local partners with grant funding opportunities.

Partner Coordination:

- SWRO staff will continue to collaborate and attend annual meetings with Clark County, City of Camas, Washington State Department of Agriculture, Clark Conservation District, and the United State Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service.
- **Conservation District:** SWRO staff will continue to attend monthly Clark Conservation District Board Meetings and coordinate with CD staff on addressing pollution concerns.
- **PIC:** SWRO staff will continue to participate in monthly PIC "Poop Smart" meetings and provide updates on compliance activities.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Watershed Evaluation:** Ecology staff will conduct watershed evaluations primarily during the rainy season with a goal of five evaluations.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Complaint Response:** Staff will continue to verify and respond to nonpoint concerns submitted through Ecology's reporting system (ERTS).
- **Technical Assistance:** Staff will provide Technical Assistance letters to landowners identified as having nonpoint concerns identified during watershed evaluations and through ERTS.
- **Landowners:** We will continue to provide water quality related educational materials to landowners within the watershed with an estimated 10 site visits per year by either Ecology staff or referred to the Conservation District's Working Lands Program Manager.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Investigatory collection:** Staff will take opportunistic samples when responding to complaints or referrals on a per-case basis.

NWRO Priority Watersheds

Priority Watershed: Whatcom County Shellfish Growing Areas (Various Whatcom County Watersheds)

Implementing: Drayton Harbor Bacteria TMDL Implementation, Regional Pollution Identification and Control Programs through the Whatcom Clean Water Program (WCWP)

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Ecology will continue generating or updating outreach material, and tracking the various outreach events that occur within the watershed. Staff will evaluate which events to attend based on current outreach needs.
- Nonpoint staff will continue to conduct partner-to-partner education. Subjects of interest to program partners include implementing the Clean Water Guidance for Agriculture and the Water Quality Combined Funding Guidelines as relevant to agricultural BMP financial assistance.

Financial Assistance:

- Ecology continues to receive feedback related to barriers to receiving financial assistance. Nonpoint staff plan to improve their understanding of Ecology's current funding guidelines to provide clarity and guidance to accessing funding sources for agricultural BMP implementation.

Partner Coordination:

- Ecology will continue to participate in quarterly Joint Shellfish Protection District meetings that center on coordinating water quality monitoring, pollution identification and control, and technical assistance/enforcement efforts across these watersheds.

- Ecology will continue participation in Whatcom Clean Water Program. Ecology's participation in the program will consist of prioritizing properties to offer financial and technical assistance and executing the programs technical assistance and enforcement workflows
- Nonpoint staff will continue participation in bi-weekly Compliance Coordination meetings with Whatcom CWP regulatory partners. Discussions will include identifying milestones and clarifying processes for achieving compliance at newly identified properties contributing pollutants and sites with long-standing water quality concerns.
- Nonpoint staff will continue participation in bi-weekly field-staff meetings and where appropriate to inform Whatcom CWP on Ecology's nonpoint procedures.
- Ecology will continue to participate in quarterly Nooksack transboundary meetings to improve information sharing of water quality concerns and improve data collection efforts across borders.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Nonpoint staff will complete one watershed evaluation for the California creek watershed to identify new properties to initiate contact with and monitor known properties during various weather conditions to assess their potential to pollute.
- Nonpoint staff evaluate ERTS in coordination with the Whatcom CWP. Nonpoint staff will primarily leverage local authority, MS4 permit authority, or other regulatory tools as applicable to address these issues.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Ecology will participate in discussions to prioritize sites and identify corrective actions and support local enforcement efforts as appropriate. Ecology will collaborate with partners on renewed outreach attempts to ensure CWG BMPs are included in all corrective action recommendations.
- Ecology staff, in coordination with Whatcom CWP, will conduct site visits, site monitoring, and re-issue TA letters as determined by Whatcom CWP priorities.

Monitoring Activities:

- Ecology will continue to attend weekly Hotspot check-in meetings in coordination with Whatcom CWP water quality monitoring program to stay updated on current monitoring activities and assist in follow up sampling and surveys when needed.

Priority Watershed: Skagit River and Samish River Watersheds

Implementing: Lower Skagit Tributaries Temperature TMDL, Lower Skagit Fecal Coliform TMDL, and Samish Bay Watershed Bacteria TMDL

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Nonpoint staff will continue to evaluate existing materials and update and generate outreach material based on landowners and partner needs to increase local awareness of Skagit River water temperatures and water quality BMPs.

- Staff will attend monthly Nonpoint Outreach Subgroup meetings and collaborate with Nonpoint Education and Outreach Specialists from other regions to brainstorm and develop outreach strategies and materials.

Financial Assistance:

- Ecology will provide partner-to-partner education on how to maximize flexibility between the current funding guidelines and CWG to all partners to more easily apply for and use Ecology's funding sources for BMP installation.
- Ecology continues to receive feedback related to barriers to receiving financial assistance. Ecology staff plan to provide as much clarity and guidance to accessing funding sources as requested. Ecology will assess other funding sources utilized by partners in the watershed to determine how Ecology funding may fill existing funding gaps to enable TMDL implementation.
- Ecology included three projects in the Skagit watershed on its draft Water Quality Combined Funding list that was released on January 29, 2026. If approved by the state legislature, Ecology would award $733,500 out of the State's Centennial Fund for three restoration projects in tributaries to the Skagit River. The final funding list will be released on July 1, 2026.

Partner Coordination:

- Continued participation in Skagit County's bi-monthly Project Delivery Team meetings which are an opportunity for field staff to discuss problems, brainstorm solutions, give progress updates, and highlight hotspots from monitoring efforts.
- Continued participation in quarterly CSI executive meetings that center on coordinating pollution identification and control, technical/financial assistance efforts across the watersheds, and discuss challenges at a management level with members from the Conservation District, WSDA, DOH and Ecology.
- Ecology will continue to work with Upper Skagit and Sauk-Seattle Indian Tribe, and the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community to support ongoing restoration efforts.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Nonpoint staff will monitor known properties during various weather conditions to assess their potential to pollute and coordinate actions with local partners accordingly.
- Ecology will routinely conduct windshield surveys to identify new properties to initiate technical assistance efforts in collaboration with CSI partners.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Staff will contact five prioritized sites with TA letters, highlighting the benefits of site visits to deliver tailored technical and financial assistance and strengthen working relationships.
- Staff will investigate ERTS reports received and offer technical assistance and site visits as needed.

Monitoring Activities:

- Ecology will continue to attend PDT meetings and review weekly Skagit FC/EC Ambient Hotspots emails to stay updated on current monitoring activity.

- Ecology will plan to participate in at least one marine or freshwater quality sampling event during the reporting period

Priority Watershed: South Skagit Bay

Implementing: Lower Skagit River Fecal Coliform TMDL (2000)

As of November 2025, due to vacancies there is no nonpoint staff assigned to this watershed.

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Ecology's education and outreach efforts in South Skagit Bay (SSB) will mainly consist of partner-to-partner education on the nonpoint team's previous monitoring and site identification efforts in the watershed.

Financial Assistance:

- Ecology will pursue partner-to-partner education opportunities to further clarify Ecology funding guidelines for agriculture BMP implementation.

Partner Coordination:

- Following hiring and onboarding in 2026, nonpoint staff will prioritize establishing and maintaining connections with partners and interest groups across the watershed.
- Partners within the Lower Stillaguamish PIC often have overlapping interest in bacteria pollution inputs to South Skagit Bay. Ecology will continue receiving information sharing related to properties of concern and habitat restoration efforts in the watershed.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Following hiring and onboarding in 2026, new staff will build an understanding of watershed evaluations and gain familiarity with the nonpoint pollution control efforts initiated by former staff.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Ecology's technical assistance activities in this watershed will mainly consist of resolving long-standing legacy cases initiated by former staff. Staff will investigate two legacy cases and assess whether renewed technical assistance efforts are warranted or if the cases can be closed.
- Compliance and technical assistance activities related to ERTS response will be assessed and executed on a case-by-case basis.

Monitoring Activities:

- Nonpoint and TMDL staff do not have any planned water quality monitoring activities in this watershed for 2026.

Priority Watershed: Stillaguamish River Watershed

Implementing: Stillaguamish River Watershed Multiparameter TMDL, Stillaguamish River Watershed Temperature TMDL

As of November 2025, due to vacancies, there is no nonpoint staff assigned to this watershed.

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Following hiring and onboarding, new nonpoint staff will prioritize building familiarity with Ecology's education and outreach approaches, and gaining insights into watershed specific land use values, motivators, and barriers to agriculture BMP implementation.

Financial Assistance:

- Following hiring and onboarding, new nonpoint staff will prioritize building familiarity with Ecology's funding guidelines for agriculture BMP implementation

Partner Coordination:

- Following hiring and onboarding in 2026, nonpoint staff will prioritize establishing and maintaining connections with partners and interest groups across the watershed.
- Ecology will continue nonpoint coordination efforts by attending the monthly Stillaguamish PIC-IV coordination meetings and PIC program's Water Quality sub-team meetings as capacity allows.
- TMDL staff will continue attending regular meetings of the Stillaguamish Technical Advisory Group and Stillaguamish Watershed Council.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- New nonpoint staff onboarded during the reporting period will build an understanding of watershed evaluations, and review and continue the on-going evaluation initiated by former staff.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Ecology staff have previously identified roughly 30 sites that could be prioritized for technical and financial assistance to address nonpoint pollution concerns. Of these sites, staff would aim to identify up to five sites to initiate contact with property owners to address the issues identified.
- New nonpoint staff onboarded during the reporting period would review the watershed evaluation findings from former staff and refine the list of priority properties for technical assistance.

