IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

LEADING IOWANS IN CARING FOR OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

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In Brief: Triennial Review Work Plan 2015-2017

The triennial review work plan describes the priorities and goals for Iowa's water quality standards for the next three year period (2015-2017), and the process conducted to form them. Public input, gathered through public hearings and stakeholder meetings, played a key part in this process, which meets requirements as described in the federal Clean Water Act (Sec. 131.20).

Background

The DNR held nine meetings as part of the triennial review: one with internal stakeholders, one with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, one with external stakeholders and six public hearings. Comments were also submitted through mail and e-mail and then organized by issue and reviewed by the DNR for inclusion in future water quality standards efforts. For each issue, the DNR considered: level of interest, resources available by the DNR to address the issue, and the appropriateness for the issue to be handled through Iowa's water quality standards.

Results

Selected Items: These water quality standards issues have the highest priority for DNR staff in the next triennial review period.

Use Attainability Analyses (UAAs)

An ongoing and important part of Iowa's water quality standards, UAAs allow for the recommendation of appropriate designations for Iowa's streams, and help ensure water quality is sufficient to support the different ways Iowans use our streams and rivers. Several different DNR program areas rely upon UAAs, but primarily they are conducted for National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit renewals.

Proposed stream designation changes are assembled as batches. As of May 2015, Batch 4 UAAs are in the middle of rulemaking, Batch 5 UAAs are being drafted, and field work for Batch 6 is completed and drafting of reports has begun. In addition, as the triennial review period progresses, additional field work and data collection will be conducted for the purpose of writing UAAs for future batches. UAAs are a high priority for the DNR and work will continue on them through this triennial review period.

Wasteload Allocation Procedure Manual (WLAP)

The Wasteload Allocation Procedure Manual provides updated technical methodologies for developing wasteload allocations and water quality-based limits for point discharges that are protective of surface water quality standards as described in IAC 567 Chapter 61 – water quality standards. The current document needed revisions to make policy updates easier to understand. The end result will be a clearer, better-defined procedure manual that will include updated information and procedures.

Copper Biotic Ligand Model

After Iowa adopted the current copper criteria, U.S. EPA published a new methodology for calculating copper criteria. The new EPA copper criteria allow use of a completely different approach – the Biotic Ligand Model (BLM). The copper BLM is a metal bioavailability model that uses receiving water body characteristics to develop site-specific water quality criteria. This approach has received positive feedback from most stakeholders, and has been touted by the U.S. EPA for some time. The DNR and its stakeholders have already invested a significant amount of time moving toward this goal, and seek to stay on track by making this effort a top priority.

Second Tier Items: DNR staff will work on these issues as time allows.

Total Dissolved vs. Total Recoverable
Both water quality standards criteria in Iowa and measurements reported by the DNR water quality monitoring networks are expressed as total recoverable metals. However, U.S. Geological Survey data, used by some DNR programs, report metals as dissolved. In doing so, it seems the frequency or magnitude of violations when this dissolved data is used is not as high. Specifically there is a concern with aluminum, which is ubiquitous in Iowa soils. The DNR will continue to study the implications of this issue.

Antidegradation
The DNR's revised antidegradation policy took effect in 2010. The DNR will start to evaluate how the antidegradation implementation policy is working and possible changes. In performing the antidegradation evaluation, the DNR will meet with DNR sections that work with the antidegradation procedure to learn about their experiences with it. The DNR will also speak with wastewater treatment facilities, industries, municipalities and other stakeholders to gain feedback on how the process works. The DNR will evaluate processes and procedures, impacts and opportunities to improve the process.

Estimated Work Schedule

Year	Action Item
2015	UAA – Complete rulemaking for Batch 4 UAAs UAA – Initiate rulemaking for Batch 5 UAAs UAA – Draft Batch 6 UAAs UAA – Field work for Batch 7 UAAs, as weather permits WLAP – Finish drafting document WLAP – Initiate rulemaking Copper BLM – Initiate rulemaking
2016	UAA – Continue with rulemaking for Batch 4 UAAs UAA – Continue with rulemaking for Batch 5 UAAs UAA – Initiate rulemaking for Batch 6 UAAs UAA – Draft Batch 7 UAAs UAA – Field work for Batch 8 UAAs, as weather permits WLAP – Continue with rulemaking Copper BLM – Continue with rulemaking Total Dissolved vs. Total Recoverable – Start research
2017	Triennial review – Begin triennial review process UAA – Continue with rulemaking for Batch 5 UAAs UAA – Continue with rulemaking for Batch 6 UAAs UAA – Initiate rulemaking for Batch 7 UAAs UAA – Draft Batch 8 UAAs UAA – Field Work for Batch 9 UAAs, as weather permits WLAP – Continue with rulemaking Total Dissolved vs. Total Recoverable – Continue research Antidegradation – Start research