



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8**

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Ref: 8EPR-EP

Mr. George Mathieus
Administrator
Planning, Prevention and Assistance Division
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: TMDL Approvals for the Bitterroot
Temperature and Tributary Sediment Total
Maximum Daily Loads and Framework Water
Quality Improvement Plan

Dear Mr. Mathieus:

We have completed our review of the total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) as submitted by your office for the waterbodies listed in the enclosure to this letter. In accordance with the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C. 1251 *et. seq.*), we approve all aspects of the TMDLs as developed for the water quality limited waterbodies as described in Section 303(d)(1). Based on our review, we feel the separate elements of the TMDLs listed in the enclosed table adequately address the pollutants of concern as given in the table, taking into consideration seasonal variation and a margin of safety.

Thank you for submitting these TMDLs for our review and approval. If you have any questions, the most knowledgeable person on my staff is Jason Gildea and he may be reached at 406-457-5028.

Sincerely,

Carol L. Campbell
Assistant Regional Administrator
Office of Ecosystems Protection
and Remediation



Enclosures

cc: Claudia Massman, Attorney
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Enclosure 1 – Bitterroot Temperature and Tributary Sediment Total Maximum Daily Loads

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action	TMDL Endpoints		WLA		Load Allocations		TMDL ¹	MOS		
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation					Indicators	Threshold Values	WLA ¹	WLA Permitted Facilities (Permit Number)	Source	LA ¹				
Ambrose Creek, headwaters to mouth (Threemile Creek)	MT76H004_120	F	N	N	X	F	P	2000	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								N/A	Physical substrate habitat alterations	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								> 2010	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	% riffle surface fines <6mm (reach average)	Idaho Batholith ≤ 14	11	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	4	887	Implicit		
													Middle Rockies ≤ 14								
													Northern Rockies ≤ 15								
													E channel: ≤ 45 for IB, ≤ 36 for MR								
												% riffle surface fines <2mm (reach average)	Idaho Batholith ≤ 8	296							
													Middle Rockies ≤ 10								
													Northern Rockies ≤ 7								
												% riffle and pool surface fines <6mm via grid toss (reach average)	E channel: All ecoregions ≤ 20								
													Riffles: All ecoregions ≤ 10	238							
													Pools: Idaho Batholith ≤ 10								
								Pools: Middle Rockies ≤ 6													
Width/Depth Ratio	Pools: Northern Rockies ≤ 8																				
	BFW ≤ 35': ≤ 16																				
Entrenchment Ratio	BFW >35': ≤ 29	338																			
	E channel: 6-11																				
Reach average residual pool depth	B: ≥ 1.5, C: ≥ 2.5, E: ≥ 2																				
	<20' BFW: ≥ 0.8'																				
	20'-35' BFW: ≥ 1.1'																				
Pools/mile	>35' BFW: ≥ 1.3'																				
	<20' BFW: ≥ 84	338																			
LWD/mile	20'-35' BFW: ≥ 49																				
	% Greenline shrub cover (where applicable)	>35' BFW: ≥ 26																			
Riffle stability index	<20' BFW: ≥ 573																				
	20'-35' BFW: ≥ 380																				
Macroinvertebrate Indices	>35" BFW: 195																				
	≥ 57%																				
	B: <70																				
Macroinvertebrate Indices	C: >45 and <75																				
	Mountain MMI: >63																				
	Valley MMI: >48																				
Macroinvertebrate Indices	O/E: >0.80																				
	Upland Erosion																				
	338																				

Bass Creek, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (unnamed creek), T9N R20W S3	MT76H004_010	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								2006	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								> 2010	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	9	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	0.7	526.7

Bass Creek, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (unnamed creek), T9N R20W S3	MT76H004_010	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								2006	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								> 2010	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	9	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	30	526.7

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action	TMDL Endpoints		WLA		Load Allocations		TMDL ¹	MOS				
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation					Indicators	Threshold Values	WLA ¹	WLA Permitted Facilities (Permit Number)	Source	LA ¹						
Bear Creek, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Fred Burr Creek), T7N R20W S7	MT76H004_031	F	X	X	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
Bitterroot River, East and West Forks to Skalkaho Creek	MT76H001_010	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
								2004	Copper	N/A	No Action	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bitterroot River, Skalkaho Creek to Eightmile Creek	MT76H001_020	F	P	P	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
								2000	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								1988	Sedimentation / Siltation	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								1988	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL	Tributary Temperatures	1°F reduction (average) via increased shade, irrigation efficiencies, and channel restoration	620	WWTPs accumulatively: Darby (MTG580011), Hamilton (MT0020028), Stevensville (MT0022713)	Natural	84,334	880,542	620				
												Riparian Shade	Comparable to reference areas where riparian vegetation is managed with reasonable conservation practices										
												Irrigation Water Management	15% improvement in summer irrigation efficiency (June-Sept)										
Inflows to Stream Network	75% reduction in warm irrigation return flow water																						
Wastewater Treatment Plants (if present)	No more than 0.25°F increase to stream temperature during summer (June-Sept)																						
Missoula Urban Runoff (if present)	Compliance with Part II, 5.a.vii of Missoula MS4 permit (MTR040007) or comparable initial flush stormwater interception control measures in subsequent permit renewals																						
Bitterroot River, Eightmile Creek to mouth (Clark Fork River)	MT76H001_030	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by temperature TMDL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
								2004	Copper	N/A	No Action	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2004	Lead	N/A	No Action	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								1990	Nitrogen (Nitrate)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2000	Sedimentation / Siltation	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								> 2010	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL	Same as Bitterroot River, MT76H001_020	Same as Bitterroot River, MT76H001_020	1,529	WWTPs accumulatively: Darby (MTG580011), Hamilton (MT0020028), Stevensville (MT0022713), Lolo (MT0020168)	Natural	221,370	234,824	1,529				
								Collective human sources with all reasonable land, soil, and water conservation practices in place	2,480														

