Core Element Framework Revisions

Wetland Water Quality Standards

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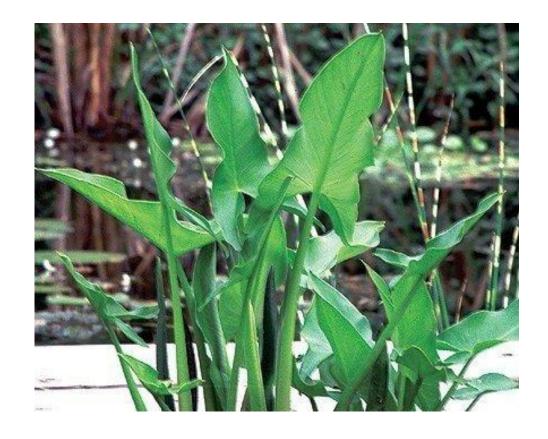
Water Division: Watersheds and Grants Branch

The revisions include:

- Adding reference to the EPA Water Quality Standards Template in the Definition
- Deconstructed Objectives
- Deconstructed Actions
- Added new Actions
- Added new Activities for the original and revised Actions



- 1. Definition
- 2. Goals & Benefits
- 3. Program Building Activities Menu
 - ∘ Objectives − 3
 - Actions 10 to 14
 - Activities 28 to 53
- 4. Resource



Definition Proposed Revisions

Revisions: Definition-WQS

In 2016, EPA developed multiple templates to assist the nation in developing wetland water quality standards. These templates are available at the following link (https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech/templates-developing-wetland-water-quality-standards). The templates are a tool to simplify development of protective wetland water quality standards. They address the three components of a WQS: designated uses, criteria, and antidegradation. The templates also provide wetland-specific terms and language so regulators can tailor standards to suit the needs of the wetland and their state, authorized tribe, or territory. Once developed, the state or tribe may submit the wetland WQS to EPA for review and approval.

Revisions: Definition-WQS

While existing WQS for surface waters may provide some protection, wetlands may need tailored WQS because they have different functions and different dynamics. Wetlands exist as ecosystems along the margins (land—sea, land—lake, land—river) and in depressional landscapes (e.g., prairie potholes in the Midwest and kettle-hole wetlands in the northern U.S.). By season and location, wetlands experience variable water depth and velocity, soil type and saturation levels, vegetation, nutrient levels, sediment type, and oxygen demand, both within a given wetland and among wetland types. Wetland-specific WQS provide robust protection for wetlands and their functions.

Most states do not have WQS specifically developed for protecting wetlands. Establishing narrative criteria is typically the best approach when first developing water quality standards for these complex waters. Where feasible, states could develop numeric criteria to target specific pollutants and other parameters that could impact wetland functions.

The Wetland WQS CE is a framework to follow, and for a more prescriptive set of Activities we recommend applying these templates (https://www.epa.gov/wqs-tech/templates-developing-wetland-water-quality-standards).

Goals & Benefits

Goals & Benefits-stayed same

Goals:

- 1) Overall increase in wetland function and condition
- 2) Provides the scientific basis to protect and restore wetlands

Benefits

- 1) Permitting
- 2) Water Quality Certification
- 3) Monitoring, Assessment & Reporting
- 4) Restoration & Protection



Program Building

Objective 1 – Ensure wetlands are treated as waters within state and tribal water quality programs (Side Note: For Tribes – if they have TAS, but not WQS, then they would need to apply for WQS approval. If they do not have TAS nor approved WQS, then they would need to seek application for Water Quality Standards TAS. And if so, receive EPA approval [40 CFR 131.8], Tribe can submit water quality standards in the same manner as a state, and receive EPA approval, concurrently or after pursuing TAS.)

ACTIONS: remained the same

ACTIVITIES: remained the same

Objective 2 – Develop wetland-specific water quality standards (remained the same)

ACTIONS:

- added 4 new Actions
- Reworded Action a
- Split Actions b, c, d into separate actions (these became new Actions)

ACTIVITIES:

Added 25 Activities



This is where most of the revisions occurred.

Original Objectives

Actions

- a. <u>Gather</u> and analyze monitoring data and other information that will become basis of wetland water quality standards
- b. <u>Establish and adopt</u> appropriate wetland specific designated uses to be achieved and protected

Proposed Objectives

Actions

- a. Collect and analyze monitoring data and other information that will become basis of wetland water quality standards
- b. Establish appropriate wetland specific designated uses to be achieved and protected
- c. Adopt appropriate wetland specific designated uses to be achieved and protected

Revisions-Objective 2: Actions-Activities

Proposed Actions

Actions

- a. Collect and analyze monitoring data and other information that will become basis of wetland water quality standards
- b. Establish appropriate wetland specific designated uses to be achieved and protected
- c. Adopt appropriate wetland specific designated uses to be achieved and protected

