

WAC 173-557-010 Authority and purpose. (1) The department of ecology (ecology) adopts this rule under the authority of the Watershed Planning Act (chapter 90.82 RCW), Water Resources Act of 1971 (chapter 90.54 RCW), Water code (chapter 90.03 RCW), Regulation of public groundwaters (chapter 90.44 RCW), Minimum Water Flows and Levels Act (chapter 90.22 RCW), Water well construction (chapter 18.104 RCW); RCW 43.21A.064(9) and 43.21A.080; and in accordance with the water resources management program regulation (chapter 173-500 WAC).

(2) The purposes of this rule are to:

(a) Establish instream flow levels necessary to protect wildlife, fish, scenic, aesthetic, recreation, water quality and other environmental values, navigational values, and stock watering requirements;

(b) Meet water resource management objectives of the Spokane area watershed plans adopted under chapter 90.82 RCW;

(c) Protect existing water rights; and

(d) Establish and protect Washington state interests in the water resources of the Spokane River.

(3) In accordance with RCW 90.82.130(4), in developing this chapter ecology refers to the Middle Spokane water resource inventory area (WRIA 57) and Lower Spokane water resource inventory area (WRIA 54) watershed plan recommendations as a consideration in determining the public interest in water resource management for the Spokane River.

The plan recommendations were approved by the Spokane area watershed planning units. The joint watershed plan for the Middle Spokane watershed (WRIA 57) and the Little Spokane watershed (WRIA 55, which is not included in this rule) was adopted by Spokane County, Stevens County, and Pend Oreille County commissioners on January 31, 2006. The Lower Spokane (WRIA 54) watershed plan was adopted by Spokane County, Lincoln County, and Stevens County commissioners on October 22, 2009.

(4) This rule establishes ecology's policies to guide the protection, use, and management of Spokane River basin surface water and the SVRP aquifer within the boundary of the rule area. It protects existing water rights, establishes instream flows, and sets forth a program for the management and administration of future water allocation and use.

[Statutory Authority: Chapters 90.54, 90.22, 90.82, 90.03, 90.44, 18.104, and 43.27A RCW. WSR 15-04-033 (Order 13-11), § 173-557-010, filed 1/27/15, effective 2/27/15.]