Monitoring Activities:

- Nonpoint staff have no planned water quality monitoring activities in this watershed in 2026.

Priority Watershed: Green-Duwamish River Watershed

Implementing: Green River Temperature TMDL, Newaukum Creek Temperature TMDL

As of November 2025, due to vacancies there are no nonpoint or TMDL staff assigned to this watershed.

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Following hiring and onboarding, new nonpoint staff will prioritize building familiarity with Ecology's education and outreach approaches, and gaining insights into watershed specific land use values, motivators, and barriers to agriculture BMP implementation.

Financial Assistance:

- Following hiring and onboarding, new nonpoint staff will prioritize building familiarity with Ecology's funding guidelines for agriculture BMP implementation.

Partner Coordination:

- Following hiring and onboarding, new nonpoint staff will prioritize establishing and maintaining connections with partners and interest groups across the watershed.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Following hiring and onboarding, new nonpoint staff will resume the watershed evaluation planning efforts initiated by former staff. New staff will aim to conduct one watershed evaluation, or finalize a plan for conducting a watershed evaluation in 2027.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Compliance and technical assistance activities in this watershed by new staff onboarded in 2026 will consist of assessing and responding to ERTS on a case-by-case basis.

Monitoring Activities:

- Nonpoint staff have no planned water quality monitoring activities in this watershed in 2026.

CRO Priority Watersheds

Priority Watershed: Lower Yakima River (WRIA 37)

Implementing: Lower Yakima Suspended Sediment TMDL

Priority Actions for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Ecology's partners in the lower Yakima Watershed include Roza/Sunnyside Board of Joint Control (RSBOJC), South Yakima Conservation District, and the Benton Conservation District. These partners continue to conduct outreach with landowners on the need to reduce suspended sediment discharges. Additional non-point outreach is being conducted by Ecology WQ to support the Lower Yakima Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) and reduce nitrates impacts to waters of the state.

Financial Assistance:

- Financial assistance opportunities are coordinated through the Watershed partners including the conservation districts and grant eligible NGOs.

Partner Coordination:

- Communication with the Roza/Sunnyside Board of Joint Control (RSBOJC), representing the irrigation districts, will continue as needed as activities or challenges are identified. Scheduling will depend on field schedules and pollution reports.
- Communications with the North Yakima, South Yakima, and Benton County conservation districts will also be conducted as needed to address potential pollution sources.
- Coordination with the Washington Department of Agriculture, the Washington Department of Health and the local health district will be centered around the work supporting the Lower Yakima GWMA and reducing discharges to ground water.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Ecology staff will coordinate with RSBOJC staff within the Watershed to identify and reduce pollution sources.
- Recently added Ecology staff are conducting water quality assessment work in the Lower Yakima watershed to identify activities that may have water quality impacts on Waters of the State.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- RSBOJC will continue to collect water quality samples and work with Ecology to compare sampling data to the goals of the Suspended Sediment TMDL and current WQ standards. RSBOJC will continue to work with Ecology to identify and eliminate illicit discharges to irrigation drains in the districts.
- Ecology staff are working with the Washington Department of Agriculture and the conservation districts to follow up on issues relating to the inappropriate application of dairy waste of other sources of nutrients to agricultural lands to protect water quality.

Monitoring Activities:

- Monitoring activities are continuing to be undertaken routinely by RSBOJC staff.

Priority Watershed: White Salmon River (WRIA 29)

Developing and Implementing: Advance Restoration Plan (bacteria impairments)

Priority Actions for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- In 2026 Ecology staff will seek to work with the US Forest Service (USFS) on outreach to the recreational boaters on bacteria pollution and prevention.
- Ecology staff will continue working with Underwood Conservation District, Mid-Columbia Fisheries, and the Yakama Nation on an educational project for the local school district addressing stream health for stream on school property.
- Ecology staff will continue to work with local health jurisdictions to conduct outreach and education relating to the environmental impacts of failing septic systems, how this affects the White Salmon Watershed, and outline financial assistance resources available for septic system installation, repair, or replacement.

Financial Assistance:

- Underwood Conservation District has received grant funding from Ecology's Water Quality Program to implement water quality improvement projects in the White Salmon Watershed. This included bacteria sampling projects, riparian restoration plantings, livestock exclusion, Best Management Practices technical assistance and planning, water quality monitoring, and education around riparian stewardship.
- Columbia Land Trust has applied for Ecology funding to assist with a land acquisition and riparian protection project in a relatively pristine, forested portion of Rattlesnake Creek. This tributary of the White Salmon has 303(d) listings for bacteria as well as temperature.

Partner Coordination:

- Ecology Water Quality staff will continue to coordinate with the U.S. Forest Service, Washington Department of Agriculture, Underwood Conservation District, Columbia Land Trust, Yakama Nation, Klickitat County Health District, Friends of the White Salmon, Mid-Columbia Fisheries, USGS, and Trout Lake city council.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Ecology is coordinating with the local CD on bacteria sampling and filling in data gaps, while preparing the White Salmon Bacteria cleanup plan.
- Water Quality nonpoint staff will work on Watershed assessments and complaint responses in the White Salmon Watershed in 2026.
- Ecology conducts complaint responses as needed and will have monthly field visits to the White Salmon Watershed for pollution identification work.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Community reports of water quality concerns will be entered into the ERTS database and followed up by CRO nonpoint staff.
- Future cases needing compliance actions will begin with technical assistance coordinated with Watershed partners and if necessary, will follow Ecology's policies on escalating enforcement.

Monitoring Activities:

- Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program (EAP) completed field sampling in October 2024 for a bacteria study in the White Salmon Watershed spanning 2022-2024. This study will reference the current WQ bacteria standard for *E. coli*.

- Underwood Conservation District will continue conducting grant funded monitoring for bacteria and other WQ parameters in the White Salmon Watershed.

Priority Watershed: Bonaparte Creek

Implementing: Bonaparte Creek STI (in development)

Priority Actions for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Distribute mailer to watershed residents to inform them of best management practices for protecting water quality, including a self-check for land managers, and offering technical assistance to residents and owners.
- Share nonpoint information and landowner self-assessment at farmers markets and other local events as available.
- Visit local clubs such as Rotary, Lions, etc.
- Meet with the local Cattlemen's Association, and other groups such as Backcountry Horsemen.
- Partner with Okanogan CD, conservation groups and other stakeholders for outreach to middle and high schools.
- Work with Okanogan CD to ensure complementary messaging.
- Discuss evaluating septic systems with Health District.

Financial Assistance:

- Support partners in seeking funding for riparian improvements with the CD and possibly conservation non-profits.
- Encourage the Okanogan Health Department to apply for support to conduct a septic maintenance outreach program.
- Encourage city of Tonasket or health department to apply for pass-through funding for septic upgrades.

Partner Coordination:

- Ecology staff will attend meetings in person or online as time and opportunity allows.
- Follow Conservation District activities through newsletters and meeting minutes if not in person.
- Follow activities of Health Department.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- Implement monitoring with Ecology Basin Station near mouth of Bonaparte Creek.
- Evaluate sources of nonpoint pollution through watershed assessment field work.
- Utilize Ecology's Environmental Assessment Program data to consider future data gathering opportunities.
- Nonpoint staff will utilize watershed evaluations to identify potential nonpoint pollution sources within the watershed.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Follow up on any ERTS reports and ensure appropriate closeout.

- Conduct water quality investigations as appropriate. Notify correct Ecology program (e.g. water resources, air quality), or other agencies (e.g. WDNR, WDFW) if necessary to address environmental concerns and complaints.
- Coordinate with watershed partners as needed to address compliance actions. When offers of technical assistance fail, escalate to enforcement following Ecology policies. Compliance activities: Future cases needing compliance actions will begin with technical assistance coordinated with Watershed partners and if necessary, will follow Ecology's policies on escalating enforcement.

Monitoring Activities:

- Ecology staff will conduct source identification monitoring as needed.

ERO Priority Watersheds

Priority Watershed: Hangman Creek Watershed

Implementing: Hangman Creek Fecal Coliform Bacteria, Temperature, and Turbidity TMDL

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Mailings:** ERO staff will design and send a third mailer to Hangman watershed landowners about water quality issues and BMPs.
- **Youth Education:** Staff will continue to coordinate with schools on guest speaking opportunities and field activities focusing on water quality education (trout in the classroom, salmon release days, etc…).
- **Community Events:** Continue to participate and table at events throughout the Hangman watershed (such as Tekoa's Slippery Gulch festival and county fairs).
- **Conferences and Symposiums:** Continue to attend and/or table at conferences related to the Hangman and greater Spokane River watersheds.
- **Webpage:** Maintain and update the Hangman Creek webpage with active links to annual reports, blog posts, videos, etc.