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action	TMDL Endpoints		WLA		Load Allocations		TMDL ¹	MOS			
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation					Indicators	Threshold Values	WLA ¹	WLA Permitted Facilities (Permit Number)	Source	LA ¹					
McClain Creek , headwaters to mouth (Sin-tin-tin-em-ska Creek), T11N R20W, S23	MT76H004_150	F	P	P	X	F	X	1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	10	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	3	171	Implicit			
																Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	71					
																Natural Bank Erosion	30					
																Upland Erosion	57					
Mill Creek , Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to the mouth (Fred Burr Creek), T7N R20W S19	MT76H004_040	X	X	P	X	X	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
								N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								2000	Temperature (water)	Temperature	Investigated - No Action	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Miller Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_130	F	P	P	F	F	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by temperature & sediment TMDLs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
								N/A	Chlorophyll-a	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
								2006	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
								2006	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
								1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	0	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	10	1538	Implicit			
																Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	792					
																Natural Bank Erosion	659					
																Upland Erosion	77					
1992	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL	Riparian Shade	Comparable to reference areas where riparian vegetation is managed with reasonable conservation practices	N/A	N/A	Collective human sources with all reasonable land, soil, and water conservation practices in place	62	2,246	31											
				Channel Width/Depth Ratio	Comparable to reference conditons. (see Ambrose Creek W/D sediment threshold values)																	
				Irrigation Water Management	15% improvement in summer irrigation efficiency (June-Sept)																	
				Inflows to Stream Network	75% reduction in warm irrigation return flow water																	
Muddy Spring Creek , headwaters to mouth (Gold Creek) T7N R19W S2	MT76H004_180	F	P	P	F	F	F	2006	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			
								1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	N/A	N/A	Roads	0	15	Implicit			
																Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	0					
Natural Bank Erosion	0																					
Upland Erosion	15																					
North Burnt Fork Creek , confluence with South Burnt Fork Creek to mouth (Bitterroot	MT76H004_200	F	P	P	F	F	F	2002	Bottom Deposits	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	19	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	8	2830	Implicit			
																Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	952					
																Natural Bank Erosion	656					

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action	TMDL Endpoints		WLA		Load Allocations		TMDL ¹	MOS		
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation					Indicators	Threshold Values	WLA ¹	WLA Permitted Facilities (Permit Number)	Source	LA ¹				
River)																					
								2002	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2002	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
North Channel Bear Creek , headwaters to the mouth (Fred Burr Creek), T8N R20W S32	MT76H004_032	F	X	X	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
North Fork Rye Creek , headwaters to mouth (Rye Creek-Bitterroot River, South of Darby)	MT76H004_160	F	P	P	X	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2000	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rye Creek , North Fork to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_190	F	P	P	X	F	X	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2002	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
								2002	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								2000	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	0	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	24	1724	Implicit		
								Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	379												
								Natural Bank Erosion	1314												
								Upland Erosion	7												
Skalkaho Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_100	F	F	F	N	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2000	Mercury	N/A	No Action	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Sleeping Child Creek , headwater to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_090	F	P	P	X	F	P	2000	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								1988	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	3	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	11	2306	Implicit		
																Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	593				
																Natural Bank Erosion	1502				
								Upland Erosion	197												
								1990	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL	Same as Miller Creek	Same as Miller Creek	N/A	N/A	Collective human sources with all reasonable land, soil, and water conservation practices in place	79	2,223	38		
South Fork Lolo Creek , Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Lolo Creek)	MT76H005_020	F	P	P	F	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								N/A	Physical substrate alterations	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action	TMDL Endpoints		WLA		Load Allocations		TMDL ¹	MOS				
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation					Indicators	Threshold Values	WLA ¹	WLA Permitted Facilities (Permit Number)	Source	LA ¹						
Sweathouse Creek, headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_210	X	P	P	X	X	N	N/A	Alterations in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
								N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
								2002	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
								> 2010	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	4	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	3	705	Implicit				
								Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	315														
								Natural Bank Erosion	288														
								Upland Erosion	95														
Threemile Creek, headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_140	F	N	N	X	F	X	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
								1996	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								1996	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								1996	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	11	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	7	3034	Implicit				
								Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	1098														
								Natural Bank Erosion	1082														
								Upland Erosion	836														
Tin Cup Creek, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_080	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
								2006	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Willow Creek, headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_110	F	P	P	F	F	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by temperature & sediment TMDLs	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A				
								N/A	Chlorophyll-a	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
								1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL	Same as Ambrose Creek	Same as Ambrose Creek	11	Composite for Stormwater Construction (MTR100000)	Roads	5	1654	Implicit				
																Anthropogenic Bank Erosion	461						
																Natural Bank Erosion	783						
																Upland Erosion	394						
	2006	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL	Same as Miller Creek	Same as Miller Creek	N/A	N/A	Collective human sources with all reasonable land, soil, and water conservation practices in place	78	2,379	38											
	2006	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Natural	2,262													

F = Fully Supporting, P = Partially Supporting, N = Not Supporting, X = Not Assessed, N/A = Not Applicable

Footnote 1 - Sediment TMDLs and allocations are shown in tons/yr. Daily loads are reported in Appendix I.
(Sediment TMDLs and allocations are expressed as percent reductions for the reasons stated in Section 5.7, but load values are presented in this table per EPA request.)
The temperature TMDLs are an equation based upon discharge and temperature. In this table, we provide example loads for typical critical discharge rates.
Temperature TMDLs and allocations are shown in Kcal/sec.

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses					CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action	TMDL Endpoints		WLA		Load Allocations		TMDL ¹	MOS
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry					Contact Recreation	Indicators	Threshold Values	WLA ¹	WLA Permitted Facilities (Permit Number)	Source		
Temperature TMDLs for the Bitterroot River (MT76H001_020, MT76H001_030) are calculated at 7Q10 during a typical hot sunny summer afternoon near Victor and Misosula, MT, respectively.																		
The example Miller Creek temperature TMDL is for a typical summer afternoon.																		
The example Sleeping Child Creek temperature TMDL is for a typical summer afternoon below a clear cut section near stream mile 19.																		
The example Willow Creek temperature TMDL is for a typical summer afternoon at stream mile 4.5.																		

ENCLOSURE 2

EPA REGION VIII TMDL REVIEW

TMDL Document Info:

Document Name:	Bitterroot Temperature and Tributary Sediment Total Maximum Daily Loads and Framework Water Quality Improvement Plan
Submitted by:	Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Date Received:	August 2, 2011
Review Date:	August 10, 2011
Reviewer:	Jason Gildea
Rough Draft / Public Notice / Final Draft?	Final
Notes:	

Reviewers Final Recommendation(s) to EPA Administrator (used for final draft review only):

- Approve
- Partial Approval
- Disapprove
- Insufficient Information

Approval Notes to Administrator: [Based on the review presented below, I recommend approval of the TMDLs submitted in this document.](#)

This document provides a standard format for EPA Region 8 to provide comments to state TMDL programs on TMDL documents submitted to EPA for either formal or informal review. All TMDL documents are evaluated against the minimum submission requirements and TMDL elements identified in the following 8 sections:

1. Problem Description
 - 1.1. TMDL Document Submittal Letter
 - 1.2. Identification of the Waterbody, Impairments, and Study Boundaries
 - 1.3. Water Quality Standards
2. Water Quality Target
3. Pollutant Source Analysis
4. TMDL Technical Analysis
 - 4.1. Data Set Description
 - 4.2. Waste Load Allocations (WLA)
 - 4.3. Load Allocations (LA)
 - 4.4. Margin of Safety (MOS)
 - 4.5. Seasonality and variations in assimilative capacity
5. Public Participation
6. Monitoring Strategy
7. Restoration Strategy
8. Daily Loading Expression

Under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, waterbodies that are not attaining one or more water quality standard (WQS) are considered “impaired.” When the cause of the impairment is determined to be a pollutant, a TMDL analysis is required to assess the appropriate maximum allowable pollutant loading rate. A TMDL document consists of a technical analysis conducted to: (1) assess the maximum pollutant loading rate that a waterbody is able to assimilate while maintaining water quality standards; and (2) allocate that assimilative capacity among the known sources of that pollutant. A well written TMDL document will describe a path forward that may be used by those who implement the TMDL recommendations to attain and maintain WQS.

Each of the following eight sections describe the rationale that EPA Region 8 staff uses when reviewing TMDL documents. Also included in each section is a list of EPA’s minimum submission requirements relative to that section, a brief summary of the EPA reviewer’s findings, and the reviewer’s comments and/or suggestions. Use of the verb “must” in the minimum submission requirements denotes information that is required to be submitted because it relates to elements of the TMDL required by the CWA and by regulation. Use of the term “should” below denotes information that is generally necessary for EPA to determine if a submitted TMDL is approvable.

This review template is intended to ensure compliance with the Clean Water Act and that the reviewed documents are technically sound and the conclusions are technically defensible.

1.0 Problem Description

A TMDL document needs to provide a clear explanation of the problem it is intended to address. Included in that description should be a definitive portrayal of the physical boundaries to which the TMDL applies, as well as a clear description of the impairments that the TMDL intends to address and the associated pollutant(s) causing those impairments. While the existence of one or more impairment and stressor may be known, it is important that a comprehensive evaluation of the water quality be conducted prior to development of the TMDL to ensure that all water quality problems and associated stressors are identified. Typically, this step is conducted prior to the 303(d) listing of a waterbody through the monitoring and assessment program. The designated uses and water quality criteria for the waterbody should be examined against available data to provide an evaluation of the water quality relative to all applicable water quality standards. If, as part of this exercise, additional WQS problems are discovered and additional stressor pollutants are identified, consideration should be given to concurrently evaluating TMDLs for those additional pollutants. If it is determined that insufficient data is available to make such an evaluation, this should be noted in the TMDL document.

1.1 TMDL Document Submittal Letter

When a TMDL document is submitted to EPA requesting formal comments or a final review and approval, the submittal package should include a letter identifying the document being submitted and the purpose of the submission.

Minimum Submission Requirements.

- A TMDL submittal letter should be included with each TMDL document submitted to EPA requesting a formal review.
- The submittal letter should specify whether the TMDL document is being submitted for initial review and comments, public review and comments, or final review and approval.
- Each TMDL document submitted to EPA for final review and approval should be accompanied by a submittal letter that explicitly states that the submittal is a final TMDL submitted under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water

Act for EPA review and approval. This clearly establishes the State's/Tribe's intent to submit, and EPA's duty to review, the TMDL under the statute. The submittal letter should contain such identifying information as the name and location of the waterbody and the pollutant(s) of concern, which matches similar identifying information in the TMDL document for which a review is being requested.

Recommendation:

Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments: [This document was submitted to EPA for review on August 2, 2011. An adequate cover letter was included.](#)

1.2 Identification of the Waterbody, Impairments, and Study Boundaries

The TMDL document should provide an unambiguous description of the waterbody to which the TMDL is intended to apply and the impairments the TMDL is intended to address. The document should also clearly delineate the physical boundaries of the waterbody and the geographical extent of the watershed area studied. Any additional information needed to tie the TMDL document back to a current 303(d) listing should also be included.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- The TMDL document should clearly identify the pollutant and waterbody segment(s) for which the TMDL is being established. If the TMDL document is submitted to fulfill a TMDL development requirement for a waterbody on the state's current EPA approved 303(d) list, the TMDL document submittal should clearly identify the waterbody and associated impairment(s) as they appear on the State's/Tribe's current EPA approved 303(d) list, including a full waterbody description, assessment unit/waterbody ID, and the priority ranking of the waterbody. This information is necessary to ensure that the administrative record and the national TMDL tracking database properly link the TMDL document to the 303(d) listed waterbody and impairment(s).
- One or more maps should be included in the TMDL document showing the general location of the waterbody and, to the maximum extent practical, any other features necessary and/or relevant to the understanding of the TMDL analysis, including but not limited to: watershed boundaries, locations of major pollutant sources, major tributaries included in the analysis, location of sampling points, location of discharge gauges, land use patterns, and the location of nearby waterbodies used to provide surrogate information or reference conditions. Clear and concise descriptions of all key features and their relationship to the waterbody and water quality data should be provided for all key and/or relevant features not represented on the map
- If information is available, the waterbody segment to which the TMDL applies should be identified/geo-referenced using the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD). If the boundaries of the TMDL do not correspond to the Waterbody ID(s) (WBID), Entity_ID information or reach code (RCH_Code) information should be provided. If NHD data is not available for the waterbody, an alternative geographical referencing system that unambiguously identifies the physical boundaries to which the TMDL applies may be substituted.

Recommendation:

Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments: [The waterbody/pollutant combinations addressed in the Bitterroot Temperature and Tributary Sediment document are summarized in Table 1 \(appended to the end of this document\) and are clearly described in the subject document. The number of TMDLs developed and the pollutants for which they were developed are summarized below:](#)

Bitterroot Temperature and Tributary Sediment TMDLs

Number of TMDLs:	20
Number of Waterbody/Pollutant Combinations addressed by TMDLs:	20
Number of Sediment TMDLs:	15
Number of Temperature TMDLs:	5

The waterbodies addressed by the sediment and temperature TMDLs are listed in Tables 2 and 3, respectively (these tables are appended to the end of this document).

At this time, TMDLs were not completed for 31 waterbody-pollutant combinations (WBPCs) in the Bitterroot TMDL Planning Area. Additional information was needed before completing a temperature TMDL for Mill Creek (1 WBPC). DEQ is currently addressing 26 impairments as part of a separate ongoing project for the Bitterroot River TPA (nutrients and mainstem Bitterroot sediment impairments). DEQ did not address 4 metals impairments and no additional details were provided regarding when TMDLs will be completed for those impairments.

