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WSR 24-01-088

PERMANENT RULES

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY

[Order 22-06—Filed December 18, 2023, 7:49 a.m., effective January 18, 2024]

Effective Date of Rule: Thirty-one days after filing.

Purpose: This rule making adopts changes to chapter 173-201A WAC, Water quality standards for surface waters of the state of Washington.

We added new WAC 173-201A-332 Table 332—Outstanding resource water designations by water resource inventory area (WRIA).

We amended WAC 173-201A-020 Definitions, 173-201A-330 Tier III—Protection of outstanding resource waters, and 173-201A-602 Use designations for fresh waters by water resource inventory area (WRIA)—WRIAs 4 and 26.

We are designating four waterbodies as Tier III(A) or Tier III(B) outstanding resource waters (ORWs). Outstanding resource waters are identified as having exceptional water quality, ecological and recreational values, or unique attributes that distinguish them among state waterbodies and warrant special protection. An ORW has the highest level of protection assigned to a waterbody under the Tier III antidegradation rule in our water quality standards.

We are designating the following waterbodies as Tier III(A) ORWs: Portions of the Napeequa River and tributaries (Chelan County); upper watershed of the Green River and tributaries (Skamania County); and upper watershed of the Cascade River and tributaries (Skagit County).

A Tier III(A) designation is the highest level of protection. Proposed activities that would result in new or expanded sources of pollution in an ORW are prohibited, except in limited cases.

We are designating the following waterbody as a Tier III(B) ORW: Soap Lake (Grant County).

Any new or expanded source of pollution to a Tier III(B) ORW cannot cause a measurable change in water quality. This level of protection would place extra requirements on new or expanded point source discharges to ensure pollution from wastewater is kept to a minimum. For nonpoint sources, this designation would require that certain best management practices are used to limit pollution from runoff to below measurable levels where total elimination is not feasible.

We also adopted changes to WAC 173-201A-330 to revise our review process. The rule currently states that ecology will consult with federally recognized tribes in the geographic vicinity of the water (WAC 173-201A-330 (3)(a)). We have revised this to state that the public review process will include "consultation with Tribes." We will not limit tribal consultation only to those within the geographic vicinity of the proposed waterbody, nor will we limit consultation to only those tribes that are federally recognized.

Other adopted changes to chapter 173-201A WAC include WAC 173-201A-020 to add a definition for outstanding resource waters and 173-201A-602 to note where an ORW exists on waterbodies with specified use designations within Table 602.

Citation of Rules Affected by this Order: Amending chapter 173-201A WAC.

Statutory Authority for Adoption: Chapter 90.48 RCW, Water pollution control, which provides ecology the authority to revise the surface water quality standards. The federal Antidegradation Policy and Implementation Methods at 40 C.F.R. 131.12 require states to adopt an antidegradation policy that includes protection of outstanding resource waters.

Adopted under notice filed as WSR 23-15-085 on July 18, 2023.

Changes Other than Editing from Proposed to Adopted Version: We edited the notes for Table 332 in WAC 173-201A-332 Table 332—Outstanding resource water designations by water resource inventory area (WRIA). Specifically, we made the following edits in response to a comment noting that, based on our requirement to collect samples between April through October, this essentially constitutes a seasonal average, rather than an annual average:

Notes for Soap Lake:

Soap Lake measurable change is defined as a decrease in salinity as measured by conductivity of 639 microsiemens per centimeter ($\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$) or greater.

In addition, human actions must not cause lake conductivity to decrease below 19,843 $\mu\text{S}/\text{cm}$ as calculated as a ~~annual average~~ seasonal average more than once in 10 years.

~~Annual~~ Seasonal average conductivity is calculated as the arithmetic average of seven or more samples collected April through October. Sampling should be distributed throughout this period.

A final cost-benefit analysis is available by contacting Marla Koberstein, Department of Ecology, Water Quality Program, P.O. Box 47600, Olympia, WA 98504-7600, phone 360-407-6600, Washington relay service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341, email swqs@ecy.wa.gov, website <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/publications/SummaryPages/2310048.html>.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Comply with Federal Statute: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Federal Rules or Standards: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Recently Enacted State Statutes: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted at the Request of a Nongovernmental Entity: New 1, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted on the Agency's own Initiative: New 0, Amended 3, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted in Order to Clarify, Streamline, or Reform Agency Procedures: New 0, Amended 1, Repealed 0.

Number of Sections Adopted using Negotiated Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; Pilot Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0; or Other Alternative Rule Making: New 0, Amended 0, Repealed 0.

Date Adopted: December 18, 2023.

