

Dept. of Natural Resources: Seeks comments on updated surface water assessment guidance

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is seeking public comment on guidance that helps water management specialists evaluate the status of the state's surface water quality.

The Wisconsin Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology, known as WisCALM, provides guidance to assess surface water quality and trends against standards set by the Clean Water Act, according to Ashley Beranek, DNR water resources management specialist. The methodology is updated for each biennial surface water assessment cycle and the current guidance is being updated for the 2022 cycle.

This year's updates include:

- reorganization based on assessment type;
- addition of new E. coli assessment methods for updated criteria;
- new subcategories for the Healthy Waters List indicating the amount of supporting data; and
- addition of information on assessment timeline, automation and total waters in the state.

Assessing water bodies against water quality standards and identifying impaired waters that don't meet standards is part of the overarching federal Clean Water Act framework for restoring impaired waters. Under the Clean Water Act, states are required to monitor and assess their waters to determine if they meet water quality standards and support the designated uses they are intended to provide.

“Wisconsin’s surface water quality is good and improving in many areas,” Beranek said. “By updating the technical guidance and maintaining the impaired waters list, the state works to address changes through targeted improvement plans.”

The public comment period will be held from Oct. 12 to Nov. 20, 2020. A copy of the draft guidance can be downloaded by clicking on the following link: [Draft 2022 WisCALM](#). For more about these changes, visit dnr.wi.gov and refer to the [WisCALM](#) page.

Public comments on the latest WisCALM guidance can be submitted to: dnrmpairedwaters@wisconsin.gov or via mail to Ashley Beranek, DNR, Bureau of Water Quality, WQ/3, P.O Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707-7921.