During the TMDL process, DEQ identified 4 new WBPCs that were impaired because of sediment, noted as a cycle first listed of ">2010" in Table 1. These WBPCs do not currently appear on any 303(d) list. Sediment TMDLs were completed for each of the WBPCs.

The TMDL document addresses 10 WBPCs that originally appeared on Montana's 1996 303(d) list and fall under the current Montana TMDL Court Order. The remaining 10 WBPCs were listed on subsequent lists.

2.0 Water Quality Standards

TMDL documents should provide a complete description of the water quality standards for the waterbodies addressed, including a listing of the designated uses and an indication of whether the uses are being met, not being met, or not assessed. If a designated use was not assessed as part of the TMDL analysis (or not otherwise recently assessed), the documents should provide a reason for the lack of assessment (e.g., sufficient data was not available at this time to assess whether or not this designated use was being met).

Water quality criteria (WQC) are established as a component of water quality standard at levels considered necessary to protect the designated uses assigned to that waterbody. WQC identify quantifiable targets and/or qualitative water quality goals which, if attained and maintained, are intended to ensure that the designated uses for the waterbody are protected. TMDLs result in maintaining and attaining water quality standards by determining the appropriate maximum pollutant loading rate to meet water quality criteria, either directly, or through a surrogate measurable target. The TMDL document should include a description of all applicable water quality criteria for the impaired designated uses and address whether or not the criteria are being attained, not attained, or not evaluated as part of the analysis. If the criteria were not evaluated as part of the analysis, a reason should be cited (e.g. insufficient data were available to determine if this water quality criterion is being attained).

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- The TMDL must include a description of the applicable State/Tribal water quality standard, including the designated use(s) of the waterbody, the applicable numeric or narrative water quality criterion, and the anti-degradation policy. (40 C.F.R. §130.7(c)(1)).
- The purpose of a TMDL analysis is to determine the assimilative capacity of the waterbody that corresponds to the existing water quality standards for that waterbody, and to allocate that assimilative capacity between the significant sources. Therefore, all TMDL documents must be written to meet the existing water quality standards for that waterbody (CWA §303(d)(1)(C)).

Note: In some circumstances, the load reductions determined to be necessary by the TMDL analysis may prove to be infeasible and may possibly indicate that the existing water quality standards and/or assessment methodologies may be erroneous. However, the TMDL must still be determined based on existing water quality standards. Adjustments to water quality standards and/or assessment methodologies may be evaluated separately, after the completion of the TMDL.

- The TMDL document should describe the relationship between the pollutant of concern and the water quality standard the pollutant load is intended to meet. This information is necessary for EPA to evaluate whether or not attainment of the prescribed pollutant loadings will result in attainment of the water quality standard in question.
- If a standard includes multiple criteria for the pollutant of concern, the document should demonstrate that the TMDL value will result in attainment of all related criteria for the pollutant. For example, both acute and chronic values (if present in the WQS) should be addressed in the document, including consideration of magnitude, frequency and duration requirements.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

The Bitterroot Temperature and Tributary Sediment document includes a description of all applicable water quality standards associated with sediment and temperature whether or not the criteria are being attained, not attained, or not evaluated. Standards are discussed in Section 3.0.

3.0 Water Quality Targets

TMDL analyses establish numeric targets that are used to determine whether water quality standards are being achieved. Quantified water quality targets or endpoints should be provided to evaluate each listed pollutant/water body combination addressed by the TMDL, and should represent achievement of applicable water quality standards and support of associated beneficial uses. For pollutants with numeric water quality standards, the numeric criteria are generally used as the water quality target. For pollutants with narrative standards, the narrative standard should be translated into a measurable value. At a minimum, one target is required for each pollutant/water body combination. It is generally desirable, however, to include several targets that represent achievement of the standard and support of beneficial uses (e.g., for a sediment impairment issue it may be appropriate to include a variety of targets representing water column sediment such as TSS, embeddness, stream morphology, up-slope conditions and a measure of biota).

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- The TMDL should identify a numeric water quality target(s) for each waterbody pollutant combination. The TMDL target is a quantitative value used to measure whether or not the applicable water quality standard is attained.

Generally, the pollutant of concern and the numeric water quality target are, respectively, the chemical causing the impairment and the numeric criteria for that chemical (e.g., chromium) contained in the water quality standard. Occasionally, the pollutant of concern is different from the parameter that is the subject of the numeric water quality target (e.g., when the pollutant of concern is phosphorus and the numeric water quality target is expressed as a numerical dissolved oxygen criterion). In such cases, the TMDL should explain the linkage between the pollutant(s) of concern, and express the quantitative relationship between the TMDL target and pollutant of concern. In all cases, TMDL targets must represent the attainment of current water quality standards.

- When a numeric TMDL target is established to ensure the attainment of a narrative water quality criterion, the methodology used to determine the numeric target, and the link between the pollutant of concern and the narrative water quality criterion should all be described in the TMDL document. Any additional information supporting the numeric target and linkage should also be included in the document.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

Sediment

Sediment targets are presented in Section 5.4 of the document. A suite of targets have been established to represent Montana's narrative sediment standards. The targets include Percentage of fine surface sediment in riffles < 6mm (reach average via pebble count method); Percentage of fine surface sediment in riffles < 2mm (reach average via pebble count method); Percentage of fine surface sediment <6mm in riffles and pool tails (reach average via grid toss method); Bankfull width/depth ratio (median of channel

x-sec measurements); Entrenchment ratio (median of channel x-sec measurements); Residual pool depth (reach average); Pools/mile; LWD/mile; and Percent of streambank with understory shrub cover.

Temperature

Temperature targets are described in Section 6.4. The temperature standard was directly applied as a target, and evaluated using the QUAL2K model. DEQ also established secondary temperature influencing targets that include Riparian Shade; Channel width/depth ratio; Irrigation water management; and inflows to stream network.