Financial Assistance:

- **Begin Implementing the Trout Unlimited, *Hangman Creek Floodplain Restoration at Grouse Creek Ranch Phase 2:* ($499,920):** The overarching goals in this multi-phased project are to enhance water quality through reengagement of floodplains and side channels for improved habitat both instream and along upland riparian zones paralleling the creek. This is the second phase of the project that has planned construction components to the design work completed under Phase 1. This project made the draft offer list for Ecology's Water Quality Combined Funding grant round – final draft offer list contingent upon WA legislative session. If funded as expected, this project would begin in 2026.
- **Begin Implementing the City of Tekoa, *Hangman Creek Watershed Riparian Restoration-Tekoa City Limits:* ($428,626):** This project will develop a comprehensive riparian restoration plan along Hangman mainstem and Little Hangman Creeks that flow through the town of Tekoa, WA. The plan will include walking paths and education & outreach signage. Direct implementation of riparian restoration will occur on a 1.6-acre portion of Hangman Creek, with more direct implementation to come after the design work has been completed. This project made the draft offer list for Ecology's Water Quality

Combined Funding grant round – final draft offer list contingent upon WA legislative session. If funded as expected, this project would begin in 2026.

- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program Phases 1 – 3* ($7,817,000 - since 2022):** This program, since its inception in 2022 has contracted 300 acres of riparian restoration along 32.6 miles of streams in the Hangman watershed, which were previously in or directly adjacent to dryland agricultural production. This program was created to facilitate compliance for sites contacted by Ecology as having water quality concerns, which is an eligibility criterion for enrollment in the program. The implementation of these acres to perform site prep, plant installations, and planting maintenance is a heavy lift for the Spokane Conservation District. They have been building their riparian program and partnering with other watershed stakeholders to manage this important and challenging workload. This implementation and maintenance of these riparian restoration projects are ongoing. Phase 3 will continue to enroll approx. 50 more critical riparian acres into the program. This third phase of the project was funded in 2024, and individual contracts will be enrolled into the program over the course of 2025-2026.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *PNW Cover Crop & Agronomy Support Demonstration Project:* ($499,873):** This program will support at least 12 farmers in adopting sustainable practices through both financial assistance and agronomic support. The program provides 70 per acre for up to 100 acres per year for three years to incentivize the use of cover crops. In addition to the cost-share, the program will partially fund extensive technical support to enrolled program farmers. This project was funded in 2025 and will be completed in 2028.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *Rock Creek Confluence Stabilization Project:* ($500,000):** The Spokane Conservation District is working with cooperative adjacent landowners near the confluence of Rock Creek and Hangman Creek to stabilize approximately 1,000 linear feet of unstable and actively eroding stream banks. This project will implement Phase I of restoring/stabilizing a high sediment contribution source of this confluence area. The project will address turbidity from stream bank erosion and build upon previous, planned, and future work in the reach. This project was funded in 2025 and will be completed in 2028.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Creek Agricultural Sediment Abatement Project* ($424,000):** This project will restore a 2,100-foot-long reach of the Hangman Creek mainstem. The project will remove historic livestock influences, reduce active erosion through bioengineered streambank stabilization practices, and restore the riparian area with restorative buffers ranging from 130–200-foot widths. This project was funded in 2023 and will be completed in 2026.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *Direct Seed Loan Program* ($5,196,914):** This loan from State Revolving Funds allowed Spokane County Conservation District to expand their Direct Seed Equipment Loan program to 13 counties in Eastern Washington. This program allows producers to purchase the necessary direct seed equipment to practice low disturbance, direct seed conservation tillage. This loan helps to convert acres in the Hangman Creek farmed with conventional tillage techniques to direct seed. Ecology and Spokane CD have operated this program for several years, this is the most recent phase of the program funding. This project was funded in 2023 and will be completed in 2026.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Creek Composite Toe Stabilization Project* ($500,000):** This project will implement nonpoint source best management practices recommended in the local Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Water Quality Implementation Plan to address turbidity from stream bank erosion in Hangman Creek. The project will

build upon previous downstream work and will stabilize and install riparian plantings along approximately 1,050 linear feet of actively eroding stream bank on Hangman Creek near the Rock Creek confluence. This project was funded in 2024 and will be completed in 2027.

- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *Hangman Watershed – Rock Creek Tributary Livestock BMPs* ($69,561):** This project will improve water quality by implementing livestock best management practices and 3 acres of riparian restoration on a farm located along an unnamed tributary to Rock Creek within the Hangman Creek watershed. The site was identified and contacted due to having significant water quality concerns by Ecology staff during annual watershed evaluations. This project was funded in 2024 and will be completed in 2027.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Conservation District, *Spokane Riparian Establishment* Project ($283,500):** This project implements three projects, two of which are in the Hangman watershed. These projects include livestock BMPs and riparian restoration across approx. 35 acres. Both sites were identified and contacted due to having significant water quality concerns by Ecology staff during annual watershed evaluations. This project began in 2023 and will be completed in 2026.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Falls Trout Unlimited, *Hangman Creek Floodplain Restoration at Grouse Creek Ranch – Phase 1 Project* ($499,730):** This agreement is part of a multi-phased project that will improve water quality, restore floodplain connectivity, and restore habitat functions along 2.2 miles of Hangman Creek upstream of its confluence with Rock Creek. This initial phase will generate a reach assessment identifying priority restoration opportunities, advance priority opportunities to preliminary and final design, initiate phased construction of priority restoration actions, and provide monitoring and adaptive management. This first phase of the project was funded in 2024 and will be completed in 2027. The second phase of this project listed above in this section made the draft offer list for Ecology's Water Quality Combined Funding grant round – final draft offer list contingent upon WA legislative session. If funded as expected, the second phase of project would begin in 2026.
- **Continue Implementing the Spokane Riverkeeper, *Rock and Hangman Creeks Riparian Restoration and Water Quality Improvement* Project ($256,892):** This project will continue to improve nonpoint pollution issues throughout the watershed by installing 50 acres of riparian plantings, establishing three water quality monitoring locations, 10 water temperature loggers, install livestock BMPs, and provide education and outreach programs to maximize restoration efforts within the Hangman watershed. This project began in 2022 and will be completed in 2026.

Partner Coordination:

- **Continue Hangman Workgroup meetings:** ERO staff will continue to coordinate and facilitate quarterly workgroup meetings for partner collaboration.
- **Meet bi-annually with the Spokane Riverkeeper:** Ecology and Riverkeeper will meet at least two times in person to discuss Settlement Agreement progress.
- **Host Quarterly Partner Meetings with The Spokane Conservation District**: Meet with the Spokane CD to fund and implement riparian protection and restoration at priority water quality problem sites.
- **Host Coordination Meeting with the Pine Creek Conservation District**: Meet with the Pine Creek Conservation District to fund and implement riparian protection and restoration at priority water quality problem sites.
- **Participate in Coordination Meeting with the Lands Council**: Meet with the Lands Council to discuss restoration projects in the watershed.

- **Participate in Coordination Meeting with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe of Indians**: Meet with the Tribe to discuss interest in restoration projects in the upper watershed.
- **Participate in Coordination Meeting with the Spokane County**: Meet with Spokane County to discuss stormwater BMPs in the watershed.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Perform Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation:** Ecology staff will document at least 40 non-point pollution problems in the watershed using the eastern Region evaluation process.
- **Prioritize Sites for Technical and Financial Assistance:** Ecology has prioritized and contacted >100 producers in the watershed over the last eight years. Ecology will continue to provide technical and financial assistance to these sites until water quality compliance has been achieved. Ecology will contact at least 5 new sites in the Hangman Creek watershed in 2026.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Continue Communications on Existing Sites:** 39 of the 108 sites prioritized and contacted in the last eight years yet to have fully protective water quality plans developed. Ecology will devote its resources to bringing these existing sites into compliance in 2026.
- **Complaint Response:** Ecology staff will continue to follow up on valid water quality complaints in the Hangman watershed. Ecology staff will conduct site visits and actively work on plans to implement practices that will protect water quality.
- **Implement Water Quality Protection Plans/Riparian Buffers:** Using a combination of technical/financial assistance as well as compliance tools, Ecology staff will work to ensure implementation of three miles of riparian buffer in the Hangman Creek watershed.
- **Monitor the Implementation of the Administrative Order issued to Livestock Operation in Mica Creek subwatershed:** Ecology issued an Order to one livestock operation located in Mica Creek subwatershed in summer 2025. The Order was appealed and Ecology and the operation are currently in negotiations as of the end of 2025. Ecology will continue to work on this enforcement action in 2026.
- **Take Additional Formal Enforcement in Hangman Creek:** Ecology staff will send approximately 5 warning letters and likely issue an additional Administrative Order in 2026. 39 of the 108 sites prioritized and contacted in the last eight years yet to have fully protective water quality plans developed. Sites that are unwilling to work with Ecology on water quality protection will be prioritized for enforcement actions.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Tracking Non-point BMP implementation:** Ecology staff will continue tracking a number of numeric criteria including acres of riparian area planted, linear feet of stream restored, feet or miles of exclusion fencing, acres of conservation tillage. Staff will also be tracking and reporting on the success of the watershed evaluation efforts including number of sites contacted, number of plans developed, number of sites brought into compliance, etc.
- **Continue Spokane Salmon Restoration Collaborative Data Collection:** Spokane Salmon Restoration Collaborative, established in 2022, is the recognized Lead Entity for Salmon Recovery Efforts in the

Spokane River Subbasin, which includes Hangman watershed. The Collaborative is tasked with collecting a multitude of data for EDT modeling in order to generate a limiting factor analysis. Watershed partners compiled existing data and worked with a contract to compile a data gaps analysis in 2023 and in 2024 on the ground data collection efforts began to fill any needed gaps in 2025 and will continue through 2026.

