

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

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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 attaining water quality standards, continuing a trend of improved surface water quality across the state.

The Clean Water Act directs states to publish biennial lists of waterbodies detailing which are healthy, which are in the process of restoration and which still need a plan to achieve good health. These lists are, respectively, the Waters Achieving Standards, Waters in Restoration and Impaired Waters lists. The DNR is seeking public comment on these draft lists and will hold a public informational meeting on March 2.

Although the majority of waterbodies are in good condition and have been placed on the list of Waters Attaining Standards, 92 new waterbodies or segments are now classified as impaired. Placing waters on the Impaired Waters List means those waters require a restoration plan to improve aquatic habitat, recreation opportunities or fish consumption.

A total of 100 new pollutant listings are proposed; a waterbody can have multiple pollutant listings. Some of the new listings are on waters already identified as impaired. The most common new pollutant listings in this review cycle are for total phosphorus, *E. coli* and Perfluorooctane Sulfonate (PFOS).

“The newly listed waterbodies reflect the DNR’s commitment to locating and addressing the dominant sources of surface water pollution across the state,” said

Justin Chenevert, Wisconsin DNR waterbody assessment coordinator. “With hard work and sound science, we can hope to eventually remove the impairments from these waters. Depending on the pollutant, many waters listed as impaired are still beautiful resources and safe for the recreational activities that Wisconsinites and visitors alike enjoy.”

Of the 100 new listings, 10 will be placed directly on the Waters in Restoration List because they are covered by an existing restoration plan called a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) analysis. These listings are being added to the Milwaukee River Basin TMDL (four listings), Upper Fox-Wolf Basins TMDL (four listings), the Northeast Lakeshore TMDL (one listing) and Rock River Basin TMDL (one listing). The DNR is also seeking public comment on these TMDL additions.

Simultaneously, 15 impairment listings will be removed, with over half being for phosphorus. Overall, the 2026 draft Impaired Waters List contains 1,574 listings. The draft Waters In Restoration List contains 681 listings.

The public is encouraged to submit written comments regarding the new listings and TMDL additions by March 18 to DNRWYWaterbodyAssessments@wisconsin.gov or:

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
c/o Justin Chenevert, Water Quality
WY/3 P.O. Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

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 DNR follows standard procedures to assess waterbodies against water quality standards.

Find the 2026 lists and other materials on the DNR's [website](#).

Public Information Meeting Event Details

When: 1 p.m. Monday, March 2

Where: Virtual. [Zoom link](#). Meeting ID: 811 1139 5449. Pre-registration is not necessary.