Laura Watson
Director

OTS-4677.4

AMENDATORY SECTION(Amending WSR 22-07-095, filed 3/22/22, effective 4/22/22)

WAC 173-201A-020Definitions.

The following definitions are intended to facilitate the use of chapter 173-201A WAC:

"**1-DMax**" or "**1-day maximum temperature**" is the highest water temperature reached on any given day. This measure can be obtained using calibrated maximum/minimum thermometers or continuous monitoring probes having sampling intervals of 30 minutes or less.

"**7-DADMax**" or "**7-day average of the daily maximum temperatures**" is the arithmetic average of seven consecutive measures of daily maximum temperatures. The 7-DADMax for any individual day is calculated by averaging that day's daily maximum temperature with the daily maximum temperatures of the three days prior and the three days after that date.

"**Action value**" means a total phosphorus (TP) value established at the upper limit of the trophic states in each ecoregion (see Table 230(1)). Exceedance of an action value indicates that a problem is suspected. A lake-specific study may be needed to confirm if a nutrient problem exists.

"**Actions**" refers broadly to any human projects or activities.

"**Acute conditions**" are changes in the physical, chemical, or biologic environment which are expected or demonstrated to result in injury or death to an organism as a result of short-term exposure to the substance or detrimental environmental condition.

"**AKART**" is an acronym for "all known, available, and reasonable methods of prevention, control, and treatment." AKART shall represent the most current methodology that can be reasonably required for preventing, controlling, or abating the pollutants associated with a discharge. The concept of AKART applies to both point and nonpoint sources of pollution. The term "best management practices," typically applied to nonpoint source pollution controls is considered a subset of the AKART requirement.

"**Ambient water quality**" refers to the conditions and properties of a surface water of the state as determined by the results of water samples, measurements, or observations.

"**Background**" means the biological, chemical, and physical conditions of a water body, outside the area of influence of the discharge under consideration. Background sampling locations in an enforcement action would be up-gradient or outside the area of influence of the discharge. If several discharges to any water body exist, and enforcement action is being taken for possible violations to the standards, background sampling would be undertaken immediately up-gradient from each discharge.

"**Best management practices (BMP)**" means physical, structural, and/or managerial practices approved by the department that, when used singularly or in combination, prevent or reduce pollutant discharges.

"**Biological assessment**" is an evaluation of the biological condition of a water body using surveys of aquatic community structure and function and other direct measurements of resident biota in surface waters.

"**Bog**" means those wetlands that are acidic, peat forming, and whose primary water source is precipitation, with little, if any, outflow.

"Carcinogen" means any substance or agent that produces or tends to produce cancer in humans. For implementation of this chapter, the term carcinogen will apply to substances on the United States Environmental Protection Agency lists of A (known human) and B (probable human) carcinogens, and any substance which causes a significant increased incidence of benign or malignant tumors in a single, well conducted animal bioassay, consistent with the weight of evidence approach specified in the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Guidelines for Carcinogenic Risk Assessment as set forth in 51 FR 33992 et seq. as presently published or as subsequently amended or republished.

"Chronic conditions" are changes in the physical, chemical, or biologic environment which are expected or demonstrated to result in injury or death to an organism as a result of repeated or constant exposure over an extended period of time to a substance or detrimental environmental condition.

"Combined sewer overflow (CSO) treatment plant" is a facility that provides at-site treatment as provided for in chapter 173-245 WAC. A CSO treatment plant is a specific facility identified in a department-approved CSO reduction plan (long-term control plan) that is designed, operated and controlled by a municipal utility to capture and treat excess combined sanitary sewage and stormwater from a combined sewer system.

"Compliance schedule" or **"schedule of compliance"** is a schedule of remedial measures included in a permit or an order, including an enforceable sequence of interim requirements (for example, actions, operations, or milestone events) leading to compliance with an effluent limit, other prohibition, or standard.

"Created wetlands" means those wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland sites to produce or replace natural wetland habitat.

"Critical condition" is when the physical, chemical, and biological characteristics of the receiving water environment interact with the effluent to produce the greatest potential adverse impact on aquatic biota and existing or designated water uses. For steady-state discharges to riverine systems the critical condition may be assumed to be equal to the 7Q10 flow event unless determined otherwise by the department.

"Damage to the ecosystem" means any demonstrated or predicted stress to aquatic or terrestrial organisms or communities of organisms which the department reasonably concludes may interfere in the health or survival success or natural structure of such populations. This stress may be due to, but is not limited to, alteration in habitat or changes in water temperature, chemistry, or turbidity, and shall consider the potential build up of discharge constituents or temporal increases in habitat alteration which may create such stress in the long term.