4.0 Pollutant Source Analysis

A TMDL analysis is conducted when a pollutant load is known or suspected to be exceeding the loading capacity of the waterbody. Logically then, a TMDL analysis should consider all sources of the pollutant of concern in some manner. The detail provided in the source assessment step drives the rigor of the pollutant load allocation. In other words, it is only possible to specifically allocate quantifiable loads or load reductions to each significant source (or source category) when the relative load contribution from each source has been estimated. Therefore, the pollutant load from each significant source (or source category) should be identified and quantified to the maximum practical extent. This may be accomplished using site-specific monitoring data, modeling, or application of other assessment techniques. If insufficient time or resources are available to accomplish this step, a phased/adaptive management approach can be employed so long as the approach is clearly defined in the document.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- The TMDL should include an identification of all potentially significant point and nonpoint sources of the pollutant of concern, including the geographical location of the source(s) and the quantity of the loading, e.g., lbs/per day. This information is necessary for EPA to evaluate the WLA, LA and MOS components of the TMDL.
- The level of detail provided in the source assessment should be commensurate with the nature of the watershed and the nature of the pollutant being studied. Where it is possible to separate natural background from nonpoint sources, the TMDL should include a description of both the natural background loads and the nonpoint source loads.
- Natural background loads should not be assumed to be the difference between the sum of known and quantified anthropogenic sources and the existing *in situ* loads (e.g. measured in stream) unless it can be demonstrated that all significant anthropogenic sources of the pollutant of concern have been identified, characterized, and properly quantified.
- The sampling data relied upon to discover, characterize, and quantify the pollutant sources should be included in the document (e.g. a data appendix) along with a description of how the data were analyzed to characterize and quantify the pollutant sources. A discussion of the known deficiencies and/or gaps in the data set and their potential implications should also be included.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

Sediment

The sediment source assessment is presented in Section 5.6. Potentially significant sediment sources considered include streambank erosion, upland erosion, roads, and storm water permitted point sources. Streambank erosion was quantified through direct measurements on selected streams. The measurements and loading estimates from the selected streams were then extrapolated to all streams. Appendix E provides further details. Upland erosion was quantified by using the SWAT modeling tool (see Appendix H). Sediment loading from roads was derived from modeling with WEPP and GIS analyses (see Appendix G). Sediment from stormwater point sources was estimated based on site size, rainfall, and permit limits.

Temperature

Temperature loads were quantified through the use of the QUAL2K model for all temperature impaired stream segments.

4.1 TMDL Technical Analysis

TMDL determinations should be supported by a robust data set and an appropriate level of technical analysis. This applies to all of the components of a TMDL document. It is vitally important that the technical basis for all conclusions be articulated in a manner that is easily understandable and readily apparent to the reader.

A TMDL analysis determines the maximum pollutant loading rate that may be allowed to a waterbody without violating water quality standards. The TMDL analysis should demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the rate of pollutant loading into the waterbody and the resultant water quality impacts. This stressor → response relationship between the pollutant and impairment and between the selected targets, sources, TMDLs, and load allocations needs to be clearly articulated and supported by an appropriate level of technical analysis. Every effort should be made to be as detailed as possible, and to base all conclusions on the best available scientific principles.

The pollutant loading allocation is at the heart of the TMDL analysis. TMDLs apportion responsibility for taking actions by allocating the available assimilative capacity among the various point, nonpoint, and natural pollutant sources. Allocations may be expressed in a variety of ways, such as by individual discharger, by tributary watershed, by source or land use category, by land parcel, or other appropriate scale or division of responsibility.

The pollutant loading allocation that will result in achievement of the water quality target is expressed in the form of the standard TMDL equation:

$$TMDL = \sum LAs + \sum WLAs + MOS$$

Where:

TMDL = Total Pollutant Loading Capacity of the waterbody

LAs = Pollutant Load Allocations

WLAs = Pollutant Wasteload Allocations

MOS = The portion of the Load Capacity allocated to the Margin of safety.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- A TMDL must identify the loading capacity of a waterbody for the applicable pollutant, taking into consideration temporal variations in that capacity. EPA regulations define loading capacity as the greatest amount of a pollutant that a water can receive without violating water quality standards (40 C.F.R. §130.2(f)).
- The total loading capacity of the waterbody should be clearly demonstrated to equate back to the pollutant load allocations through a balanced TMDL equation. In instances where numerous LA, WLA and seasonal TMDL capacities make expression in the form of an equation cumbersome, a table may be substituted as long as it is clear that the total TMDL capacity equates to the sum of the allocations.
- The TMDL document should describe the methodology and technical analysis used to establish and quantify the cause-and-effect relationship between the numeric target and the identified pollutant sources. In many instances, this method will be a water quality model.
- It is necessary for EPA staff to be aware of any assumptions used in the technical analysis to understand and evaluate the methodology used to derive the TMDL value and associated loading allocations. Therefore, the TMDL document should contain a description of any important assumptions (including the basis for those assumptions) made in developing the TMDL, including but not limited to:

- (1) the spatial extent of the watershed in which the impaired waterbody is located and the spatial extent of the TMDL technical analysis;
 - (2) the distribution of land use in the watershed (e.g., urban, forested, agriculture);
 - (3) a presentation of relevant information affecting the characterization of the pollutant of concern and its allocation to sources such as population characteristics, wildlife resources, industrial activities etc...;
 - (4) present and future growth trends, if taken into consideration in determining the TMDL and preparing the TMDL document (e.g., the TMDL could include the design capacity of an existing or planned wastewater treatment facility);
 - (5) an explanation and analytical basis for expressing the TMDL through surrogate measures, if applicable. Surrogate measures are parameters such as percent fines and turbidity for sediment impairments; chlorophyll *a* and phosphorus loadings for excess algae; length of riparian buffer; or number of acres of best management practices.
- The TMDL document should contain documentation supporting the TMDL analysis, including an inventory of the data set used, a description of the methodology used to analyze the data, a discussion of strengths and weaknesses in the analytical process, and the results from any water quality modeling used. This information is necessary for EPA to review the loading capacity determination, and the associated load, wasteload, and margin of safety allocations.
- TMDLs must take critical conditions (e.g., stream flow, loading, and water quality parameters, seasonality, etc...) into account as part of the analysis of loading capacity (40 C.F.R. §130.7(c)(1)). TMDLs should define applicable critical conditions and describe the approach used to determine both point and nonpoint source loadings under such critical conditions. In particular, the document should discuss the approach used to compute and allocate nonpoint source loadings, e.g., meteorological conditions and land use distribution.
- Where both nonpoint sources and NPDES permitted point sources are included in the TMDL loading allocation, and attainment of the TMDL target depends on reductions in the nonpoint source loads, the TMDL document must include a demonstration that nonpoint source loading reductions needed to implement the load allocations are actually practicable [40 CFR 130.2(i) and 122.44(d)].

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

[Sediment](#)

An adequate technical analysis has been completed. Summary information is presented in the main body of the document and supporting analyses/data are presented in appendices.

[Temperature](#)

An adequate technical analysis has been performed. The QUAL2K model was applied to evaluate a variety of scenarios in consideration of the sources that exist, the naturally occurring condition, and the applicable water quality standards. Further, uncertainties are acknowledged and an adaptive management strategy is provided in Section 8.3.4 to address them.

