

Dept. of Natural Resources: Seeking public comment on updated water condition lists

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced that more than 80% of Wisconsin's lakes and rivers recently assessed are healthy, continuing a trend of improved surface water quality across the state.

Every two years, Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) require states to publish a list of all waters not meeting water quality standards and an overall report on surface water quality status of all waters in the state.

Although the majority of waterbodies are in good condition and have been placed on the Healthy Waters List, 92 new waterbodies or segments are now classified as impaired.

“Placing waters on the Impaired Waters List means they require a restoration plan to improve aquatic habitat, recreation opportunities or fish consumption. While these waters are labeled ‘impaired,’ the majority are still usable; just follow local water quality alerts and posted signs,” said Ashley Beranek, DNR Surface Water Quality Assessment Coordinator.

A total of 115 new pollutant listings are proposed; a waterbody can have multiple pollutant listings and some of the new listings are on waters already identified as impaired. The majority of new pollutant listings are for phosphorus and bacteria. This is the first assessment cycle to use the new *E. coli* bacteria criteria recently approved by the Wisconsin legislature.

Of the 115 new listings, 11 will be placed directly on the Restoration Waters List

because they are covered by an existing restoration plan in the form of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The listings are being added to the Milwaukee River Basin TMDL, Upper Fox-Wolf Basins TMDL and Wisconsin River Basin TMDL. The department is also seeking public comment on these TMDL additions.

Simultaneously, 22 listings will be removed, half of which are for phosphorus and sediment. The 2022 draft Impaired Waters List contains 1,526 listings. The draft Restoration Waters List contains 577 listings.

The department is asking for public comments regarding the new listings and TMDL additions. Provide written comments by Oct. 1 to:

Department of Natural Resources
c/o Ashley Beranek, Water Quality
P.O. Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707

DNRWYWaterbodyAssessments@wisconsin.gov

The water condition lists are submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency every even-numbered year in accordance with the Clean Water Act. The department follows standard procedures to assess waterbodies against water quality standards.

[The 2022 lists and other materials can be found on the DNR's website.](#)