



Focus

Priority Water Cleanup Plans for Fiscal Year 2001

Water Cleanup List

As a result of an extensive year-long effort, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) has established the final statewide list of priority Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) or Water Cleanup Plans selected for fiscal year 2001 (July 2000 through June 2001).

The federal Clean Water Act requires states to prepare a list of water bodies that do not meet water quality standards for ensuring the water is healthy for such activities as swimming, boating, industries, and fish and aquatic habitat every two years. Ecology uses data collected by agency scientists, Indian tribes, state and local governments, industries, and others to develop the list, which then goes through an intensive public process. A Water Cleanup Plan must be developed for each of the polluted water bodies. Ecology identified 666 water bodies with some pollution problems in 1996 and in 1998 643 water bodies were identified as having some pollution problems.

Each year Ecology identifies the water bodies where the agency will start to develop cleanup plans. Ecology selected the proposed water bodies based on the severity of the pollution, the potential for harm to human and aquatic health, and the barriers they pose for swimming, boating, fish habitat and other uses.

Where will we begin working this year?

Ecology began the process to develop Water Cleanup Plans this past fall by gathering technical data and information in several areas of the state. Our goal is to involve local entities and the public in each identified community in all aspects of water cleanup. Involvement opportunities include review of reports on water quality of the river or creek, identifying pollution sources, developing cleanup strategies or ways to prevent, stop and cleanup the polluted water and evaluating the successes of cleanup efforts.

WRIA	Primary Location	Water Body	Pollution Problems
49	Okanogan County	Okanogan River	PCB and DDT
37	Yakima County	Granger Drain	Fecal Coliform
49	Okanogan County	Similkameen River	Arsenic
41, 43	Grant County	Moses Lake, Rocky Ford Creek, Upper Crab Creek	Phosphorus
3	Skagit County	Carpenter Creek, Fisher Creek, Fisher Slough, Skagit Basin	Fecal Coliform and Temperature;
10	Pierce County	South Prairie Creek	Fecal Coliform and Temperature
10	Pierce County	Meeker Ditch and Clark's Creek	Fecal Coliform, pH, Dissolved Oxygen, and Temperature
18	Clallam County	Dungeness River/Bay Expansion	Fecal Coliform

* WRIs (Water Resource Inventory Areas) are large watersheds.

The activities and deliberations that led to the final Fiscal Year 2001 List included:

- Holding workshops in the fall of 1999 to identify priority water bodies for establishing Water Cleanup Plans,
- Considering identified areas by an Ecology joint management team, and,
- Conducting a formal public comment period in the spring of 2000.

What were the public comments on the proposed water bodies?

Forty-five individuals and organizations provided comments. Respondents asked a number of questions and made comments concerning the water bodies selected and other waters Ecology did not propose for cleanup. Ecology prepared a responsiveness summary and provided it to those who commented.

A specific question was raised regarding the study of arsenic in the Similkameen River given the current uncertainty about the water quality standard for arsenic. Other respondents questioned establishing a water cleanup plan in the Moses Lake/Rocky Ford Creek/Upper Crab Creek area. Ecology considered these comments and reviewed the environmental benefits of continuing these projects. Staff considered technical, historical, managerial, and local perspectives along with local involvement and local commitments for each case. They recommended continuing the establishment of a water cleanup plan on these water bodies.

Ecology will integrate any changes in standards or rules that may apply to the chosen water bodies. Each water body selected was screened for its potential for meeting water quality standards through the implementation of other pollution controls.

Community involvement is very important to the process of developing water cleanup plans and to putting the plans into action. If you want to participate in cleanup planning and/or cleanup activities in your watershed contact Ann Butler at the address below and she will put you in touch with water cleanup coordinators in your region of the state.

For more information, please contact:

Ron McBride, (TMDL Coordinator)
P.O. Box 47600
Water Quality Program
Department of Ecology
Olympia, Washington 98504-7600
Phone: (360) 407-6469; FAX: (360) 407-6426
Email: rmcb461@ecy.wa.gov