

How to Streamline Projects: Determining the Current Knowledge Base

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So often environmental studies are conducted and the resulting reports placed on a shelf and become lost or go unnoticed to researchers and consultants. Additional studies are conducted that repeat previous work or are conducted without sufficient forethought as to the ultimate goal. The Palouse Ground Water Framework Project (Framework Project) was designed to minimize or eliminate such issues so that money spent on future studies is directed towards projects that are stream-lined towards identified goals. The Framework Project was funded by the Washington Department of Ecology and the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC) to determine the hydrogeologic knowledge base of the Palouse Ground Water Basin (Palouse Basin) which spans the border between Idaho and Washington. The focus was on what is known, what is not known, what we want to know, and how do we get there. The project began in October 2009 and ended in January 2011. The five tasks of the project were: 1) project management, 2) compilation, 3) synthesis, 4) data gap investigation, 4.5) preliminary data gap investigation, and 5) conclusions and recommendations. The compilation task is comprised of assembling all of the Palouse Basin hydrogeologic documents. These documents were acquired electronically or scanned from hard copies. Information from the documents was then entered into a database to provide a single information source for future researchers. The purpose of the synthesis task was to review all of the assembled documents to determine what is known geologically and hydrogeologically about the Palouse Basin. The preliminary data gap task was added during the project and was designed to fill two identified data gaps. The data gap task is to determine what information is lacking from the current body of knowledge and to provide recommendations on future studies. Conclusions and recommendations comprise the final task.