

## Over Pumped Problems

**"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water"**

- Benjamin Franklin

260 million gallons! Did you know that's how much water we pump in the summer per day? Citizens that use the aquifer are profusely over pumping; the average flow of the water source is only 109.68 million gallons. One major contributing factor is that the state agencies are giving out too many water rights. Additionally, Avista Corp. is a problem because they are diverting the already low flowing Spokane Falls to their power plant. Also, the trout species are suffering because of our mistake. Finally, just everybody not being conscious of how much water they use adds to our water wasting problems.

The state agencies of Idaho and Washington that currently manage our aquifer have carelessly deeded water to other cities and industries. They have not adequately assed the ecological impacts and effects it has on the Spokane Aquifer. This generosity has fueled wasteful habits that substantially reduce the flow of our water source. Our water usage in the region is among the highest in the nation, and will become the highest in the future because of many accepted water right requests. Unless the state agencies stop letting people gain the ability to withdraw copious amounts of aquifer water, this will continue.

**A manual, traditional  
water well**



The Spokane River and aquifer are connected, a fact that will be important in later problems. Along the river, there are gaining reaches and losing reaches. A gaining reach is when the aquifer has points where it'll feed water to the Spokane River. A losing reach occurs when the river has areas where it'll lose water to the underground water source. This means that when one source's flow is low, the other's will subsequently be low as

well. Correspondingly to that, when we over pump the aquifer, the river will become just a trickle.

Another problem is the fact that Avista Corp. re-directs the river above Spokane Falls to their hydropower plant. With our falls already running with a trickle the majority of the summer season, the Avista power plant makes it inevitable that this takes place for almost the entirety of the year. Completed in 1922, Upper Falls Dam was instrumental in meeting the growing demands of Spokane's industrial development. The last project built by Avista is on the Spokane River; the development includes both a diversion dam on the river that feeds the falls and a powerhouse. However, as you know the two are related.



**Dams reduce the water flow in the Spokane River**

With the lower summer flows from over pumping and higher water temperatures on the river, the trout species is suffering. They thrive in cool water and in turn don't do well in warm water. Once, there was 110 miles of free running water. Today, seven dams harness the river. Dams do not capture less than 36 miles of the entire river; 16 miles is the longest stretch that is left. This also damages the fish population because they have less spawning ground. According to Jeff Holms and Stann Grater, a new Washington fishing rule has opened upper Spokane to winter fishing. However, the 'catch and release, barb less hook, no bait' method is enforced here for the first time in memory.



**Winooski Rainbow Trout**

Few citizens that use the Spokane Valley Rathdrum-Prairie Aquifer set out to waste water. However, they do so unconsciously all 365 in a year. A leaking toilet can waste up to 21,700

gallons per year. This water could be put to better use. Many people have a nasty habit of continuously letting water run while doing dishes,

which literally wastes hundreds of gallons. As a result of only 1% of the world's water being drinkable by humans, when we misuse this privilege, later generations will pay dearly for our mistake. They might not have this important source anymore. Do you want to be partially responsible for that?



**Letting the water run while doing dishes is a wasteful**

All these problems surround the fact that the aquifer and river run dry and parched most of the summer. This myriad of issues go beyond the state agencies giving out too many rights, no one realizing how much water they use, the fish population declining, and electrical companies robbing Spokane's signature falls of its once mighty water; there are innumerable more.

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