



**GROUND WATER  
MANAGEMENT PLAN**

*Executive Summary*

by

**Ground Water Advisory Committee  
for Clark County**

*December 8, 1992*

---

## INTRODUCTION

This Ground Water Management Plan has been prepared to serve as a guide to the general public and governmental organizations to properly manage ground water resources in Clark County.

Ground water is supply water for the greatest majority of Clark County residents and businesses. It is used by municipalities, industries, agriculture, and individual's homes through dozens of public well fields and thousands of private wells.

The ground water quality in the County has been found to be good with some significant exceptions. Major toxic sites are documented in urban and rural areas. These sites have tainted important water supply sources with volatile organic compounds (solvents, etc.). Chromium has also polluted certain areas. Suburban and rural areas have shown increases in nitrate from urbanization without sanitary sewers.

The County is rapidly urbanizing with an additional 110,000 people expected in the next 20 years. The urbanization of new areas and higher density growth in existing areas increases the need for ground water protection, in order to retain this resource as our primary water supply.

## HISTORY

Government leaders, special interest groups, and citizens have jointed together to protect ground water resources. In 1985, community leaders asked the Washington Department of Ecology (WDOE) to reserve ground water for future use. One year later Clark County petitioned the State to become one of only 16 ground water management areas in Washington (Exhibit A). The designation provides a 50/50 state-local partnership to cover costs for developing a ground water management program and protection plan. In 1987, Clark County received designation as a Ground Water Management Area and developed a 30-member public and private sector Ground Water Advisory Committee, commonly called GWAC (Exhibit B). GWAC is an advisory committee to WDOE, and is responsible for developing and submitting a completed plan

**Ground Water Management Program and Activities**

*I. Management of Ground Water Resources*

- Establish a coordinated ground water management body in Clark County
- Provide for Ground Water Advisory Committee input into ground water management activities
- Ensure that a team of local and state agency technical experts coordinate the development and analysis of data (computer modeling), and manage contracts for program activities

*II. Public Awareness and Education*

- Household hazardous waste
- Enhance on-site sewer systems
- On-site drainage and water injection
- Water conservation
- Forest/agricultural practices
- Environmentally safe recreation practices
- Use education in all aspects of ground water protection

*III. Commercial Chemical Management*

- Provide businesses technical assistance
- Require a best management practices plan and chemical inventory from each commercial or industrial business that uses chemicals
- Require ground water monitoring and reporting
- Require "Best Management Practices" for animal water disposal

*IV. Wellhead Protection*

- Establish Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPA) for every municipal well
- Eliminate substandard underground tanks
- Prohibit use of certain commercial and industrial chemicals

**IMPLEMENTATION**

Affected jurisdictions (i.e., municipalities, special purpose districts, etc.) will implement the ground water strategies they can feasibly and reasonably carry out within their authority.

The new regulations and program funding necessary to implement Ground Water Management Program activities will be the responsibility of the Water Planning Forum.

Clark County Water Quality Division staff will develop model ordinances and suggested annual work plans for Forum member organizations to help guide their individual efforts into a coordinated and synergistic water management program. The model ordinances will bring uniformity to existing regulations. Specific ordinances and work plans adopted by each organization must reflect the special circumstances and financial constraints of each jurisdiction. The impact to governmental bodies and individuals can be decreased by distributing the expenses over several years and by selecting higher priority strategies within each effected jurisdiction.

State money (e.g., grants, no interest and low interest loans) could be used as seed funds to enhance water quantity and availability programs. However, local revenue is necessary to support ongoing water programs. One example, is the formation of aquifer protection areas and establishing a water user fee within the area to generate revenue to manage aquifers.

