

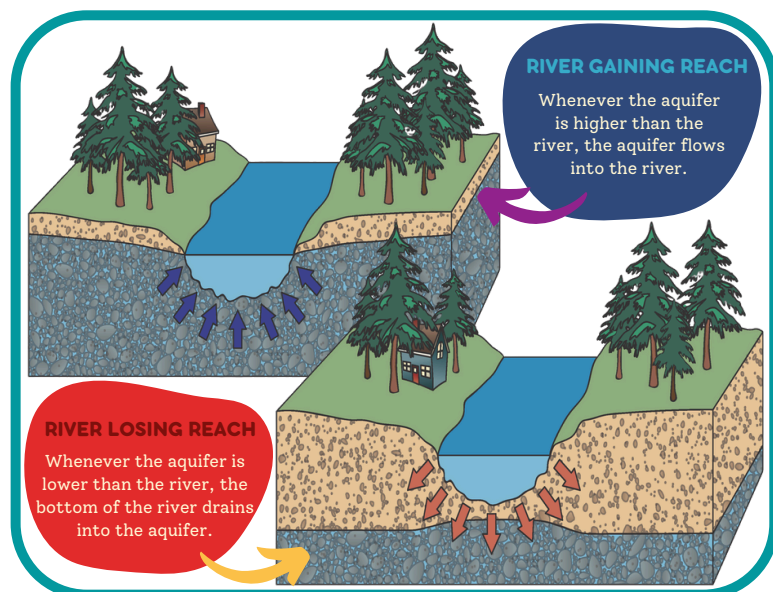
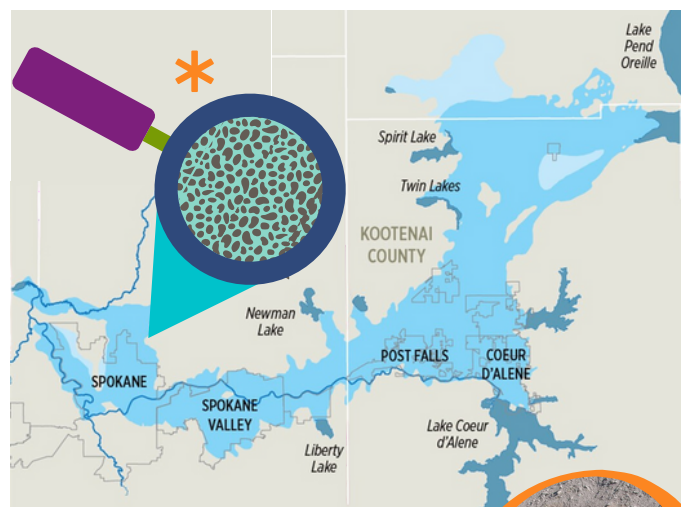


BURIED TREASURE Water in Spokane

Every day, people across the Spokane area use water! We take showers, brush our teeth, wash our clothes, and water our lawns. Have you ever wondered where that water comes from? It seems like magic when water appears with the turn of a faucet, but our water actually comes from an extraordinary hidden place: The AQUIFER! The Spokane Valley-Rathdrum Prairie Aquifer (SVRP) to be specific. It provides over 500,000 people across Spokane and Kootenai County with fresh clean filtered water.

Some think an aquifer is like an underground lake we can swim in? But not at all! The water actually flows between the spaces between rocks, pebbles, and sand naturally filtering and cleaning out pollutants. If we could see the aquifer, it would look something like this. *

This buried treasure we use every day hasn't always been here. It was created during the last Ice Age, when catastrophic floods swept across Northern Idaho and Western Montana after ice dams on the edge of glacial Lake Missoula suddenly burst. The floodwaters moved quickly and with great force, releasing a volume of water 13 times greater than all the water in the Amazon River, depositing thick layers of rock and sediment in our aquifer today. Over time, water from lakes, rivers, and mountain streams supplied the aquifer with water. It may not be the biggest aquifer in the world, but scientists believe it's one of the most productive!



DID YOU KNOW? The SVRP aquifer's best friend is the Spokane River! Every day, the Aquifer and the River exchange water back and forth. In some areas the aquifer flows into the Spokane River, giving the river fresh, clean water. In other places the Spokane River flows over the aquifer draining water into the ground. Sometimes humans pump too much water from the aquifer, and it can't recharge the river, causing river levels to drop. Yikes! This creates challenges for fish, aquatic animals, plants and people who use the river. Can you think of ways you can protect our river and aquifer? Read on for more!

The SVRP Aquifer does not have a protective layer, like clay over the top of it. This means any pollution left on the ground, such as motor oil, litter, dog poop, or chemicals, can infiltrate down into our drinking water. That would be really bad! Also, since the river and aquifer share water, they also share pollutants! So that trash in the river could become part of our drinking water! Yikes! Thankfully, there are things we can do each day to help keep our waterways (and our drinking water) clean.



ONLY RAIN
DOWN THE
STORMDRAIN!

Never dump
anything in a
storm drain!



THIS IS A
STORM DRAIN!

Storm drains are found on the sides of streets all around Spokane County, and they are great because they prevent street flooding when it rains. While some lead to water reclamation facilities that clean and recycle water, most storm drains go directly into our river or groundwater without any treatment at all! Would you want to swim in a river that was filled with pollutants like dog poop or car oil? Of course not! The creatures that call the Spokane River home don't want to either! Healthy, safe water means we all must do our part to keep pollution off our streets.

Think About It

We all impact our water for good or bad. Do you want to keep it healthy and plentiful for years to come? Think about what actions YOU can take today to ensure our precious treasure isn't wasted or polluted.

I CAN CONSERVE WATER BY _____

I CAN KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN BY _____

I AM THANKFUL FOR WATER BECAUSE _____

MATCH THE POLLUTION TO THE SOLUTION!

Draw a line to match the source of pollution to the action that will help!



Soil Erosion



Fix Car



Dog Poop



Go to Carwash



Car Leaking Oil



Pick up Poop



Litter



Plant Trees



Washing a Car on the Driveway



Throw Waste in the Right Place!



Sign your name
pledging to be a
Water Defender!



Envirokids is a collaborative effort among multiple environmentally focused agencies in the Spokane region working to provide locally relevant educational resources to teachers and families.