"Department" means the state of Washington department of ecology.

"Designated uses" are those uses specified in this chapter for each water body or segment, regardless of whether or not the uses are currently attained.

"Director" means the director of the state of Washington department of ecology.

"Drainage ditch" means that portion of a designed and constructed conveyance system that serves the purpose of transporting surplus water; this may include natural water courses or channels incorporated in the system design, but does not include the area adjacent to the water course or channel.

"Ecoregions" are defined using EPAs *Ecoregions of the Pacific Northwest* Document No. 600/3-86/033 July 1986 by Omernik and Gallant.

"Enterococci" refers to a subgroup of fecal streptococci that includes *S. faecalis*, *S. faecium*, *S. gallinarum*, and *S. avium*. The enterococci are differentiated from other streptococci by their ability to grow in 6.5% sodium chloride, at pH 9.6, and at 10°C and 45°C.

"E. coli" is a bacterium in the family Enterobacteriaceae named *Escherichia coli* and is a common inhabitant of the intestinal tract of warm-blooded animals, and its presence in water samples is an indication of fecal pollution and the possible presence of enteric pathogens.

"Existing uses" means those uses actually attained in fresh or marine waters on or after November 28, 1975, whether or not they are designated uses. Introduced species that are not native to Washington, and put-and-take fisheries comprised of nonself-replicating introduced native species, do not need to receive full support as an existing use.

"Fecal coliform" means that portion of the coliform group which is present in the intestinal tracts and feces of warm-blooded animals as detected by the product of acid or gas from lactose in a suitable culture medium within 24 hours at 44.5 plus or minus 0.2 degrees Celsius.

"Geometric mean" means either the nth root of a product of n factors, or the antilogarithm of the arithmetic mean of the logarithms of the individual sample values.

"Ground water exchange" means the discharge and recharge of ground water to a surface water. Discharge is inflow from an aquifer, seeps or springs that increases the available supply of surface water. Recharge is outflow downgradient to an aquifer or downstream to surface water for base flow maintenance. Exchange may include ground water discharge in one season followed by recharge later in the year.

"Hardness" means a measure of the calcium and magnesium salts present in water. For purposes of this chapter, hardness is measured in milligrams per liter and expressed as calcium carbonate (CaCO₃).

"Intake credit" is a procedure for establishing effluent limits that takes into account the amount of a pollutant that is present in waters of the state, at the time water is removed from the same body of water by the discharger or other facility supplying the discharger with intake water.

"Intragravel dissolved oxygen" means the concentration of dissolved oxygen in the spaces between sediment particles in a streambed.

"Irrigation ditch" means that portion of a designed and constructed conveyance system that serves the purpose of transporting irrigation water from its supply source to its place of use; this may include natural water courses or channels incorporated in the system design, but does not include the area adjacent to the water course or channel.

"Lakes" shall be distinguished from riverine systems as being water bodies, including reservoirs, with a mean detention time of greater than 15 days.

"Lake-specific study" means a study intended to quantify existing nutrient concentrations, determine existing characteristic uses for lake class waters, and potential lake uses. The study determines how to protect these uses and if any uses are lost or impaired because of nutrients, algae, or aquatic plants. An appropriate study must recommend a criterion for total phosphorus (TP), total nitrogen (TN) in µg/l, or other nutrient that impairs characteristic uses by causing excessive algae blooms or aquatic plant growth.

"Mean detention time" means the time obtained by dividing a reservoir's mean annual minimum total storage by the 30-day 10-year low-flow from the reservoir.

"Migration" or **"translocation"** means any natural movement of an organism or community of organisms from one locality to another locality.

"Migration for naturally limited waters" is a subcategory of the aquatic life use of salmonid rearing and migration that is limited by the natural physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of the water body.

"Mixing zone" means that portion of a water body adjacent to an effluent outfall where mixing results in the dilution of the effluent with the receiving water. Water quality criteria may be exceeded in a mixing zone as conditioned and provided for in WAC 173-201A-400.

"Natural conditions" or **"natural background levels"** means surface water quality that was present before any human-caused pollution. When estimating natural conditions in the headwaters of a disturbed watershed it may be necessary to use the less disturbed conditions of a neighboring or similar watershed as a reference condition. (See also WAC 173-201A-260(1).)

"New or expanded actions" mean human actions that occur or are regulated for the first time, or human actions expanded such that they result in an increase in pollution, after July 1, 2003, for the purpose of applying this chapter only.