Proposed Activities

Menu of Activities

a. From 2 to 18 new Activities

Step-wise progression

From 2 to 5 new Activities

- Kept 1 original Activity
- Eliminated 1 original Activity
- Added 4 new Activities
- Action b has 3 Activities
- Action c has 2 Activities

Original Objective

Actions

c. Establish and adopt narrative criteria where numeric criteria cannot be established or to supplement numeric criteria that qualitatively describe the condition or suite of functions that must be achieved to support a designated use



Proposed Objectives

Actions

- d. Establish narrative criteria where numeric criteria cannot be established or to supplement numeric criteria that qualitatively describe the condition or suite of functions that must be achieved to support a designated use
- e. Adopt narrative criteria that qualitatively describe the condition or suite of functions that must be achieved to support a designated use

Revisions-Objective 2: Actions-Activities

Proposed Actions

Actions

- d. Establish narrative criteria where numeric criteria cannot be established or to supplement numeric criteria that qualitatively describe the condition or suite of functions that must be achieved to support a designated use
- e. Adopt narrative criteria that qualitatively describe the condition or suite of functions that must be achieved to support a designated use

Proposed Activities

Menu of Activities

From 3 to 9 new Activities

- Kept 3 original Activities
- Added 6 new Activities
- Split between d and e
- Action d has 8 Activities
- Action e has 1 Activity

Original Objective

Actions

d. Establish and adopt numeric criteria representing wetland specific values for chemical, physical, and biological parameters that may not be exceeded, must be exceeded, or some combination to protect or restore designated uses

Proposed Objectives

Actions

- f. Establish numeric criteria representing wetland specific values for chemical, physical, and biological parameters that may not be exceeded, must be exceeded, or some combination to protect or restore designated uses
- g. Adopt numeric criteria representing wetland specific values for chemical, physical, and biological parameters that may not be exceeded, must be exceeded, or some combination to protect or restore designated uses

Revisions - Objective 2: Actions - Activities

Proposed Actions

Actions

- f. Establish numeric criteria representing wetland specific values for chemical, physical, and biological parameters that may not be exceeded, must be exceeded, or some combination to protect or restore designated uses
- g. Adopt numeric criteria representing wetland specific values for chemical, physical, and biological parameters that may not be exceeded, must be exceeded, or some combination to protect or restore designated uses

Proposed Activities

Menu of Activities

From 3 to 7 new Activities

- Kept 3 original Activities
- Added 4 new Activities
- Action f has 6 Activities
- Action g has 1 Activity

Original Objective

Actions

e. Better define state/tribal antidegradation policies for wetlands, requiring full protection of existing uses (functions and/or condition), maintenance of functions/condition in high quality wetlands, and a prohibition against lowering functions/conditions in outstanding national resource waters

Proposed Objective

Actions

Stayed same content Re-lettered to h

Revisions - Objective 2: Actions - Activities

Original Action

Proposed Activities

Actions

h. Better define state/tribal antidegradation policies for wetlands, requiring full protection of existing uses (functions and/or condition), maintenance of functions/condition in high quality wetlands, and a prohibition against lowering functions/conditions in outstanding national resource waters



From 4 to 5 Activities

- Kept 4 original Activities
- Added 1 new Activity

Original Objective

Proposed Objective

Actions

None Existed

Actions

i. Draft and finalize water quality standard regulations

Revisions - Objective 2: Actions - Activities

Proposed Actions

Proposed Activities

Actions

i. Draft and finalize water quality standard regulations

Menu of Activities

Generated 4 new Activities

Objective 3 – Incorporate wetland specific water quality standards into agency

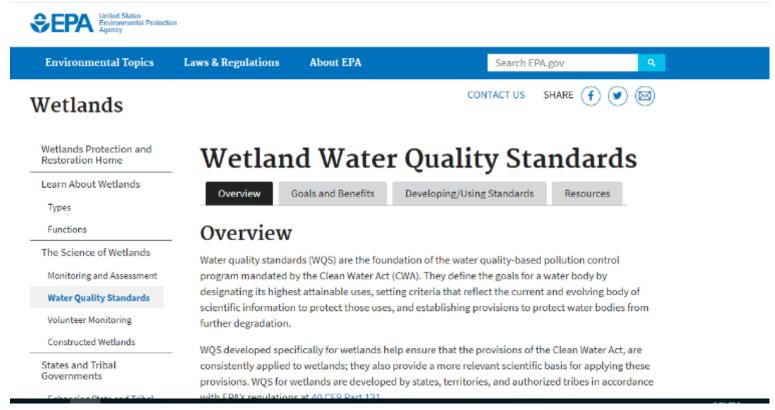
decision making. (remained the same)

ACTIONS: remained the same

ACTIVITIES: remained the same



Questions? Comments...



https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-water-quality-standards





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