4.1.1 Data Set Description

TMDL documents should include a thorough description and summary of all available water quality data that are relevant to the water quality assessment and TMDL analysis. An inventory of the data used for the TMDL analysis should be provided to document, for the record, the data used in decision making. This also provides the reader with the opportunity to independently review the data. The TMDL analysis should make use of all readily available data for the waterbody under analysis unless the TMDL writer

determines that the data are not relevant or appropriate. For relevant data that were known but rejected, an explanation of why the data were not utilized should be provided (e.g., samples exceeded holding times, data collected prior to a specific date were not considered timely, etc...).

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- TMDL documents should include a thorough description and summary of all available water quality data that are relevant to the water quality assessment and TMDL analysis such that the water quality impairments are clearly defined and linked to the impaired beneficial uses and appropriate water quality criteria.
- The TMDL document submitted should be accompanied by the data set utilized during the TMDL analysis. If possible, it is preferred that the data set be provided in an electronic format and referenced in the document. If electronic submission of the data is not possible, the data set may be included as an appendix to the document.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments: [The data and technical analyses for all three pollutants addressed are summarized in the main body of the document and presented in the appendices.](#)

4.1.2 Waste Load Allocations (WLA):

Waste Load Allocations represent point source pollutant loads to the waterbody. Point source loads are typically better understood and more easily monitored and quantified than nonpoint source loads. Whenever practical, each point source should be given a separate waste load allocation. All NPDES permitted dischargers that discharge the pollutant under analysis directly to the waterbody should be identified and given separate waste load allocations. The finalized WLAs are required to be incorporated into future NPDES permit renewals.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- EPA regulations require that a TMDL include WLAs for all significant and/or NPDES permitted point sources of the pollutant. TMDLs must identify the portion of the loading capacity allocated to individual existing and/or future point source(s) (40 C.F.R. §130.2(h), 40 C.F.R. §130.2(i)). In some cases, WLAs may cover more than one discharger, e.g., if the source is contained within a general permit. If no allocations are to be made to point sources, then the TMDL should include a value of zero for the WLA.
- All NPDES permitted dischargers given WLA as part of the TMDL should be identified in the TMDL, including the specific NPDES permit numbers, their geographical locations, and their associated waste load allocations.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information No-action

Summary and Comments:

[Sediment](#)

[The only point sources of sediment to the sediment impaired streams in the watershed are permitted stormwater construction discharges. A composite wasteload allocation was provided for all stormwater construction discharges for each impaired segment.](#)

Temperature

A composite wasteload allocation is presented for the major permitted point sources to the mainstem Bitterroot River.

4.1.3 Load Allocations (LA):

Load allocations include the nonpoint source, natural, and background loads. These types of loads are typically more difficult to quantify than point source loads, and may include a significant degree of uncertainty. Often it is necessary to group these loads into larger categories and estimate the loading rates based on limited monitoring data and/or modeling results. The background load represents a composite of all upstream pollutant loads into the waterbody. In addition to the upstream nonpoint and upstream natural load, the background load often includes upstream point source loads that are not given specific waste load allocations in this particular TMDL analysis. In instances where nonpoint source loading rates are particularly difficult to quantify, a performance-based allocation approach, in which a detailed monitoring plan and adaptive management strategy are employed for the application of BMPs, may be appropriate.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- EPA regulations require that TMDL expressions include LAs which identify the portion of the loading capacity attributed to nonpoint sources and to natural background. Load allocations may range from reasonably accurate estimates to gross allotments (40 C.F.R. §130.2(g)). Load allocations may be included for both existing and future nonpoint source loads. Where possible, load allocations should be described separately for natural background and nonpoint sources.
- Load allocations assigned to natural background loads should not be assumed to be the difference between the sum of known and quantified anthropogenic sources and the existing *in situ* loads (e.g., measured in stream) unless it can be demonstrated that all significant anthropogenic sources of the pollutant of concern have been identified and given proper load or waste load allocations.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

Sediment

Load allocations are provided for each of the significant anthropogenic sources and natural background. They are presented as % reductions and as daily loads in tons per day.

Temperature

The temperature TMDLs have been allocated to the significant sources of thermal loading and/or surrogates that affect thermal loading.

4.1.4 Margin of Safety (MOS):

Natural systems are inherently complex. Any mathematical relationship used to quantify the stressor → response relationship between pollutant loading rates and the resultant water quality impacts, no matter how rigorous, will include some level of uncertainty and error. To compensate for this uncertainty and ensure water quality standards will be attained, a margin of safety is required as a component of each TMDL. The MOS may take the form of an explicit load allocation (e.g., 10 lbs/day), or may be implicitly built into the TMDL analysis through the use of conservative assumptions and values for the various factors that determine the TMDL pollutant load → water quality effect relationship. Whether explicit or implicit, the MOS should be supported by an appropriate level of discussion that addresses the level of uncertainty in the various components of the TMDL technical analysis, the assumptions used in that analysis, and the relative effect of those assumptions on the final TMDL. The discussion should demonstrate that the MOS used is sufficient to ensure that the water quality standards would be attained if the TMDL pollutant loading rates are met. In cases where there is substantial uncertainty regarding the linkage between the proposed allocations and achievement of water quality standards, it may be necessary to employ a phased or adaptive management approach (e.g., establish a monitoring plan to determine if the proposed allocations are, in fact, leading to the desired water quality improvements).

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- TMDLs must include a margin of safety (MOS) to account for any lack of knowledge concerning the relationship between load and wasteload allocations and water quality (CWA §303(d)(1)(C), 40 C.F.R. §130.7(c)(1)). EPA's 1991 TMDL Guidance explains that the MOS may be implicit (i.e., incorporated into the TMDL through conservative assumptions in the analysis) or explicit (i.e., expressed in the TMDL as loadings set aside for the MOS).
- If the MOS is implicit, the conservative assumptions in the analysis that account for the MOS should be identified and described. The document should discuss why the assumptions are considered conservative and the effect of the assumption on the final TMDL value determined.
- If the MOS is explicit, the loading set aside for the MOS should be identified. The document should discuss how the explicit MOS chosen is related to the uncertainty and/or potential error in the linkage analysis between the WQS, the TMDL target, and the TMDL loading rate.
- If, rather than an explicit or implicit MOS, the TMDL relies upon a phased approach to deal with large and/or unquantifiable uncertainties in the linkage analysis, the document should include a description of the planned phases for the TMDL as well as a monitoring plan and adaptive management strategy.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

Sediment

The document provides an implicit margin of safety through conservative assumptions and the use of an adaptive management strategy.