"Nonpoint source" means pollution that enters any waters of the state from any dispersed land-based or water-based activities including, but not limited to, atmospheric deposition; surface water runoff from agricultural lands, urban areas, or forest lands; subsurface or underground sources; or discharges from boats or marine vessels not otherwise regulated under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program.

"Outstanding resource waters" are high quality waters designated by the state due to their exceptional water quality, ecological or recreational significance, unique habitat, or cold water refuge. Outstanding resource waters are given the highest level of protection under the state antidegradation policy.

"Permit" means a document issued pursuant to chapter 90.48 RCW specifying the waste treatment and control requirements and waste discharge conditions.

"pH" means the negative logarithm of the hydrogen ion concentration.

"Pollution" means such contamination, or other alteration of the physical, chemical, or biological properties, of any waters of the state, including change in temperature, taste, color, turbidity, or odor of the waters, or such discharge of any liquid, gaseous, solid, radioactive, or other substance into any waters of the state as will or is likely to create a nuisance or render such waters harmful, detrimental, or injurious to the public health, safety, or welfare, or to domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational, or other legitimate beneficial uses, or to livestock, wild animals, birds, fish, or other aquatic life.

"Primary contact recreation" means activities where a person would have direct contact with water to the point of complete submergence including, but not limited to, skin diving, swimming, and water skiing.

"Salmonid spawning, rearing, and migration for naturally limited waters" is a subcategory of the aquatic life use of salmonid spawning, rearing, and migration that is limited by the natural physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of the water body.

"Shoreline stabilization" means the anchoring of soil at the water's edge, or in shallow water, by fibrous plant root complexes; this may include long-term accretion of sediment or peat, along with shoreline progradation in such areas.

"Spatial median" is the middle value of multiple ranked measurements taken within the sampling area.

"Stormwater" means that portion of precipitation that does not naturally percolate into the ground or evaporate, but flows via overland flow, interflow, pipes, and other features of a stormwater drainage system into a defined surface water body, or a constructed infiltration facility.

"Stormwater attenuation" means the process by which peak flows from precipitation are reduced and runoff velocities are slowed as a result of passing through a surface water body.

"Surface waters of the state" includes lakes, rivers, ponds, streams, inland waters, saltwaters, wetlands and all other surface waters and water courses within the jurisdiction of the state of Washington.

"Temperature" means water temperature expressed in degrees Celsius (°C).

"Treatment wetlands" means those wetlands intentionally constructed on nonwetland sites and managed for the primary purpose of wastewater or stormwater treatment. Treatment wetlands are considered part of a collection and treatment system, and generally are not subject to the criteria of this chapter.

"Trophic state" means a classification of the productivity of a lake ecosystem. Lake productivity depends on the amount of biologically available nutrients in water and sediments and may be based on total phosphorus (TP). Secchi depth and chlorophyll-a measurements may be used to improve the trophic state classification of a lake. Trophic states used in this rule include, from least to most nutrient rich, ultra-oligotrophic, oligotrophic, lower mesotrophic, upper mesotrophic, and eutrophic.

"Turbidity" means the clarity of water expressed as nephelometric turbidity units (NTU) and measured with a calibrated turbidimeter.

"Upwelling" means the natural process along Washington's Pacific Coast where the summer prevailing northerly winds produce a seaward transport of surface water. Cold, deeper more saline waters rich in nutrients and low in dissolved oxygen, rise to replace the surface water. The cold oxygen deficient water enters Puget Sound and other coastal estuaries at depth where it displaces the existing deep water and eventually rises to replace the surface water. Such surface water replacement results in an overall increase in salinity and nutrients accompanied by a depression in dissolved oxygen. Localized upwelling of the deeper water of Puget Sound can occur year-round under influence of tidal currents, winds, and geomorphic features.

"USEPA" means the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

"Variance" is a time-limited designated use and criterion as defined in 40 C.F.R. 131.3, and must be adopted by rule.

"Wetlands" means areas that are inundated or saturated by surface water or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas. Wetlands do not include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland sites including, but not limited to, irrigation and drainage ditches, grass-lined swales, canals, detention facilities, wastewater treatment facilities, farm ponds, and landscape amenities, or those wetlands created after July 1, 1990, that were unintentionally created as a result of the construction of a road, street, or highway. Wetlands may include those artificial wetlands intentionally created from nonwetland areas to mitigate the conversion of wetlands. (Water bodies not included in the definition of wetlands as well as those mentioned in the definition are still waters of the state.)

"Wildlife habitat" means waters of the state used by, or that directly or indirectly provide food support to, fish, other aquatic life, and wildlife for any life history stage or activity.

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