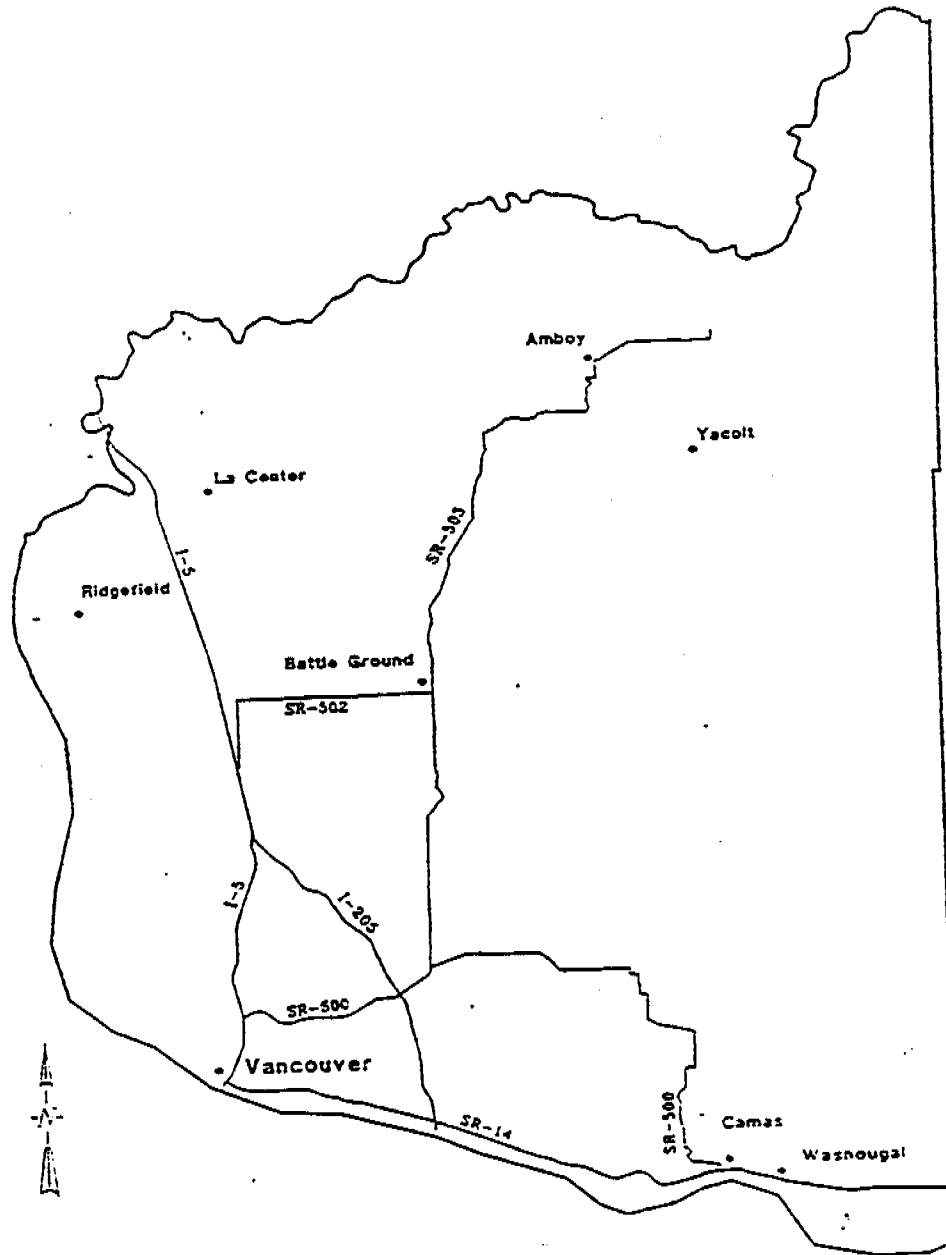
**CONCURRENCE  
PROCESS/  
PLAN ADOPTION**

The "concurrence process" or *approval* process is a requirement of Washington Water Law (Chapters 90.44 RCW and 173-100 WAC). It allows effected jurisdictions an opportunity to evaluate and tailor the Ground Water Management Plan to the specific requirements of their jurisdiction while ensuring no degradation to ground water. The concurrence process begins with a formal public hearing held by WDOE and lasts 90 to 180 days (Exhibit C).

Once locally approved and certified by WDOE, the Ground Water Management Plan will undergo annual review and modifications. This approach provides governmental agencies, businesses, and citizens with: 1) continued opportunity to incorporate additional ground water protection strategies into

**Exhibit A**

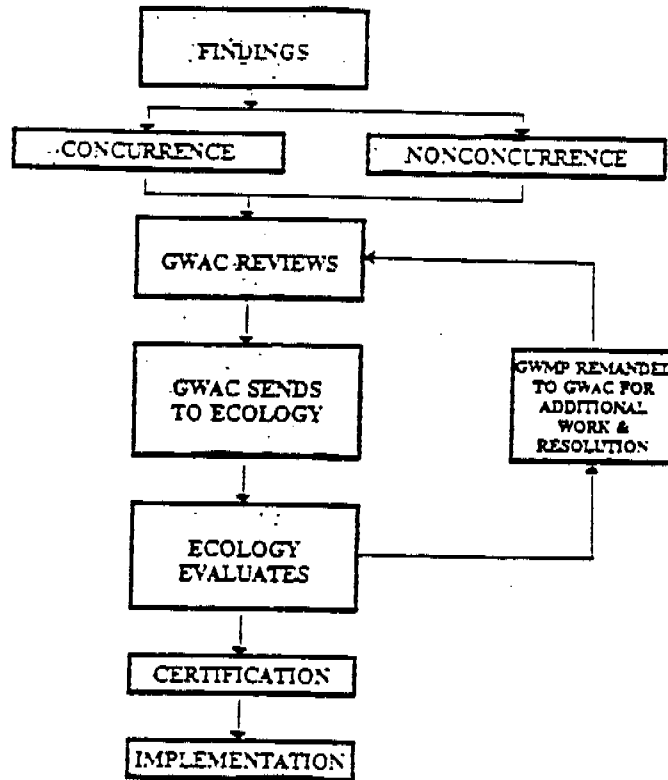
**CLARK COUNTY GROUND WATER MANAGEMENT AREA**



The Clark County Ground Water Management Area includes the entire area of Clark County, Washington. All ground water within the County is included and was chosen to coincide with the Clark County jurisdictional boundary. Most of the ground water within this area is recharged locally and discharges to the Columbia River. Ground water recharge is derived chiefly from rainfall infiltration through soil. Estimated rates range from less than one inch per year, in urban areas, to about 40 inches per year in the Cascade Mountains.

Exhibit C

CONCURRENCE PROCESS



The concurrence process allows "effected jurisdictions," including WDOE, 90 to 180 days to determine if the Ground Water Management Plan for Clark County is *feasible* and *reasonable*. If the jurisdiction finds the management plan is acceptable, it will implement the strategies it found feasible and reasonable to protect ground water.

Should a jurisdiction disagree with the plan (select nonconcurrence), that jurisdiction, staff from the Ground Water Management Program, GWAC officials, Clark County Water Planning Forum members (elected officials), and WDOE will negotiate a solution.