Temperature

A margin of safety has been provided by focusing the analysis on, and establishing allocations based on the warmest period of the year and by the use of an adaptive management strategy. Additionally, an explicit MOS is provided for each of the temperature TMDLs.

4.1.5 Seasonality and variations in assimilative capacity:

The TMDL relationship is a factor of both the loading rate of the pollutant to the waterbody and the amount of pollutant the waterbody can assimilate and still attain water quality standards. Water quality standards often vary based on seasonal considerations. Therefore, it is appropriate that the TMDL analysis consider seasonal variations, such as critical flow periods (high flow, low flow), when establishing TMDLs, targets, and allocations.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- The statute and regulations require that a TMDL be established with consideration of seasonal variations. The TMDL must describe the method chosen for including seasonal variability as a factor. (CWA §303(d)(1)(C), 40 C.F.R. §130.7(c)(1)).

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

Sediment

The annual approach is appropriate for the situation, and, the daily approach that is presented in Appendix I addresses natural variations that occur throughout the year.

Temperature

Seasonality was addressed conservatively by focusing the analysis on, and establishing allocations based on the warmest period of the year.

5.0 Monitoring Strategy

TMDLs may have significant uncertainty associated with the selection of appropriate numeric targets and estimates of source loadings and assimilative capacity. In these cases, a phased TMDL approach may be necessary. For Phased TMDLs, it is EPA's expectation that a monitoring plan will be included as a component of the TMDL document to articulate the means by which the TMDL will be evaluated in the field, and to provide for future supplemental data that will address any uncertainties that may exist when the document is prepared.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- When a TMDL involves both NPDES permitted point source(s) and nonpoint source(s) allocations, and attainment of the TMDL target depends on reductions in the nonpoint source loads, the TMDL document should include a monitoring plan that describes the additional data to be collected to determine if the load reductions provided for in the TMDL are occurring.
- Under certain circumstances, a phased TMDL approach may be utilized when limited existing data are relied upon to develop a TMDL, and the State believes that the use of additional data or data based on better analytical techniques would likely increase the accuracy of the TMDL load calculation and merit development of a second phase TMDL. EPA recommends that a phased TMDL document or its implementation plan include a monitoring plan and a scheduled timeframe for revision of the TMDL. These elements would not be an intrinsic part of the TMDL and would not be approved by EPA, but may be necessary to support a rationale for approving the TMDL. http://www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl/tmdl_clarification_letter.pdf

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments: [A conceptual monitoring strategy is provided in Section 8.3.](#)

6.0 Restoration Strategy

The overall purpose of the TMDL analysis is to determine what actions are necessary to ensure that the pollutant load in a waterbody does not result in water quality impairment. Adding additional detail regarding the proposed approach for the restoration of water quality is not currently a regulatory requirement, but is considered a value added component of a TMDL document. During the TMDL analytical process, information is often gained that may serve to point restoration efforts in the right direction and help ensure that resources are spent in the most efficient manner possible. For example, watershed models used to analyze the linkage between the pollutant loading rates and resultant water quality impacts might also be used to conduct "what if" scenarios to help direct BMP installations to locations that provide the greatest pollutant reductions. Once a TMDL has been written and approved, it is often the responsibility of other water quality programs to see that it is implemented. The level of quality and detail provided in the restoration strategy will greatly influence the future success in achieving the needed pollutant load reductions.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- EPA is not required to and does not approve TMDL implementation plans. However, in cases where a WLA is dependent upon the achievement of a LA, "reasonable assurance" is required to demonstrate the necessary LA called for in the document is practicable). A discussion of the BMPs (or other load reduction measures) that are to be relied upon to achieve the LA(s), and programs and funding sources that will be relied upon to implement

the load reductions called for in the document, may be included in the implementation/restoration section of the TMDL document to support a demonstration of “reasonable assurance”.

Recommendation:

Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information No-action

Summary and Comments: Most of the stream segments addressed in the Bitterroot document only have nonpoint sources, and no RA is necessary. DEQ has provided a restoration strategy, as well as a summary of available funding, for all of the impaired streams in the Bitterroot watershed, including those that have point sources.

7.0 Daily Loading Expression

The goal of a TMDL analysis is to determine what actions are necessary to attain and maintain WQS. The appropriate averaging period that corresponds to this goal will vary depending on the pollutant and the nature of the waterbody under analysis. When selecting an appropriate averaging period for a TMDL analysis, primary concern should be given to the nature of the pollutant in question and the achievement of the underlying WQS. However, recent federal appeals court decisions have pointed out that the title TMDL implies a “daily” loading rate. While the most appropriate averaging period to be used for developing a TMDL analysis may vary according to the pollutant, a daily loading rate can provide a more practical indication of whether or not the overall needed load reductions are being achieved. When limited monitoring resources are available, a daily loading target that takes into account the natural variability of the system can serve as a useful indicator for whether or not the overall load reductions are likely to be met. Therefore, a daily expression of the required pollutant loading rate is a required element in all TMDLs, in addition to any other load averaging periods that may have been used to conduct the TMDL analysis. The level of effort spent to develop the daily load indicator should be based on the overall utility it can provide as an indicator for the total load reductions needed.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

The document should include an expression of the TMDL in terms of a daily load. However, the TMDL may also be expressed in temporal terms other than daily (e.g., an annual or monthly load). If the document expresses the TMDL in additional “non-daily” terms the document should explain why it is appropriate or advantageous to express the TMDL in the additional unit of measurement chosen.

Recommendation:

Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments:

[Sediment](#)

The sediment TMDLs are presented as tons/day in Appendix I.

[Temperature](#)

An equation for calculating daily heat loads is presented in Section 6.4.2.

8.0 Public Participation

EPA regulations require that the establishment of TMDLs be conducted in a process open to the public, and that the public be afforded an opportunity to participate. To meaningfully participate in the TMDL process it is necessary that stakeholders, including members of the general public, be able to understand the problem and the proposed solution. TMDL documents should include language that explains the issues to the general public in understandable terms, as well as provides additional detailed technical information for the scientific community. Notifications or solicitations for comments regarding the TMDL should be made available to the general public, widely circulated, and clearly identify the product as a TMDL and the fact that it will be submitted to EPA for review. When the final TMDL is submitted to EPA for approval, a copy of the comments received by the state and the state responses to those comments should be included with the document.

Minimum Submission Requirements:

- The TMDL must include a description of the public participation process used during the development of the TMDL (40 C.F.R. §130.7(c)(1)(ii)).
- TMDLs submitted to EPA for review and approval should include a summary of significant comments and the State's/Tribe's responses to those comments.

