



Montana's 2014 Water Quality Integrated Report Quick Facts

The biennial report describes the beneficial use support status and trends of streams and lakes, contaminants found in groundwater, and the safety of drinking water over the past two years. The report on water conditions "integrates" the 303(d) list and 305(b) water quality report and is required by the U.S. Clean Water Act.

MT has approximately 50,000 miles of perennial streams (exclusive of streams on Indian Reservations)

MT has approximately 625,000 acres of lakes/reservoirs greater than 5 acres (exclusive of waters on Indian Reservations)

DEQ has assessed about half (20,278 miles) of the perennial streams and over three quarters (493,237 acres) of lakes and reservoirs greater than 5 acres in the state.

Assessed waterbodies are partitioned into 1,100 stream and 72 lake/reservoir sections (assessment units).

Beneficial use support status for the state's 1172 assessment units:

Rivers & Streams

- 53% fully support drinking
- 42% fully support primary contact recreation
- 14% fully support aquatic life/fishes
- 70% fully support agriculture

Lakes & Reservoirs

- 31% fully support drinking water
- 80% fully support primary contact recreation
- 22% fully support aquatic life/fishes
- 36% fully support agriculture

Of the 1,172 total waterbody assessment units, 835 have one or more beneficial uses impaired.

- 278 assessment units have all necessary TMDLs completed, up from 176 in 2012 Integrated Report
- 144 assessment units have one or more, but not all necessary TMDLs completed

A TMDL, or Total Maximum Daily Load, defines the restoration goals for a waterbody in terms of specific pollutant loading from all sources needed to restore the waterbody's beneficial use to a fully supporting condition.

Waterbodies that have impaired beneficial uses typically still support the use, just not at the optimal level expected.

DEQ delisted 496 impairment causes from the 2012 303(d) List for the following reasons:

- Water quality standards attained – 172
- Original basis for listing was incorrect – 16
- TMDL approved by EPA – 307

Most common causes of impairment that require a TMDL:

- sediment or siltation impairs 459 waterbodies; 199 have the TMDL completed.
- phosphorus and nitrogen impair more than 200 waterbodies each; 105 have the TMDLs completed.
- Lead, copper, and arsenic impair more than 125 waterbodies each; 177 have the TMDLs completed.