

WCA Water Topic Comments

Perry Lovelace - January 26, 2026

The provided text outlines Island County's comprehensive strategy for the long-term protection and management of groundwater resources. These guidelines focus on maintaining water quality and quantity for residents by enforcing strict development standards in areas with limited supply or high vulnerability. The policy emphasizes the use of low-impact development, hazardous material management, and the reuse of stormwater to prevent contamination and depletion.

Water planning needs to be strengthened in the following areas:

- The focus and main goal must be stated more clearly as **aquifer preservation**, for both current and future residents. Changes to county aquifers occur over decade timescales, monitoring and planning for sustainability must consider, at a minimum, the next 100 years.
- **Resiliency** planning must be developed for groundwater access and recharge infrastructure.
- Water issues touch multiple areas of county, state, and federal governments. Points of intersection must be clearly outlined to promote **inter-agency cooperation**.
- Addition **incentive programs** to align with water **sustainability** need to be developed in order to meet our growing water needs.

While sustainability is not quantified, the strategies are designed to secure the long-term availability of water resources through several key approaches:

- **Stringent Development Controls:** The plan prohibits development in areas with known groundwater limitations unless objective well tests prove that the development will not diminish water supplies or quality for existing users. It also prohibits hazardous land uses in critical recharge areas and protected wellhead areas.
- **Infrastructure Resiliency and Monitoring:** There is a mandate to develop a comprehensive assessment of groundwater infrastructure, specifically focusing on resiliency needs to support preparedness against threats like groundwater depletion and seawater intrusion. Continuous data collection and analysis are prioritized to identify vulnerable areas.
- **Active Resource Enhancement:** To ensure water remains available, the strategies encourage the reuse of water, the use of alternative storage systems, and the acquisition of land that has particular value for groundwater recharge.
- **Conservation and Education:** Public education regarding conservation is labeled a "high priority," supplemented by incentive programs to encourage residents to participate in water conservation and aquifer protection.
- **Stormwater and Land Use Management:** The strategies require the use of Low Impact Development (LID) standards and the limitation of impervious surfaces to reduce runoff and protect recharge areas. Additionally, the county promotes the retention and reuse of stormwater using integrated best practices.