- **Continue Implementing Spokane Riverkeeper's Monitoring Project:** Three water quality monitoring locations were established, and 10 water temperature loggers were installed as part of the Spokane Riverkeeper's Rock and Hangman Creeks Riparian Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Project. This project provides the data to the public in real time via website. The Spokane Riverkeeper plans on adding an additional Total Phosphorous and TSS monitoring study into this project in 2026.

Priority Watershed: Palouse River Watershed

Implementing: Spring Flat Creek STI; North Fork Palouse Fecal Coliform Bacteria, DO, and pH TMDL; Palouse River Fecal Coliform Bacteria TMDL; Palouse River Temperature TMDL; Palouse River Toxics TMDL; South Fork Palouse Ammonia TMDL; and South Fork Fecal Coliform TMDL.

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Youth Education:** Staff will continue to coordinate with schools on guest speaking opportunities and field activities focusing on water quality education (trout in the classroom, salmon release days, etc.)
- **Community Events:** Participate and/or table at events throughout the Palouse watershed.
- **Conferences and Symposiums:** Continue to attend and/or table at conferences focused on the Palouse watershed and agriculture BMPs.
- **Webpage:** ERO staff will work with HQ to develop a webpage for Spring Flat Creek watershed as a landing page where landowners and the public can access more information. Webpage will include a link to the published STI, an overview of water quality issues, BMPs, funding programs, and contact information specific to the Spring Flat watershed.
- **Attend Conservation District Board Meetings:** The Conservation District Boards are primarily made up of area farmers and ranchers. Ecology anticipates on having the capacity to attend Conservation District Board Meetings again in 2026 as we did in 2025.
- **One on One Discussions:** Ecology staff will conduct site visits with landowners and producers contacted for having water quality concerns. These site visits typically last over an hour and contain meaningful and often difficult conversations on water quality issues. Although often challenging, these outreach activities can be incredibly fruitful for water quality education and implementation efforts.
- **Landowner Office Hours:** Ecology will offer landowner office hours for producers in the Spring Flat Creek Watershed who received technical assistance letters from the Department. The Palouse Watershed Implementation Lead will make themselves available in a local public building to speak with landowners about the resources and financial assistance available to them.
- **Conservation District Education and Outreach Actions:** As provided in the following section, Ecology funds several projects that have an education and outreach component. Several education and outreach workshops and events will continue to take place because of this funding in the Palouse in 2025.

Financial Assistance:

- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Spring Flat Creek Buffer Incentive Program ($314,500):** High stream temperatures, low dissolved oxygen levels, and high pH values have recently been identified as problems in Spring Flat Creek (SFC), a tributary of the South Fork Palouse River. Like the Hangman Riparian Restoration and Conservation Program, this program will provide rental rates with long-term contracts for agricultural riparian land taken out of production and planted with native trees and shrubs. Ecology partnered with Palouse Conservation District and Whitman Conservation District on this project. This program was created to support the Spring Flat Creek STI. 2024 efforts for the program focused on landowner outreach.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Spring Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement Project ($345,445):** High stream temperatures, low dissolved oxygen levels, and high pH values have recently been identified as problems in Spring Flat Creek (SFC), a tributary of the South Fork Palouse River. This project will improve water quality in the SFC watershed by providing riparian buffer installation, technical assistance and conservation planning, direct seed cost share, environmental monitoring, outreach, and education to producers. In 2025, the Conservation District completed their QAPP and began monitoring efforts in Spring Flat Creek.
- **Begin implementing the Palouse Conservation District Riparian Restoration for Healthier Waters in the Palouse River Watershed ($472,057):** This project aims to enhance water quality in multiple tributaries of the Palouse River Watershed. The Palouse Conservation District will plan and implement vegetative riparian restoration activities across eight sites and lead education and outreach efforts. Outcomes include the installation of 19.11 acres of riparian buffers, two bio-engineering projects, and the engagement of 3,000 community members.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Full Stream Ahead! Riparian Restoration Innovations on the Palouse River Project ($666,666):** This multi-approach project by Palouse Conservation District is restoring 15 acres (1.5 miles), installing four beaver dam analogs (BDAs), and constructing three saturated riparian buffers (SRBs), a new conservation practice that facilitates riparian nitrogen removal, to improve water quality in the South Fork Palouse River watershed. Each SRB will be monitored in multiple locations to assess their effectiveness and measure water table dynamics.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Do the Residue! Promoting Direct Seed Operations on the Palouse Project ($666,666):** The Palouse Conservation District continued to implement five acres of riparian buffers and 9,000 acres of direct seeding to improve water quality in Whitman County streams. A survey of producers will assess direct seed adoption by conservation program participants. Additional crop residue monitoring and outreach and education programs, including the Alternative Cropping Symposium and Direct Seed Breakfasts, will lead to further water quality improvements in the Palouse River watershed.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Operation Residue: (Under) cover Crops & Direct Seeding on the Palouse Project ($590,716):** The Palouse Conservation District will lead implementation of one-stream-mile of riparian forest buffer and 6,000 acres of direct seeding to improve water quality in Whitman County streams. A 250-acre cover crop demonstration project will assist producers in improving soil health on their farms. Soil health assessment of direct seed and cover crop projects will demonstrate project effectiveness, and outreach and education programs will lead to further community investment in water quality improvements.

- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Partnership to Restore Riparian Areas in the Lower Fourmile Creek Watershed Project ($661,541):** This Palouse Conservation District project will restore 30 acres of riparian areas (23,000 streambank feet) in the lower Fourmile Creek watershed, including installing up to 600 feet of streambank protection and 10 to 12 beaver dam analogs, providing technical assistance, assessing revegetation methods, installing interpretive signs, and developing place-based curriculum on riparian restoration and conservation agriculture.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District One Pass at a Time- Conservation of Pine Creek Watershed ($491,156):** Palouse Rock Lake Conservation District, in cooperation with Pine Creek Conservation District, will address nonpoint pollution throughout the Pine Creek watershed by installing 1 mile of riparian plantings; implementing 6,750 acres of conservation tillage; and providing education and outreach to members of the community.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Restoring Watershed Function in the Palouse River Watershed ($485,615):** The Palouse Conservation District will help restore streamflow, water quality, watershed function, and habitat in the Palouse River Watershed by implementing instream bioengineering projects, establishing new flow and water quality monitoring, and building awareness and support to improve stream channels and riparian habitat. Eight of the project sites are in the Palouse Watershed, and one is on a small unnamed tributary of the Snake River upstream from the Palouse River. Education and outreach efforts will build public awareness of water quality issues and encourage action to protect water resources.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District Conservation & Community – Lower Fourmile Watershed Restoration Project ($500,000):** The Palouse Conservation District will improve water quality in Rose Creek in the Lower Fourmile Creek watershed by restoring 9 acres of riparian buffer along 1,246 feet of Rose Creek in the Lower Fourmile Watershed. Additional activities include providing technical assistance (TA) to 30 area landowners, conducting 24 months water quality monitoring along Fourmile Creek, and performing education and outreach activities that will connect all project activities by sharing project successes.
- **Continue implementing the Palouse Conservation District A Watershed Moment – Riparian Restoration and Education on the Palouse ($484,455):** The Palouse Conservation District will improve water quality in the South Fork Palouse River (SFPR) watershed through a series of riparian restoration projects, and providing riparian technical assistance and conservation planning, environmental monitoring development, outreach, and education to the public.
- **Continue implementing the Whitman Conservation District South Fork Palouse River Property Protection ($490,000):** This project will acquire approximately 125 acres in the South Fork Palouse River Watershed including 3,800 feet of the South Fork Palouse River. The land acquisition will provide Watershed protection which allows the district to implement riparian planting and provide education and outreach in the community.
- **Close Out the Whitman Conservation District Palouse River Water Quality Enhancement Project ($270,000):** The Palouse River has been identified through the 303(d) list for impairments of temperature, pH, and dissolved oxygen. To address these issues, the Whitman County Conservation District has identified multiple project sites for riparian restoration in the Palouse River Watershed. Working closely with one landowner, vehicle and metal scrap was removed along approximately 650 feet of the river in the fall of 2024. Following the removal of vehicle scrap, approximately 1444 tons of gravel was used to fill and slope the bank. Conservation District staff completed riparian planting and

grass seeding of the restoration area in November of 2024 and replanted areas due to flooding in 2025. Staff will work to close out the grant in 2026.

