

Water Resources in the Kettle River Watershed (WRIA 60)

The Kettle River, a major tributary of the Columbia River, originates in the Okanogan Highlands and Monashee Mountains of southern British Columbia, Canada. Roughly one-quarter of the Kettle River watershed, the southern-most 1,000 square miles, is in Washington State. It includes the northeastern portion of Okanogan County, the northern part of Ferry County, and a small part of northwestern Stevens County. The Washington portion of the watershed is often referred to as Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 60.

Water availability

The Kettle River watershed is not closed to new water uses (appropriations); see below for general information on water rights.

However, the mainstem and some tributaries of the Kettle River are subject to administrative restrictions known as Surface Water Source Limitations (SWSLs). Often these will require that new water uses stop during low flow periods. Groundwater connected to the surface water sources are also subject to SWSL restrictions.

In addition to SWSLs, some streams in WRIA 60 are “closed” by administrative rule, meaning that the water body is closed to new uses.

Water quality

Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for bacteria and temperature have been completed for creeks and rivers within the Colville National Forest.

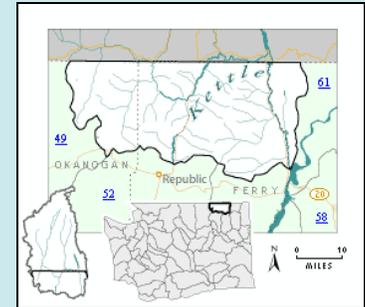
The Ferry and Stevens County Conservation Districts will soon start monitoring water quality in the Kettle River and its major tributaries. They will also work with landowners in the watershed to design and install projects to improve water quality.

Watershed Planning

There is currently no planning work being done under RCW 90.82 in WRIA 60.

Water Rights in Washington State

Under state law, the waters of Washington collectively belong to the public and cannot be owned by any one individual or group. Instead,



WRIA 60

Definitions

SWSL: Surface Water Source Limitation.

Administrative restrictions on water availability. A SWSL is established by Ecology after recommendation and consultation with the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (RCWs 90.22, 90.03 & 90.05). The intent of a SWSL is to protect fish and wildlife habitat.

TMDL: Total Maximum Daily Load. A water quality improvement plan that establishes limits for the amount of pollutants that are allowed in a water body without violating state water quality standards.

Watershed Planning: Under RCW 90.82, a framework for developing local solutions to water-related issues on a watershed basis.

WRIA: Water Resources Inventory Area; also known as a watershed or river basin. For environmental management purposes, Washington is divided into 62 WRIsAs.

Ecology may grant individuals or groups the right to use them. Approval is given in the form of a water right permit.

You need a water right to use any surface water (water located above ground, such as lakes, rivers, streams and springs), or to use groundwater (water located under ground) at a rate of more than 5,000 gallons a day (see RCW 90.44.050).

Much of the water in Washington State has already been appropriated, which means it is spoken for and being used. This is making it more difficult to find water supplies for new growth and development, while still leaving enough water in our lakes and rivers for fish and other protected instream resources and values (such as wildlife, navigation, aesthetics and water quality).

More and more people are looking to change or transfer existing water rights to meet their water needs. Generally Ecology will consider changes to the following elements of a water right:

- Place of use.
- Point(s) of diversion or withdrawal.
- Purpose of use (including season of use).

Ecology is working closely with Washington communities to help them effectively manage their water, so we can meet current needs and help ensure future water availability for people, fish and the natural environment.

For more information

Water rights:

- General questions: Water Resources Program at 509-329-3400
- Technical questions: Gene Drury, Permit Writer at 509-329-3566
- Ecology website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wr/rights/water-right-home.html>

Water quality:

- Jean Parodi, Water Quality Program, at 509-329-3517
- Ecology website: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/links/wq_assessments.html

Watershed planning:

- Jaime Short, Shorelands & Environmental Assessment Program at 509-329-3411
- Ecology website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/watershed/index.html>

Publications and studies for WRIA 60: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/wriapages/60.html>

Other contacts:

Department of Fish & Wildlife
Eastern Washington
<http://wdfw.wa.gov/reg/region1.htm>
509-892-1001

Colville Confederated Tribes
<http://www.colvilletribes.com>
509-634-2200

Stevens County Conservation District
509-685-0937 Ext. 3
<http://www.scc.wa.gov/index.php/contact/Stevens-County-Conservation-District.html>

Ferry County Conservation District
509-775-3473, or Toll Free at 888-834-7516
<http://ferry.scc.wa.gov/contact-us.html>

If you need this publication in an alternative format, call the Water Resources Program at 360-407-6600. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.