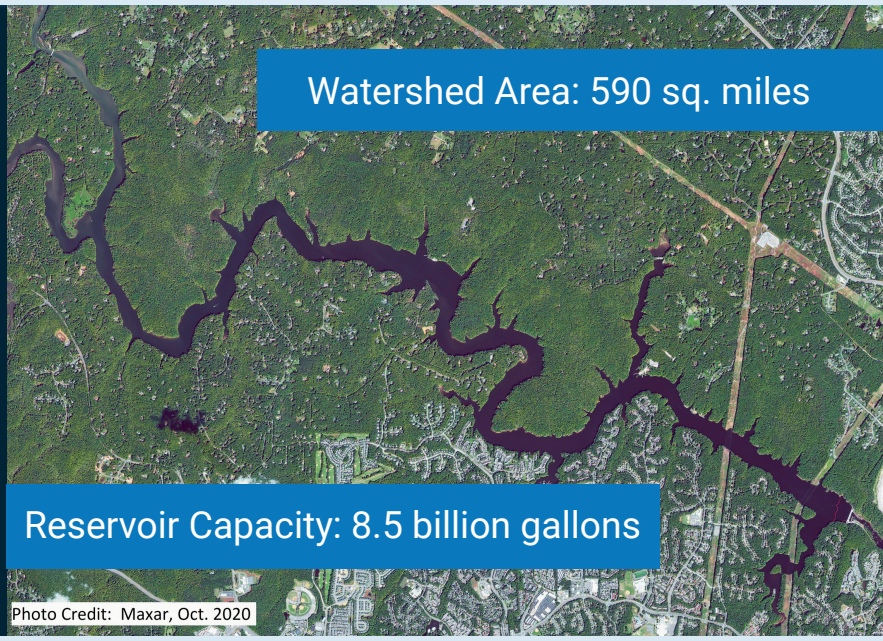
The Occoquan Watershed

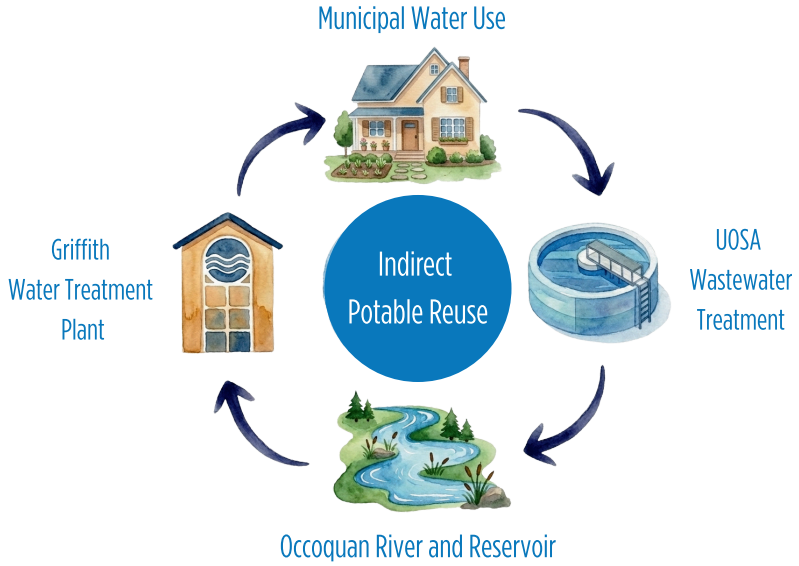
The **Occoquan Watershed** is a critical water source for nearly 1 million people in Northern Virginia. Rapid development in the 1960s caused severe water degradation issues that threatened drinking water sources, leading to the adoption of the **Occoquan Policy**.

Occoquan Policy

The Occoquan Policy (9 VAC 25-410) was created to protect drinking water sources both now and in the future. It led to the formation of the Upper Occoquan Service Authority (UOSA) and established stringent treatment and discharge limits for its effluent. The policy also identified indirect potable reuse as a sustainable water supply for Northern Virginia.



DID YOU KNOW? | *The creation of UOSA resulted in consistent, high-quality water entering the reservoir, providing up to 90% of inflows during dry periods, improving overall water quality in the reservoir, and ensuring a reliable drinking water source for future generations.*



What is Indirect Potable Reuse?

Indirect potable reuse occurs when wastewater is highly treated and released back into the environment to supplement drinking water sources. It then mixes with surface waters and moves through the watershed before reaching a drinking water intake, where it is further treated again to drinking water standards.

Any diversion of inflows into the Occoquan Watershed for consumptive use jeopardizes the original goal of the Occoquan Policy. Protecting inflows safeguards drinking water resilience, ecological health, and community benefits across the region.

Fairfax Water

Ensuring the Future



Source Water Protection

Emerging threats such as PFAS are putting drinking water supplies at risk. Fairfax Water and its partners are working to identify sources, but stronger policies are needed to prevent pollutants from entering waterways in the first place, and to ensure polluters, not the public, bear the cost of preventing contamination.

Edgemon Reservoir

To plan for future water needs, Fairfax Water is converting a quarry into the future Edgemon Reservoir. Resilient water sources are essential for the region's long-term reliability.

Phase I will be completed in 2035 with an estimated capacity of 1.7 billion gallons. Phase II will follow in 2085, bringing total capacity to nearly 19 billion gallons, more than twice the volume of the Occoquan Reservoir.



Help Us Keep the Occoquan Safe, Secure, and Sustainable

- The Occoquan Reservoir is a vital drinking water source that requires unique protections as an indirect potable reuse system.
- The reliability of future drinking water supplies is dependent on consistent, high-quality inflows to the reservoir.
- Effective collaboration with local, state, and federal officials is crucial to providing Northern Virginians with safe, secure, and sustainable drinking water.

Fairfax Water