- **Continue Implementing the Whitman Conservation District Palouse River Habitat Restoration and Stabilization Project ($468,250):** The Palouse River is identified on the Washington 303(d) list for impairments of pH, dissolved oxygen, temperature, and bacteria. To address these issues, the Conservation District will identify project sites for riparian restoration, livestock BMPs, and direct seed in the Palouse River Watershed.

Partner Coordination:

- **Meet with Conservation Districts:** Ecology will continue to meet in person and virtually with Palouse, Whitman, and Palouse-Rock Lake Conservation Districts to continue to develop cooperative relationships with local partners.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ecology will continue building and maintaining positive relationships with existing stakeholders, such as working with our sister agency WDFW to develop coordination for in-water work projects in Palouse. Engaged watershed stakeholders and positive partnerships are vital to cultivating a synergistic environment for achieving significant water quality improvements. Additionally, Ecology is committed to work with our sister agency to respond in a coordinated effort to environmental complaints.
- **Continue to meet with Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT):** Ecology staff will continue meeting with WSDOT on buffer implementation along their highway infrastructure right of ways. Many of the streams in the Palouse have been historically ditched and straightened next to the State Hwy, including Spring Flat Creek. These efforts will continue into 2026.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Continue to Perform Comprehensive Watershed Evaluations of Spring Flat Creek and portions of the Union Flat Creek Watershed**: Annual surveys will be conducted during the early spring season to identify livestock and dryland agricultural water pollution issues. Work will focus primarily on the Spring Flat Creek subbasin of the Palouse and the Thorn Creek Sub-basin of Union Flat Creek within the Palouse.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Contact 11 Priority Pollution Sites:** Ecology staff will contact 11 new landowners with livestock or dryland agricultural water quality issues via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters will follow up with email or phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure continued communication with the landowner.
- **Create Riparian Buffer Maps for Landowners:** Staff will set up site visits with contacted landowners and develop riparian buffer maps for Spring Flat Creek priority sites. The plans will include visual representations and acre estimations of riparian buffers designed to fully protect water quality.
- **Follow-up on Nonpoint WQ Complaints:** Staff will continue to respond to any water quality complaints or technical assistance requests received from the public. Phone calls and/or letters may follow after staff have confirmed a water quality issue exists.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Monitor Existing Sites:** Staff will continue to monitor, document, and work on gaining compliance on existing prioritized sites where water quality concerns persist.
- **Continue to partner with Palouse CD on Monitoring Work**: Palouse CD has taken the lead on a large monitoring effort in the Palouse Watershed. The Palouse CD began collecting water quality data at new sites in the Spring Flat Creek Watershed in 2024 and will continue into 2025. This effort is part of the Palouse Conservation District Spring Flat Creek Water Quality Enhancement Project, funded by Ecology.

Priority Watershed: Little Spokane River Watershed

Implementing: Little Spokane River TMDLs for Bacteria, Temperature, Dissolved Oxygen, Total Phosphorus, and pH

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Mailings:** ERO staff will design and send a mailer to Little Spokane watershed landowners about water quality issues and BMPs
- **Youth Education:** Staff will continue to coordinate with schools on guest speaking opportunities and field activities focusing on water quality education (trout in the classroom, salmon release days, etc.)
- **Community Events:** Continue to participate and table at events throughout the Little Spokane watershed.
- **Conferences and Symposiums:** Continue to attend and/or table at conferences related to the Little Spokane and greater Spokane River watersheds.
- **Webpage:** Continue to maintain and update the Little Spokane TMDL webpage.

Financial Assistance:

- **Continue to Implement the Hobbs Property 688-ac. Conservation Easement for healthy rivers and forests ($499,659.48):** The Hobbs family is willing to sell a conservation easement to preclude further subdivision and development, safeguard water quality, and guarantee sustainable forest management that protects the land and waters above and beyond what state law requires
- **Continue to Implement The Inland Northwest Land Trust, Glen Tana Land Acquisition**: Ecology used $500,000 to protect 50 acres of property in the Spokane Watershed adjacent to the Glen Tana reach of the Little Spokane River. This property acquisition is part of a larger acquisition of 1,066 acres along the Little Spokane River.
- **Continue to Implement the Spokane Conservation District, *Spokane Riparian Establishment* Project ($283,500):** This project reestablishes flood plain function, sinuosity, and bank stability in Deadman Creek in the Little Spokane River Watershed. Issues with matching funds from a partner federal agency have delayed this project, but at the end of 2023 Ecology and Spokane Conservation District have successfully acquired enough project match to move forward with implementation.

Partner Coordination:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Ecology will continue building and maintaining positive relationships with existing stakeholders, such as working with our sister agency WDFW to develop a compliance schedule for development of a new fish hatchery facility. Continue to engage watershed stakeholders and

building positive partnerships are vital to cultivating a synergistic environment for achieving significant water quality improvements. Additionally, Ecology is committed to engage with the Spokane and local municipalities on water quality protection measures.

- **Participate in the Voluntary Stewardship Program:** Ecology will continue to meet bi-monthly with stakeholders, such as the Spokane Tribe of Indians, local agricultural producers, Spokane Municipalities, CD's and interest groups to find solutions to meet water quality standards.
- **Continue to Meet with Watershed Partners and Building Funding Capacity:** Ecology staff will meet regularly with watershed partners to plan and coordinate on implementing best management practices that improve and protect water quality. Ecology will continue to work on maintaining existing funding opportunities as well as support and encourage new funding opportunities for water quality improvement work.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Continue to Document Pollution Problem Sites for Assistance:** Identified at least 20 non-point pollution problems in the watershed using the eastern Region evaluation process. A minimum of five of these sites were prioritized using site specific criteria, such as the length of stream impacted and the severity of riparian damage.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Contact at Least Five Priority Pollution Sites**: Approximately 5 new landowners with livestock or dryland agricultural water quality issues were contacted via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters are followed up with multiple phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure continued communication with the landowner.
- **Continue to Follow Up on Previous Years Priority Sites**: Landowners who have received technical assistance letters in previous years (same numbers as mentioned above), and who remain out of compliance, will be contacted through additional phone calls and follow-up technical/financial assistance letters.
- **Continue to Develop Water Quality Protection Plans for Priority Sites:** Staff set up site visits and worked to develop BMP plans for at least five sites. The plans included riparian buffers designed to fully protect water quality.
- **Continue to Implement Water Quality Protection Plans/Riparian Buffers:** Using a combination of technical/financial assistance as well as compliance tools, Ecology staff worked to ensure implementation of three miles of riparian buffer in the Little Spokane River watershed.
- **Send Warning Letters to Priority Sites**: If a landowner has received multiple letters and continues to remain out of compliance, Ecology will escalate to a warning letter with an expectation of response within 30 days.
- **Continue to follow-up on Non-point WQ Complaints:** Staff will continue to respond to any water quality complaints received from the public. Phone calls and/or letters may follow after staff have confirmed a water quality issue exists.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Continue to Track Non-Point BMP Implementation:** Ecology staff will partner with Gonzaga University students and The Lands Council to monitor the efficacy of BMP's, such as Beaver Dam Analogs (BDAs) to reduce total Phosphorus, increase sinuosity and bank stability.
- **Monitor Existing Sites:** Staff will continue to monitor, document, and work on gaining compliance on existing prioritized sites where water quality concerns persist.
- **Continue to Establish Photo Monitoring Points**: Staff established photo monitoring points at pollution problem sites and document riparian condition improvements over time.

Priority Watershed: Upper Colville River Watershed

Implementing: Upper Colville River Straight to Implementation Strategy

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Mailings:** ERO staff will design and send a postcard to Upper Colville watershed landowners introducing local water quality issues, BMPs, and funding opportunities.
- **Youth Education:** Staff will continue to coordinate with schools on guest speaking opportunities and field activities focusing on water quality education (trout in the classroom, salmon release days, etc.)
- **Community Events:** Continue to participate and table at events throughout the Colville River watershed.
- **Conferences and Symposiums:** Continue to attend and/or table at conferences related to the Colville River watershed.
- **Webpage:** ERO staff will work with HQ to develop a webpage for the Upper Colville watershed as a landing page where landowners and the public can access more information. Webpage will include a link to the STI, an overview of water quality issues, BMPs, funding programs, and contact information specific to the watershed.
- **Office Hours:** Staff will create a plan to hold office hours to give an opportunity for landowners and the public to ask questions in person.

Financial Assistance:

- **Share Out:** Share information about financial assistance opportunities to watershed partners, including
    - WQC (Water Quality Combined Funding)
    - DIF (Direct Implementation Funding, as applicable)
    - Terry Hussmen Grant
- **Reminders**: Send funding reminders to stakeholders at least 2 times annually (pre-application cycle and DIF round).
- **Landowner Outreach**: Conduct direct outreach to priority sites identified during watershed evaluations offering technical and financial assistance.
- **Riparian Rental Pilot:** Work with watershed partners on developing a riparian rental rate pilot program similar to the program developed in Hangman Creek watershed.