Recommendation:

- Approve Partial Approval Disapprove Insufficient Information

Summary and Comments: [The public participation process is summarized in Section 9.0. The document was sent out for public comment on April 25, 2011. Three comments were received and are addressed in Section 9.2.](#)

Table 1. Stream Segments in the Lower Bitterroot TMDL Planning Area Addressed in this document, Their Associated Levels of Beneficial Use-Support, and Causes of Impairment.

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation				
Ambrose Creek, headwaters to mouth (Threemile Creek)	MT76H004_120	F	N	N	X	F	P	2000	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								N/A	Physical substrate habitat alterations	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL
								> 2010	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Bass Creek, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (un-named creek), T9N R20W S3	MT76H004_010	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
								2006	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								> 2010	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Bear Creek, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Fred Burr Creek), T7N R20W S7	MT76H004_031	F	X	X	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
Bitterroot River, East and West Forks to Skalkaho Creek	MT76H001_010	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Not Addressed
								2004	Copper	N/A	No Action
Bitterroot River, Skalkaho Creek to Eightmile Creek	MT76H001_020	F	P	P	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
								2000	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1988	Sedimentation / Siltation	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1988	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL
Bitterroot River, Eightmile Creek to mouth (Clark Fork River)	MT76H001_030	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by temperature TMDL
								2004	Copper	N/A	No Action
								2004	Lead	N/A	No Action
								1990	Nitrogen (Nitrate)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2000	Sedimentation / Siltation	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation				
								> 2010	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL
Blodgett Creek , Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_050	F	P	P	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
Kootenai Creek , Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_020	F	P	P	X	F	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)
								N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
Lick Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_170	F	P	P	F	F	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL
								N/A	Chlorophyll-a	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2006	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
								2006	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
Lolo Creek , Mormon Creek to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H005_011	F	P	P	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
								N/A	Physical substrate habitat alterations	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL
								2002	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Lolo Creek , Sheldon Creek to Mormon Creek	MT76H005_012	F	P	P	X	F	F	N/A	Physical substrate habitat alterations	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL
								2002	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Lolo Creek , headwaters to Sheldon Creek	MT76H005_013	F	P	P	X	F	F	N/A	Physical substrate habitat alterations	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL
								2002	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Lost Horse Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_070	F	F	F	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
McClain Creek , headwaters to mouth (Sin-tin-tin-em-ska Creek), T11N R20W, S23	MT76H004_150	F	P	P	X	F	X	1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation				
Mill Creek, Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to the mouth (Fred Burr Creek), T7N R20W S19	MT76H004_040	X	X	P	X	X	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)
		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
		2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000	Temperature (water)	Temperature	Investigated - No Action
Miller Creek, headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_130	F	P	P	F	F	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by temperature & sediment TMDLs
								N/A	Chlorophyll-a	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2006	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2006	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Muddy Spring Creek, headwaters to mouth (Gold Creek) T7N R19W S2	MT76H004_180	F	P	P	F	F	F	2006	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
North Burnt Fork Creek, confluence with South Burnt Fork Creek to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_200	F	P	P	F	F	F	2002	Bottom Deposits	Sediment	TMDL
								2002	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2002	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
North Channel Bear Creek, headwaters to the mouth (Fred Burr Creek), T8N R20W S32	MT76H004_032	F	X	X	X	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
North Fork Rye Creek, headwaters to mouth (Rye Creek-Bitterroot River, South of Darby)	MT76H004_160	F	P	P	X	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)
								2000	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
Rye Creek, North Fork to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_190	F	P	P	X	F	X	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL
								2002	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2002	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2000	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Skalkaho Creek, headwaters to	MT76H004_100	F	F	F	N	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed

Waterbody & Stream Description	Waterbody ID	Impaired Beneficial Uses						CFL	Cause of Impairment	Pollutant for which TMDL has been prepared	DEQ Action
		Agriculture	Aquatic Life	Cold Water Fishery	Drinking Water	Industry	Contact Recreation				
mouth (Bitterroot River)								2000	Mercury	N/A	No Action
Sleeping Child Creek , headwater to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_090	F	P	P	X	F	P	2000	Nitrogen (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								2000	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1988	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
								1990	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL
								N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
South Fork Lolo Creek , Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Lolo Creek)	MT76H005_020	F	P	P	F	F	P	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
								N/A	Physical substrate alterations	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)
Sweathouse Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_210	X	P	P	X	X	N	N/A	Alterations in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by sediment TMDL
								N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
								2002	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								> 2010	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Threemile Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_140	F	N	N	X	F	X	N/A	Low flow alterations	N/A	Not Addressed
								1996	Nitrate / Nitrite (Nitrate + Nitrite as N)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1996	Phosphorus (Total)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1996	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
Tin Cup Creek , Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness boundary to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_080	F	P	P	F	F	F	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed within document (Section 7)
								2006	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
Willow Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_110	F	P	P	F	F	P	N/A	Alteration in stream-side or littoral vegetative covers	N/A	Addressed by temperature & sediment TMDLs
								N/A	Chlorophyll-a	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project
								1992	Sedimentation / Siltation	Sediment	TMDL
								2006	Temperature (water)	Temperature	TMDL
								2006	Total Kjehldahl Nitrogen (TKN)	N/A	Separate Ongoing Project

F = Fully Supporting, P = Partially Supporting, N = Not Supporting, X = Not Assessed, N/A = Not Applicable

Table 2. Waterbody segments addressed by sediment TMDLs.

Stream Segment	Waterbody ID
Ambrose Creek	MT76H004_120
Bass Creek	MT76H004_010
Lick Creek	MT76H004_170
Lolo Creek (headwaters to Sheldon Creek)	MT76H005_013
Lolo Creek (Mormon Creek to Mouth)	MT76H005_011
Lolo Creek (Sheldon Creek to Mormon Creek)	MT76H005_012
McClain Creek	MT76H004_150
Miller Creek	MT76H004_130
Muddy Spring Creek	MT76H004_180
North Burnt Fork Creek	MT76H004_200
Rye Creek	MT76H004_190
Sleeping Child Creek	MT76H004_090
Sweathouse Creek	MT76H004_210
Threemile Creek	MT76H004_140
Willow Creek	MT76H004_110

Table 3. Waterbody segments addressed by temperature TMDLs.

Waterbody Name	Segment ID
Bitterroot River , Skalkaho Creek to Eightmile Creek	MT76H001_020
Bitterroot River , Eightmile Creek to mouth (Clark Fork River)	MT76H001_030
Miller Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_130
Sleeping Child Creek , headwater to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_090
Willow Creek , headwaters to mouth (Bitterroot River)	MT76H004_110