

Sugar Creek TMDL Report

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(Approved May 14, 2007)

What is a TMDL?

A TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load), established under section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act, is a calculation of the maximum amount of pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and allocates pollutant loadings among point and non-point sources.

The calculation must include a margin of safety, which accounts for scientific uncertainty and future growth. Seasonal variations are also included. The TMDL is calculated using the following equation:

TMDL = WLA + LA + MOS + SV, where :

- ✦ WLA = Waste Load Allocations (point sources)
- ✦ LA = Load Allocations (non-point sources)
- ✦ MOS = Margin of Safety
- ✦ SV = Seasonal Variation

What is the TMDL Process?

A TMDL is a tool for implementing water quality standards and is based on the relationship between pollutant sources and in-stream water quality conditions. The TMDL establishes the allowable loadings or other quantifiable parameters for a water body and thereby provides the basis to establish water quality-based controls. These controls should provide the pollutant reduction necessary for a water body to meet water quality standards.

The TMDL process provides a flexible assessment and planning framework for identifying load reductions or other actions needed to attain water quality standards (i.e. water quality goals to protect aquatic life, drinking water, and other water uses). The process has three steps:

Identify Quality Limited Waters - States must identify and prepare a list of waters that do not or are not expected to meet water quality standards after applying existing required controls (e.g. minimum sewage treatment technology).

Establish Priority Waters/Watersheds - States must prioritize waters/watersheds and target high priority waters/watersheds for TMDL development.

Develop TMDLs - For listed waters, States must develop TMDLs that will achieve water quality standards, allowing for seasonal variations and an appropriate margin of safety. A TMDL is a quantitative assessment of water quality problems, contributing sources, and load reductions or control actions needed to restore and protect individual water bodies.

States are responsible for implementing the TMDL process. EPA reviews and approves lists of quality-limited waters and specific TMDLs. If EPA disapproves lists or TMDLs, EPA is required to establish the lists and/or TMDLs. Landowners, other agencies, and other stakeholders can often assist States or EPA in developing TMDLs for specific watersheds.