Partner Coordination:

- **Coordinate with Partners:** Coordinate regularly with Stevens County Conservation District (CD), County Commissioners, Tribes, and HQ Nonpoint staff to address priority nonpoint pollution concerns identified through watershed evaluations.
- **Attend Board Meetings:** Attend and participate in CD board meetings, project advisory/implementation committees (PIC groups), and related local workgroups to share water quality data, discuss site-specific concerns, and align implementation strategies (estimated 10–12 meetings annually).
- **Monthly STI Meetings:** Facilitate monthly UC STI Interested Party meetings to provide progress updates and create space for stakeholder input and coordination.
- **Quarterly Updates:** Provide quarterly high-level updates to elected officials and partner agencies to ensure transparency and alignment on pollution reduction priorities.
- **STI Draft Reviews:** Provide structured review opportunities for STI drafts through internal HQ review and public comment periods (minimum 1 informal review phases).
- **Feedback Loops:** Incorporate feedback from Stevens County Commissioners, CD, Tribes, and interested parties during quarterly and monthly coordination meetings.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Perform Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation:** Ecology staff will document at least 25 non-point pollution problems in the watershed using the eastern Region evaluation process.
- **Prioritize Sites for Technical and Financial Assistance:** Ecology has prioritized and contacted several producers in the watershed over the last few years. Ecology will continue to provide technical and financial assistance to these sites until water quality compliance has been achieved. Ecology will contact up to 5 new sites in the Upper Colville watershed in 2026. Identify and prioritize sites requiring follow-up based on observed pollutant risks and potential for water quality improvement.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **TA Letters:** Issue Technical Assistance (TA) letters in response to identified or reported nonpoint pollution concerns within the STI boundary.
- **Communications with Prioritized Sites**: Conduct follow-up communication (phone, email, in-person meetings) to clarify water quality requirements and outline voluntary compliance pathways.
- **Site Visits:** Perform site visits to review conditions, discuss corrective actions, and initiate compliance planning.
- **Develop Plans:** Work with landowners to develop site-specific compliance approaches (e.g., livestock exclusion, manure management improvements, erosion control, riparian protection, operational changes).

Monitoring Activities:

- **Monitor Existing Sites:** Staff will continue to monitor, document, and work on gaining compliance on existing prioritized sites where water quality concerns persist. Escalate cases toward formal compliance or enforcement if voluntary measures are not initiated.

- **Existing Data:** Utilize existing Ecology ambient monitoring data and partner monitoring efforts to inform watershed assessments and STI development. Coordinate with Stevens County Conservation District, Tribes, and other partners to share available monitoring data (e.g., temperature, bacteria, dissolved oxygen, pH). Use monitoring results to help identify impaired reaches, prioritize follow-up sites, and evaluate potential pollutant sources.

Priority Watershed Name: Hawk Creek Watershed

Implementing: Hawk Creek Straight to Implementation Plan.
Priority Actions to Complete in 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Mailings:** ERO staff will design and send a mailer to Hawk Creek watershed landowners about water quality issues and BMPs.
- **Youth Education:** Staff will continue to coordinate with schools on guest speaking opportunities and field activities focusing on water quality education (trout in the classroom, salmon release days, etc…) as well as the Lake Roosevelt Water Festival.
- **Community Events:** Continue to participate and table at events throughout the Hawk Creek and Lake Roosevelt watersheds.
- **Conferences and Symposiums:** Continue to attend and/or table at conferences related to the Hawk Creek and greater Lake Roosevelt watersheds.
- **Webpage:** ERO staff will work with HQ to develop a webpage for the Hawk Creek watershed as a landing page where landowners and the public can access more information. Webpage will include a link to the STI, an overview of water quality issues, BMPs, funding programs, and contact information specific to the watershed.

Financial Assistance:

- Lincoln County CD applied for 3 projects during the FY 2027 application period. They are on the draft offer list for two projects. One ($500,000) project in Hawk Creek Watershed is to construct 14,000 ft of cattle exclusion fence, restore 22 acres riparian area, and install offsite water stations at two different landowners.
- The second project ($500,00) on the draft offer list is a similar direct seed/ no till project to the one closed in 2025. The goal is to enroll 15 producers and 3 crop rotations on 500 acres per producer to try direct seed on their property.

Partner Coordination:

- Continue to coordinate with Lincoln County Conservation District, who has been a valuable partner in outreach and meeting with landowners. Two landowners have agreed to exclusion fence, riparian restoration, and offsite water.

Water Quality Impairments/ Watershed Evaluations:

- Conduct seasonal watershed evaluations (Spring and Fall annually) in the Hawk Creek Watershed to assess current water quality conditions, land use impacts, and implementation progress.

- Document site-specific conditions including erosion, tillage practices, sediment delivery, riparian condition, livestock access, stormwater inputs, and other nonpoint pollution indicators.
- Identify and prioritize sites requiring follow-up based on observed pollutant risks and potential for water quality improvement.
- Coordinate with HQ Nonpoint and partners to evaluate feasibility of corrective actions and voluntary implementation opportunities.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Contact five new sites in Hawk Creek, approve prioritization, contact landowners via email or phone then send TA letters.

Monitoring Activities:

- Utilize the ambient water quality monitoring data to evaluate trends and confirm conditions in waterbody segments listed as Category 5 (303(d)) impaired waters under the Clean Water Act.
- No monitoring plans for 2026

Priority Watershed: Moses Lake Watershed

Implementing: Other Locally Led Partnership

Priority Actions for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- Continue to Implement Public Information and Outreach Plan: Ecology and partners developed and implemented an Information and Outreach Plan, including developing a website with information on cyanobacteria and how to report an algae bloom, along with information and resources for residents to take action to protect the lake.
- Conservation District Education and Outreach Actions: As provided in the following section, Ecology funds projects that have an education and outreach component. Several education and outreach workshops and events will take place because of funding in the Moses Lake watershed in 2026.

Financial Assistance:

- Continue to Implement the Columbia Basin Conservation District Moses Lake Shoreline Restoration and Nutrient Reduction Project ($249,979.00): This project will develop and implement a shoreline nutrient assessment technical assistance program for shoreline property owners, finish construction and maintenance on the shoreline restoration exhibit, conduct education and outreach activities, continue to support a groundwater study of phosphorus contributions by the Moses Lake Irrigation Project into Moses Lake and identify mitigation techniques.
- Continue to Implement the Moses Lake Columbia Basin Conservation District Moses Lake Watershed Water Quality Assessment and Enhancement ($485,396.78): This project will address nonpoint source pollution in the Moses Lake watershed by identifying sources of nutrients entering Moses Lake, riparian restoration and cattle exclusion on Rocky Ford Creek, and education and outreach. The project will connect at least 20 shoreline homes to the municipal sewer system and eliminate their septic systems. 50 additional homes will have their septic system serviced.

- Continue to Implement the Community Project Funding Moses Lake Water Quality ($3,100,000): Ecology staff helped the Watershed Council secure federal funding for improving Moses Lake's water quality to reduce occurrences of harmful algal blooms. Lanthanum-modified bentonite clay and other technologies are being used deeper areas of the Rocky Ford Arm to prevent the release of phosphorus and mitigate approximately 10,000 pounds of internal phosphorus loading.

Partner Coordination:

- Continue to Participate in the Moses Lake Watershed Council: The MLWC meets monthly. Subcommittees meet outside the regular meeting schedule to evaluate emerging technologies, data and monitoring, information and outreach, grants, and legislative activities.
- Cattle Fence Project on Washington Department of Natural Resource Property: Ecology will work with Washington Department of Natural Resources on a fence project to exclude cattle from the Rocky Ford arm of Moses Lake. A riparian buffer will also be planted between the fence and lake to filter run off.

Pollution Identification/ Watershed Evaluations:

- Continue to support the Moses Lake Watershed Council through Ecology-funded projects and coordinated watershed planning efforts.
- Troutlodge Hatchery and Columbia Basin Hatchery will continue monitoring production outputs and evaluating operational methods to reduce phosphorus contributions to Moses Lake, supporting broader nutrient reduction goals within the watershed.
- Watershed evaluations are not planned for Moses Lake in 2026.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- Continue to support the Moses Lake Watershed Council through Ecology-funded projects and coordinated watershed planning efforts.
- Ecology participation in monthly meetings and outreach events—such as the annual State of the Lake meeting hosted in Moses Lake—remains critical to advancing shared strategies to reduce harmful algal blooms and improve long-term water quality.
- TA letters will be on an as needed basis if Columbia Basin Conservation District requests our assistance with a landowner.

Monitoring Activities:

- There are no planned monitoring activities by Ecology in 2026.
- Eutrophix will continue to monitor phosphorus and the effectiveness of their sequestration efforts.
- Troutlodge and Columbia Basin will continue to monitor phosphorus output into Moses Lake per the finfish permit.

Priority Watershed: Whitman Snake River Tributaries

Implementing: Steptoe Creek STI, Early Implementation Actions for Alkali Flat Creek STIs (In development).

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Mail outreach post cards to watershed residents:** Post cards will explain our water quality work and provide information on how to get help from Ecology staff to protect water quality.
- **Send success story to watershed residents:** Provide information on efforts other farmers and ranchers have taken to protect water quality and offset the costs of buffer installation.
- **Provide landowners a farm tour opportunity where WQ BMPs are installed:** Whitman CD to offer North Snake Tributary landowners an opportunity to visit some farms in compliance.

