

Whitman County was first settled in the mid-1860s. By 1881, the present Pullman City site had been named and platted, and when it was incorporated in April 1888, the City supported a population of approximately 300 people. It soon became evident that a safe and reliable municipal drinking water system was required to serve the community's growing population. The City began by drilling its first well in 1884. The well was found to be artesian and of good quality water. The City was sufficiently encouraged to build a complete water supply and distribution system by 1892. By 1912, the City had constructed a new system of cast iron and steel pipe to replace the original system. The City has continued to replace and expand its water system as needs have required.

Throughout the growth and development of the Pullman water system, the City has been dependent upon the Pullman-Moscow Groundwater Basin for its supply. A total of four production wells are now in use. The City's wells are no longer artesian to the extent originally found, and have experienced declining water levels since measurements began about 100 years ago. Both Well No. 4 and Well No. 6 have had pumps lowered because of declining water levels in 1993 and 1989, respectively.

In 1890, the State Legislature decided to site the Washington Agricultural College (now Washington State University or WSU) in Pullman. WSU maintains a separate water system within the City that also relies on groundwater as a source of supply. The systems are intertwined and agreements are in place for exchange of water during emergency conditions.