

## 2018/2020 Integrated Report

### What is the Integrated Report?

The federal Clean Water Act requires Oregon to report on the quality of its surface waters every two years. This effort represents the state's most comprehensive evaluation of water quality data and information about Oregon's waters. DEQ assessed this data and information to determine whether Oregon's waters contain pollutants at levels that exceed protective water quality standards. To complete this, DEQ reviewed and assessed readily available data and information using the Methodology for Oregon's 2018 Water Quality Report and List of Water Quality Limited Waters.

The result of these analyses and conclusions is called the Integrated Report because it combines the requirements of Clean Water Act section 305(b) to develop a status report and the section 303(d) requirement to develop a list of impaired waters. The Integrated Report is submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for final approval.

The Integrated Report categorizes all assessed waterbodies. Data are used to evaluate the most common beneficial uses, such as aquatic life, drinking water or recreation. Waterbodies that exceed protective water quality standards are identified as impaired and are added to the 303(d) list. Identifying a waterbody as impaired initiates the prioritization and development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), which is the calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant allowed to enter a waterbody so that the waterbody will meet and continue to meet water quality standards for that particular pollutant.

**Category 1:** All beneficial uses are supported and none is known to be impaired. Oregon does not have sufficiently robust data to be able to use this Category.

**Category 2:** At least one core beneficial use is supported and none is known to be impaired.

**Category 3:** Not enough information to determine beneficial use support.

**Category 4:** Available data and/or information indicate that at least one designated use is not being supported but a TMDL is not needed.

**Category 5:** At least one beneficial use is not supported and a TMDL is needed.

DEQ solicited comments on the draft 2018/2020 surface water quality assessment results. Because the Clean Water Act requires states to develop a report every two years, and DEQ's significant improvement efforts have spanned two cycles, DEQ is referring to this effort as the 2018/2020 Integrated Report.

### What's New with the Integrated Report?

In 2016, DEQ initiated significant improvements on how it develops and publishes its Integrated Report. DEQ staff reconstructed the framework and foundation to streamline and improve its biannual water quality assessment. In mid-2018, DEQ held its first statewide request for water quality data since the 2004/2006 Integrated Report.

One major improvement is the method by which waterbody segments are delineated, assessed, and reported. DEQ migrated its hydrologic framework from the outdated Longitude Latitude Identification system to the National Hydrography Dataset framework, which is the national and state hydrologic framework standard.

DEQ also redefined how it identifies the segments of waterbodies it uses to conduct assessments. Because waterbodies change as they flow from headwaters to the mouth, DEQ splits up the waterbody into multiple pieces, or assessment units.

These new waterbody assessment units represent homogeneous surface water quality, incorporate environmentally and hydrologically relevant breaks, and remain fixed over time. These fixed assessment units allow DEQ to more easily summarize information related to water quality in Oregon and track water quality changes over time. The water quality status by assessment unit is accessible through a new web-based tool that is both transparent and easy to use.

### What happened to the 2012 assessment results?

When DEQ does a new assessment, the assessment retains information from previous assessments. This is important, because additional data is not always available for every location that has been evaluated previously. Due to the newly delineated assessment units in



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### Water Quality Assessments

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this Integrated Report, EPA required DEQ to show assessment results between the 2012 non-attaining segments and the 2018 assessment units to ensure this information carried forward. The method DEQ used to complete the crosswalk included: (1) identifying monitoring stations associated with impairments in the 2012 Integrated Report and assigned those results to the appropriate new assessment unit; (2) if no monitoring station could be determined, identified whether other location information was available; and (3) if no spatial information was available, moved the entire spatial extent of the original listing forward to the appropriate assessment unit or assessment units.

## Key Findings

The 2018/2020 Integrated Report assessment continues to indicate the most widespread causes of impairments are temperature, dissolved oxygen, and *E. coli*.

- In 2018/2020, DEQ assessed 2,871 assessment units for one or more parameters, representing 146,057 river miles. This represents 41% of Oregon's mapped assessment units.
- Forty four percent of Oregon's river miles are impaired; this is an increase from 33 percent in 2012.
- Impairment of the Fish and Aquatic Life use is the most commonly unsupported use. This is largely driven by non-attainment of the temperature criteria.

The draft Integrated Report 2018/2020 was open for public comment for a total of 99 days from Sept. 30, 2019, through Jan. 6, 2020. Staff provided six informational sessions across the state and recorded an online webinar to provide an overview of the information contained in the Integrated Report and demonstrate the functionality of the new tools.

## Changes to the Draft Report Based on Comments Received

### Data Access and Display

The visual display of watershed assessment units on the Interactive Story Map and Interactive Web Map have been modified to represent the watershed as a shaded

area rather than identifying the entire stream network. This change more clearly represents the assessment unit as an area where impairments have been identified within the sub-watershed area (HUC-12), and not necessarily an area where every waterbody is impaired. The display was also updated to automatically display the monitoring locations used in the assessment at certain zoom levels.

The online Assessment Database was enhanced to allow filtering by attainment status and by beneficial use categories. Also, users now have the ability to download raw data used in the 2018/2020 assessments.

The Columbia Slough assessment unit, OR\_WS\_170900120201\_02\_104554, was separated into two distinct assessment units based on information submitted during the comment period documenting these two sections as hydrologically distinct. The new assessment units are:

- OR\_WS\_170900120201\_02\_104554.1
- OR\_WS\_170900120201\_02\_104554.2

Data associated with the chlordane human health criteria was reassessed based on errors identified in the original assessment. In addition, various corrections to individual assessments were completed based on comments received.

For questions regarding the 2018/2020 Integrated Report please contact:

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You can also visit the Integrated Report website  
<https://www.oregon.gov/deq/wq/Pages/2018-Integrated-Report.aspx>

### Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us).