Financial Assistance:

- **Continue to implement the Palouse Conservation District *Alkali Flat Creek Property Protection* ($1,000,000):** This project will protect 437 acres adjacent to Alkali Flat Creek. Preserving this property is important for showcasing conservation practices that promote soil health and reestablish and protect native prairie, riparian species, anadromous fish, and water quality.
- **Begin implementation on Whitman Conservation District's *Mud Flat Creek Restoration* ($500,000):** This grant will support water quality in Mud Flat Creek which is a main tributary of Alkali Flat Creek. Livestock exclusion fencing, riparian buffer establishment, and low tech bank stabilization will be implemented along with engineered high use areas to protect the creek.
- **Communicate funding opportunities:** Connect with Conservation Districts in Whitman County when funding opportunities are coming up. Share funding update announcements in working groups and partner meetings as they arise.

Partner Coordination:

- **Host Quarterly Meetings with the Whitman Conservation District:** Ecology works closely with the staff of Whitman CD to identify issues, coordinate plans/projects, and provide technical assistance to the public in the region.
- **Host Quarterly Meetings with the Palouse Conservation District**: While much of the work of the Palouse CD revolves around the Palouse Watershed, their district falls within the boundaries of both Steptoe Creek and Wawawai Canyon. Ecology works heavily with PCD staff through various project implementation, technical assistance, and events.
- **Participate with the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board:** Ecology consistently works with various stakeholders involved in salmon recovery efforts in the region, including Walla Walla. As a lead entity voting member and a member of the Regional Technical Team, Ecology assists with the SRSRB annual grant round and provides technical assistance for water quality issues as they relate to salmon recovery and habitat restoration.
- **Participate with the Snake River Local Working Group**: Ecology staff participate in this basin wide working group focused on challenges and solutions to the greater Snake River watersheds.
- **Attend at least two CD board meetings:** CD boards are composed of farmers and ranchers in that district. Staff will participate in board meetings to inform them of our on-going non-point pollution work and answer questions.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Perform Comprehensive Watershed Evaluation**: Annual surveys will be conducted during the early spring season to identify livestock water pollution issues. Work will be focused on a majority of Snake River tributaries including Alkali Flat Creek, Penawawa Creek, Almota Creek, Wawawai Canyon, and their associated tributaries.
- **Prioritize Sites for Technical and Financial Assistance:** Sites are evaluated along with all other Snake River and Palouse watershed tributaries to identify 5 new prioritized sites for contact.
- **Respond to Non-Point Complaints:** ERO responds to all water quality related complaints in the watershed. If pollution site is identified to be of concern, ERO will send a follow-up technical assistance letter to further address the water quality concern.
- **Update Nonpoint Inspection (NPI) database:** Systematically identify and document sites of concern in the NPI database.
- **Continue to identify sites of concern:** Continue to work in the field and within the community to identify additional sites of concern that have not yet been prioritized.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Contact at Least Five New Priority Sites:** Staff will contact landowners with livestock water quality issues via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters are followed up with multiple phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure continued communication with Ecology and landowner.
- **Ensure Final Steptoe Order Implementation:** An administrative order was sent to a landowner in the Steptoe Creek Watershed in 2019 addressing ongoing livestock pollution issues. Since the order was sent, Ecology, along with the partnership of the Palouse CD have developed a plan to address the site. Most of the riparian buffer and Order elements have been implemented. A final step will be completed as part of an FY22 grant that extends into 2026.
- **Compliance follow-up:** Follow-up and continue technical assistance efforts with landowners who have received letters from Ecology.
- **Evaluate and respond to incoming ERTS complaints:** Continue to respond directly or coordinate with WSDA, Whitman County, and other partners to address nonpoint pollution sources.

Monitoring Activities:

- **Partner with the Palouse Conservation District to monitor in Steptoe Creek**: Monitoring will help ensure livestock BMPs implemented in the watershed work to fully protect water quality. This will help adaptive management in the watershed.

Priority Watershed: Walla Walla River Watershed

Implementing: Walla Walla River Watershed Multiparameter TMDLs (Bacteria, Temperature, pH, DO, Toxics).

Priority Actions Projected for 2026:

Education and Outreach:

- **Send outreach mailers to watershed residents:** Mailers will explain our water quality work and provide information on how to get help from Ecology staff to protect water quality.
- **Host office hour listening sessions in the field**: Provide an opportunity for interested residents to meet with the Watershed Lead at a public location within the county to engage and ask questions. (Spring/Fall).
- **Write an article for CD's newsletter:** Article will discuss water quality work and concerns in the area. Will provide information on general BMPs and information on how to connect with Ecology staff with any questions or concerns. (Spring/Fall).
- **Meet with County Commissioners:** Share information on our water quality work, offer help to county farmers and ranchers, and answer questions they may have. (Spring).
- **Continue participation in Policy, Funding and Outreach (PFO) Workgroup Meetings:** PFO is a subgroup within the larger Walla Walla 2050 effort. This work group is comprised of local organizations and interested community members, focused on implementing public engagement and education.
- **Webpage:** ERO staff will work with HQ to develop a Walla Walla TMDL webpage to connect WQ efforts with the Walla Walla 2050 plan, provide an overview of water quality issues, BMPs, funding programs, and contact information specific to the watershed.

Financial Assistance:

- **Communicate funding opportunities:** Connect with Conservation District, Tribes, and non profits in Walla Walla County when funding opportunities are coming up. Share funding update announcements in working groups and partner meetings as they arise.
- **Continue implementation of the Emergency South Fork Russell Creek Post-Fire Planting ($50,000):** This grant is funded as an emergency grant from water quality penalties. Approximately 39 acres along 2.5 stream miles of previously forested riparian buffer that burned in July 2025 will undergo stabilization plantings. This critical area planting uses a combination of hydro-seeding, broadcast seeding, and drill seeding to control erosion and mitigate agricultural runoff.
- **Begin implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Touchet River Mile 35 Restoration – Phase 2 Project ($500,000):** The Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 2 of a restoration project on a one-mile reach of the Toucher River, and create a feasibility report and design for restoring another 2.25 miles of the Touchet River west of Prescott, WA. Phase 2 restoration activities include installing in-stream and bank bio-engineered log structures, enforced log jams, and other large woody material; as well as planting bank vegetation. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain inundation, and sediment deposition, which will improve water and salmonoid habitat quality.
- **Begin implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Lower Mill Creek River Mile 4.0 – Phase 2 Project ($495,600):** Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 2 of a restoration project on a 1.5-mile stretch of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Walla Walla River in southeast Washington, thereby improving its ecological function and addressing existing water quality impairments. Restoration activities include installing habitat structures and planting riparian vegetation. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain inundation, and sediment deposition.
- **Continue implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Canopy Cover Improvements on the Touchet River – Phase 2 Project ($312,864):** Active through June 2026, this grant works to address

temperature issues in the Touchet River by removing invasive false indigo and planting 2.5 miles of riparian vegetation.

- **Continue implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Touchet River Mile 35 Restoration – Phase 1 Project ($500,000):** Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 1 of a restoration project on a one-mile reach of the Touchet River west of Prescott, WA. Phase 1 restoration activities include installing in-stream and bank bio-engineered log structures, enforced log jams, and other large woody material; as well as planting bank vegetation. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain inundation, and sediment deposition, which will improve water and salmonoid habitat quality.
- **Continue implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Lower Mill Creek River Mile 4.0 – Phase 1 Project ($500,000):** Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 1 of a restoration project on a 1.5-mile stretch of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Walla Walla River, thereby improving its ecological function and addressing existing water quality impairments. Phase 1 restoration activities include installing various logjam and habitat structures, and planting riparian and wetland buffers. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain inundation, and sediment deposition.
- **Continue implementing the Walla Walla County Conservation District Touchet River Mile 42 Restoration – Phase 1 Project ($480,000):** Walla Walla County Conservation District will construct Phase 1 of a restoration project on a 1.4-mile reach of the Touchet River west of Waitsburg, WA. Phase 1 restoration activities include installing enforced log jams, pile fields, and other large woody material; completing side channel pilot cuts; and planting bank vegetation. Project outcomes include increased shade, floodplain inundation, sediment deposition, and side channels, all which will improve water and salmonoid habitat quality.

Partner Coordination:

- **Host Quarterly Meetings with the Walla Walla County Conservation District:** Ecology staff work closely with the conservation district staff in planning and implementing Ecology grant funded projects.
- **Participate on the Snake River Salmon Recovery Board Technical Team:** Ecology works with various stakeholders involved in salmon recovery efforts in Walla Walla. As a lead entity voting member and a member of the Regional Technical Team, Ecology assists with the SRSRB annual grants and provides technical assistance to the group for water quality issues.
- **Participate in the Mill Creek Working Group:** Ecology staff participates in the monthly working group focused on the Mill Creek Watershed and the flood control zone of Mill Creek operated by the Army Corps of Engineers.
- **Participate in the Snake River Local Working Group:** Ecology staff participate in this basin wide working group focused on challenges and solutions to the greater Snake River watersheds.
- **Participate in the Walla Walla 2050 Planning Efforts:** Ecology's Office of the Columbia River are partnering with local stakeholders in the Walla Walla Watershed to develop new ways to protect water resources, water quality, and habitat. Ecology staff participated in workgroups and drafting of plans focused on water quality aspects of this effort.
- **Coordinate with Partner Agencies:** Ecology staff will hold meetings and coordinate with state and federal agencies to develop plans to protect water quality through the implantation of best management practices.

