

Oregon Water Quality Standards Triennial Review

The Department of Environmental Quality invites the public to comment on a list of priority water quality standards projects for the agency to initiate over the next three years. The Triennial Review does not result in water quality standards changes, but will outline the rulemaking and other projects DEQ plans to complete or initiate between 2021 and 2023.

What do water quality standards do?

Water quality standards designate the beneficial uses of each water body to be protected. For example, beneficial uses include fish and aquatic life and water contact recreation, among others. The standards also establish numeric or narrative criteria that must be met to support and protect the designated uses. Water quality standards are the goals for the waterbody. Water quality standards are used to assess waters, regulate the discharge of pollutants, and develop improvement plans, such as TMDLs, which are the total amount of pollution allowed while still protecting beneficial uses. More information about Oregon's water quality standards may be found on the [Water Quality Standards](#) webpage.

Why are potential revisions to water quality standards being reviewed?

The federal Clean Water Act requires states to review water quality standards and hold a public hearing at least every three years. DEQ reviews and revises water quality standards for several reasons. Revisions may be needed to incorporate new scientific information and improve use protection, to comply with federal regulations, or to respond to Endangered



Metolius River, Oregon

Species Act consultations. Developing new procedures may be necessary to help DEQ staff consistently and efficiently apply the standards in water quality programs, such as writing permits.

What are the types of reviews and revisions DEQ may undertake?

Reviews and revisions fall into categories like:

- Updates to rule language or maps that identify where and when fish and aquatic life uses occur.
- Criteria revisions to incorporate new scientific information or EPA recommendations.
- Site specific criteria to incorporate site-specific information.
- Procedures to apply narrative standards to use the latest scientific methods and improve consistency.
- Corrections and clarifications.

What are the highest priority water quality standards revision projects?

The water quality standards that DEQ currently considers the highest priority to initiate during the next three years are described in the document: "2021 Triennial Review Draft Water Quality Standards Project Priorities for Public Comment." This document may be found on DEQ's [Water Quality Standards Triennial Review](#) webpage.

What has DEQ considered in prioritizing potential projects?

DEQ has considered the environmental benefit that would result from the project, as well as whether the project would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of DEQ's water quality programs, such as permitting and pollution reduction. DEQ also considered external requirements such as court findings and federal agency decisions.

Where can I find more information and comment on DEQ's water quality standard review and revision priorities?

More information on how to provide comment and about the public hearing may be found on DEQ's



State of Oregon
Department of
Environmental
Quality

Water Quality Division
700 NE Multnomah St.,
Suite 600
Portland, OR 97232

Phone: 503-229-5696
800-452-4011
Fax: 503-229-6124

www.oregon.gov/DEQ

DEQ is a leader in restoring, maintaining and enhancing the quality of Oregon's air, land and water.

[Water Quality Standards Triennial Review](#) webpage.

Contact

Debra Sturdevant

503-229-6691

Debra.sturdevant@deq.state.or.us

Kaley Major

503-229-6121

Kaley.major@deq.state.or.us

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.