

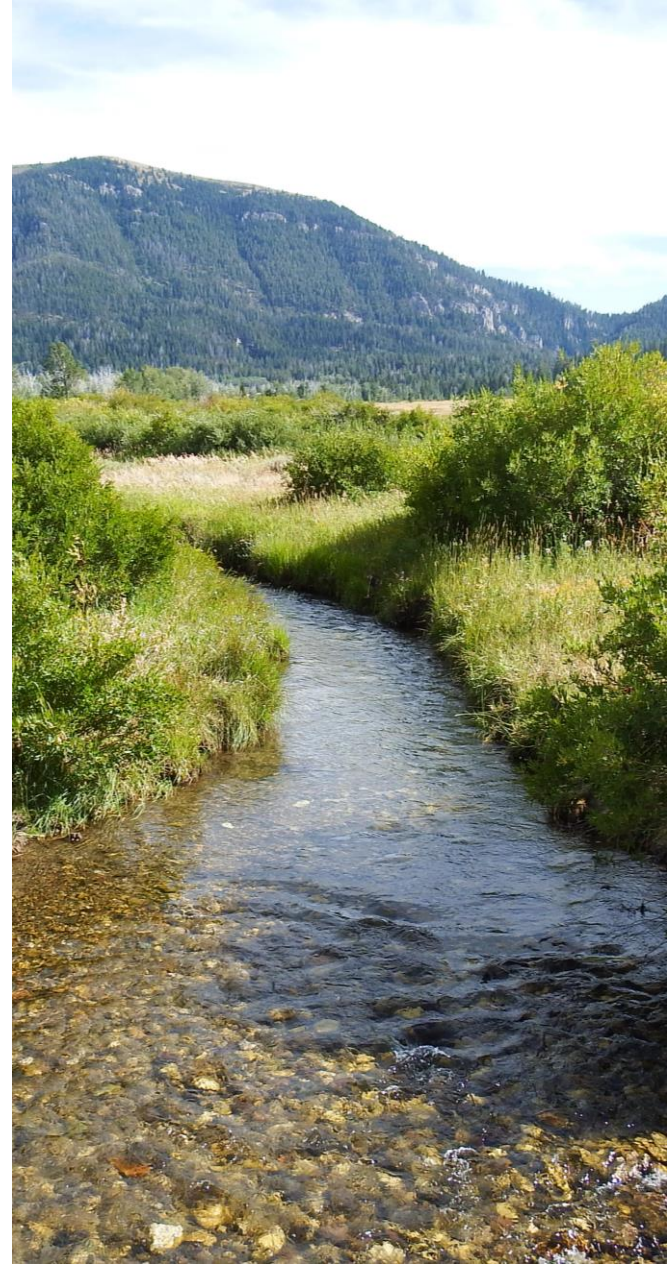
# Montana Water Quality Standards Triennial Review

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# Water Quality Standards

## Purpose

- Describe the desired condition and water quality goals of state waters
- Designate the uses of the waterbody and set criteria to protect those uses
- Form the foundation and legal basis for controlling pollutants entering waters

# Water Quality Standards

## Three components

### Criteria

- *Numeric = maximum pollutant concentration levels permitted in a water body*
- *Narrative = describes the desired condition of waterbodies (e.g., “free from” negative conditions)*

### Beneficial Uses

- *Goals and expectations for how waters are used by people, aquatic life, and wildlife (present and future)*

### Nondegradation policy

- *Framework for maintaining and protecting water quality that has already been achieved*
- *Protection for existing uses and high-quality and outstanding resource waters*





# Where to Find Montana's Water Quality Standards

## Administrative Rules of Montana Title 17, Chapter 30

- Subchapter 5 (mixing zones)
- Subchapter 6 (surface water quality standards and beneficial use classifications)
- Subchapter 7 (nondegradation)
- Subchapter 10 (groundwater protection)

Department Circulars (e.g., DEQ-7)

# Water Quality Standards Triennial Review

DEQ is required, at least every three years, to hold a public hearing for the purpose of reviewing water quality standards and, as appropriate, to modify and adopt water quality standards

- Montana Water Quality Act (75-5-301, MCA)
- Clean Water Act (40 CFR Part 131)



## Purpose of Triennial Review

- To solicit comments from interested persons regarding potential revision to any aspect of Montana's water quality standards.
- To ensure consistency with state and federal regulations.
- To ensure congruency with current research and technology.

# Overview of Triennial Review Process

**Open Montana water quality standards for public comment**

- WPCAC presentation
- Public notice
- Public comment period
- Public hearing

**Review comments and develop responses**

- Determine whether WQS changes are appropriate
- Identify which WQS changes will be pursued during current triennial review

**If no WQS changes, finalize responses**

**If WQS changes, initiate rulemaking**

- WPCAC presentation
- Public notice
- Public comment period
- Public hearing
- Adopt, file, publish

**Submit to EPA**

- Within 30 days of completion of review (no changes)
- Within 30 days of adoption/certification (changes)



# Public Participation

## Public notice to solicit comments on water quality standards

- Interested persons may submit data, views, or arguments concerning water quality standards.
- Comments can be submitted orally during public hearing
- Comments can be submitted in writing during public comment period.
- Comments should identify the water quality standard at issue, any suggested revision to the standard, and the basis for the suggested revision, including technical information.

## Public notice of proposed rulemaking

- Public comment period
- Public hearing



# Questions?