Pollution Identification/Watershed Evaluation:

- **Perform Annual Watershed Evaluations:** Surveys will be conducted during the early spring season of 2026 to identify water pollution issues resulting from crop production. Work will focus on the highly erodible soils identified in the TMDL Implementation Plan. These soil types are located north of the Walla Walla River and east of the Touchet River.

Compliance/Technical Assistance Activities:

- **Contact New Priority Pollution Sites for Assistance:** Approximately five new landowners with crop water quality issues will be contacted via technical and financial assistance letters. All letters are followed up with multiple phone calls (if contact number is available) throughout the year to ensure BMP plans are developed and implemented.
- **Follow-Up with Landowners of Previous Priority Sites:** Landowners who have received technical assistance letters in previous years and who remain out of compliance will be contacted again through additional phone calls and follow-up technical/financial assistance letters. If landowner has received multiple letters and continued to remain out of compliance, ERO may send a warning letter.
- **Follow up on Non-Point Complaint Sites:** Contact valid complaint sites with non-point pollution issues and schedule site visits to provide technical and financial assistance. Phone calls and/or letters will follow with the goal of developing a plan for water quality protection and implementing the plan.

Monitoring Activities:

- Utilize the ambient water quality monitoring data to evaluate trends and confirm conditions in waterbody segments listed as Category 5 (303(d)) impaired waters under the Clean Water Act.
- No monitoring plans for 2026

Priority Watershed: Spokane River Watershed – Focus on Deep & Coulee Creeks

Implementing: Spokane River & Lake Spokane Dissolved Oxygen TMDL

Summary/Context Info:

Deep Creek and Coulee Creek are tributaries to the Spokane River identified in Ecology's Spokane River and Lake Spokane Dissolved Oxygen (DO) TMDL as contributing nutrient and oxygen-demanding loads that affect downstream dissolved oxygen conditions. Although smaller than Hangman Creek, these tributaries influence localized instream conditions and contribute phosphorus and other constituents that ultimately enter the Spokane River mainstem and Lake Spokane.

The DO TMDL recognizes that tributary load allocations are necessary to achieve dissolved oxygen criteria in the mainstem, particularly during critical summer low-flow periods when biological oxygen demand and nutrient effects are most pronounced. In Deep Creek specifically, groundwater contributions to lower reaches provide a year-round pathway for nutrient delivery, independent of surface runoff conditions. This hydrologic dynamic complicates load reduction strategies and underscores the need for monitoring approaches that account for both surface and subsurface nutrient transport.

Priority Actions Projected for 2026

Education and Outreach

- **Mail outreach post cards to watershed residents:** Post cards will explain our water quality work and provide information on how to get help from Ecology staff to protect water quality.
- **Youth Education:** Staff will continue to coordinate with schools on guest speaking opportunities and field activities focusing on water quality education (trout in the classroom, salmon release days, etc…)
- **Community Events:** Continue to participate and table at events throughout the greater Spokane River watershed.
- **Conferences and Symposiums:** Continue to attend and/or table at conferences related to the greater Spokane River watershed.

Financial Assistance

Majority of financial assistance for nonpoint projects associated with Spokane watershed have been focused in Hangman watershed, as the Hangman watershed is the highest contributor of nonpoint source pollution to the Spokane River - please see that section for more information. Ecology will begin engaging in nonpoint source pollution education and outreach next year in the Deep and Coulee Creek subbasins of the Spokane River watershed as well as conduct reconnaissance watershed evaluations in preparation for prioritizing nonpoint sites with water quality concerns in 2027 – often those efforts are the catalyst for financial assistance allocation in a watershed.

Partner Coordination

- **Meet with Conservation Districts:** Ecology will continue to meet in person and virtually with Spokane, Stevens and Lincoln County Conservation Districts to continue to develop cooperative relationships with local partners.
- **Spokane Salmon Recovery Collaborative:** Ecology will continue participation in regional coordination meetings to align TMDL implementation priorities with salmon recovery objectives, share updates on nutrient and temperature reduction efforts, and identify opportunities to integrate riparian restoration and floodplain reconnection projects within high priority reaches.
- **Hangman Workgroup Meeting:** Ecology will continue engagement with watershed partners to review ongoing implementation activities, discuss sediment and nutrient reduction strategies, coordinate upcoming restoration and assessment projects, and identify data gaps to inform adaptive management within the Hangman Creek watershed.
- **Meet and Greet with Conservation District and Spokane Riverkeeper:** Ecology will continue to meet with Spokane Conservation District and Spokane Riverkeeper to discuss current and planned TMDL implementation actions, strengthen collaboration on nonpoint source control efforts, and improve communication pathways for community outreach and watershed engagement.

Pollution Identification / Watershed Evaluation

- **Perform Comprehensive Watershed Evaluations of Deep Creek and Coulee Creek:** Annual early-season field evaluations will be conducted to identify and document nonpoint source pollution issues influencing nutrient and sediment delivery to the Spokane River. Work will focus on the lower reaches and key contributing areas where land use and drainage conditions indicate elevated risk of pollutant transport. As this is the first year Ecology will be performing evaluations in this geography, 2026 will be focused on reconnaissance to better understand landuse and nonpoint concerns. No landowners will be directly contacted as a result of the watershed evaluations in 2026.

Compliance / Technical Assistance Activities

- **Provide Technical Assistance to Landowners:** Ecology staff will provide technical assistance to landowners as opportunities may arise from complaint response and/or education and outreach efforts in the watershed. Technical assistance will include at a minimum, riparian buffer map generation for landowners including visual buffer layouts and acreage estimates designed to protect water quality and reduce sediment and nutrient inputs from adjacent landuses, as well as offering financial assistance.
- **Follow-up on Nonpoint WQ Complaints:** Staff will continue responding to public complaints and technical assistance requests related to Deep Creek/Coulee Creek, with follow-up calls and/or letters after confirming water-quality concerns, coordinating site visits to work with sites on WQ protection plans, as well as offering financial assistance.

Monitoring Activities

- **Monitor Existing Sites:** Staff will continue to monitor and document sites where water-quality concerns persist, including bank condition, riparian function, and observable pollutant pathways.
- **Continue to Partner with Spokane Conservation District on Possible Monitoring Work:** Ecology will coordinate with Spokane Conservation District on monitoring efforts in Deep Creek and Coulee Creek, including site selection, field logistics, and data collection priorities to support tracking of implementation progress and inform adaptive management.

Appendix D. Maintenance of Effort (MOE) List for State Fiscal Year 2025 per CWA Section 319(h)(9)

Statement of Maintenance of Effort (MOE) related to Section 319(h)

MOE Base Level: Based on available Ecology data from 1985 and 1986, the average level of annual pass-through awards for nonpoint source control projects focused on improving water quality was $480,254. Projects were funded using state Referendum 39 funds.

MOE Maintenance: Ongoing pass-through funding for nonpoint source projects focused on restoration and protection of water quality has far exceeded the MOE Base Level, mostly through resources provided through the Washington State Centennial Clean Water Fund and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF).

Between 1988 and 2024 Ecology has awarded an average of more than $4 million per year in state nonpoint source project funding. These funds were not used as Section 319 or other federal match.

In State Fiscal Year 2025, Ecology offered over $4,330,000 in state funds from our Centennial Grant Program that were not used as match for Section 319 or other federal programs. This amount reflects a representative subset of eligible state expenditures sufficient to demonstrate Maintenance of Effort that exceeds the established base level (see below).

Table 16. Final SFY24 Nonpoint Source Projects-Excluding 319 State Match Projects.

Agreement Number	Recipient	Project Title	Offer Amount
WQC-2025-SeatPR-00109	Seattle city of - Parks & Recreation Department	Thornton Creek Floodplain Reconnection for the Lake City Floodplain Park	$500,000
WQC-2025-SkCoPW-00131	Skagit County - Public Works Department	Lorenzan Creek Final Design and Restoration	$500,000
WQC-2025-SpoCoD-00166	Spokane Conservation District	Hangman Creek Riparian Buffer Incentive Program	$500,000
WQC-2025-SpoCoD-00184	Spokane Conservation District	Hangman Creek Riparian Buffer Incentive Program 2	$500,000
WQC-2025-ThurCD-00165	Thurston Conservation District	Improving Water Quality in Ayer/Elwanger Creek, Phase 1	$500,000
WQC-2025-Vancou-00113	Vancouver city of	Burnt Bridge Creek Property Acquisition Phase 3	$500,000
WQC-2025-WhitCD-00189	Whitman Conservation District	Mud Flat Creek Restoration	$500,000
WQC-2025-WWCoCD-00001	Walla Walla County Conservation District	Touchet River Mile 35 Restoration Project	$500,000
WQC-2025-WWCoCD-00008	Walla Walla County Conservation District	Lower Mill Creek RM 4.0	$330,000