

Nondegradation:

Protection of High Quality Waters

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Three “Tiers” for Nondegradation

- Outstanding resource waters
- High quality waters
- All state waters



Outstanding Resource Waters

- Highest level of protection
- Equivalent to EPA's "tier 3" waters
- Water bodies entirely within the boundary of a national park or wilderness area
- Water bodies designated by the BER and approved by the legislature
- Degradation not allowed



High Quality Waters

- Middle level of protection
- Equivalent to EPA's "tier 2" waters
- Water bodies with assimilative capacity, i.e. the water quality is better than the water quality criterion
- Montana uses a parameter-by-parameter approach
- New or increased sources of pollution must undergo a nonsignificance review



All State Waters

- Lowest level of protection
- Equivalent to EPA's "tier 1" waters
- Water bodies that are impaired
- Existing uses must be protected



Three “Tiers” for Nondegradation

- Outstanding resource waters
- High quality waters
- All state waters

Increasing levels of protection as we climb from the bottom tier to the top tier.



Why Nonanthropogenic is Difficult



Looking Forward



Questions?

