

Water Resources in the Pend Oreille River Watershed (WRIA 62)

The Pend Oreille River watershed encompasses about 26,000 square miles in parts of Washington State, Canada and Idaho. The Washington portion of the watershed, often referred to as Water Resource Inventory Area (WRIA) 62, totals about 1,300 square miles in the northeastern section of the state. The Pend Oreille River is a major tributary of the Columbia River.

Water availability

The Pend Oreille mainstem is not closed to new water uses (appropriations); see reverse side for general information on water rights. However, it is 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.

Many streams in WRIA 62 also have SWSL restrictions. In addition, some streams are “closed” by administrative rule, meaning that the water body is closed to new uses.

Water quality

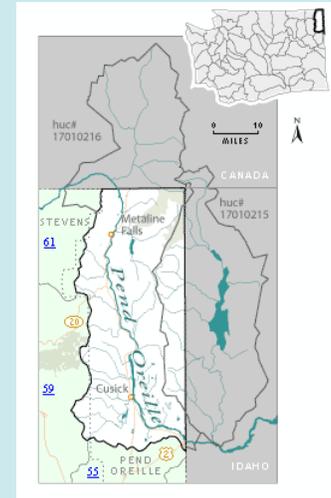
Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) began in early 2005 to address problems with temperature and total dissolved gas (TDG) on portions of the Pend Oreille River system. TDG is excessive air trapped in the water that causes harm to fish. The Environmental Protection Agency approved the TDG TMDL in March 2008.

The temperature TMDL is expected to be completed by the end of 2008. TMDLs for bacteria and temperature have been completed for creeks and rivers within the Colville National Forest.

Watershed Planning

Planning under RCW 90.82 for WRIA 62 began in 1998. The WRIA 62 management plan was adopted by Pend Oreille County in May 2005.

The WRIA 62 Planning Unit agreed to consider establishing stream flow requirements in subbasins that are restricted or closed to new uses, or are expected to experience the greatest population



WRIA 62

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.

growth. The Planning Unit has initiated flow studies on the South Fork Calispell and Indian Creek.

The Planning Unit is partnering with the Pend Oreille Conservation and Public Utility Districts to provide outreach materials to encourage residents to conserve water during the drier summer months.

Shoreline Master Program

Pend Oreille County is updating its Shoreline Master Program (SMP), which is over 30 years old. This is a regional update, and includes Newport, Ione, Metaline, and Metaline Falls. The town of Cusick's SMP has been updated over the last several years, and its

locally adopted update will be submitted to the Department of Ecology (Ecology) for formal review and approval. Pend Oreille County's update will be coordinated with Cusick's as required in the Shoreline Management Act and SMP Guidelines rule.

Shoreline Master Programs (SMPs) are locally developed plans and administrative ordinances used by communities to implement the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) of 1971.

The SMA was enacted to:

- regulate development along lakes, streams, and marine waters in Washington,
- protect fish and wildlife habitat, public access and navigation, and
- preserve shorelines and shorelands for water dependent uses.

Protecting water quality and the "natural character" (aesthetics) of shorelines and shorelands are also explicitly stated objectives of the SMA and locally developed SMPs.

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, 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:

- Karin Baldwin, Water Quality Program at 509-329-3472
- 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>

Shoreline management:

- Doug Pineo, Shorelands & Environmental Assessment Program at 509-329-3416
- Ecology website: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/SMA/index.html>

Publications and studies for WRIA 62:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/apps/watersheds/wriapages/62.html>

Other contacts:

Department of Fish & Wildlife

Eastern Washington

<http://wdfw.wa.gov/reg/region1.htm>

509-892-1001

Kalispel Tribe

<http://www.kalispeltribe.com/>

509-445-1147

Pend Oreille Conservation District & Watershed Planning Unit

<http://www.pocd.org/wria/html>

509-447-4217

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