

What are Water Quality Standards?

Water Quality Standards are essentially numerical limits on pollutants which affect how we use water. The Standards include limitations on minerals, bacteria, clarity, temperature, oiliness, acidity or alkalinity, oxygen, nutrients and toxic substances. The federal Clean Water Act requires each state to develop Standards to protect lakes and rivers, streams, creeks and even large ditches. The Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission adopts Standards for Arkansas.

How are the Standards used?

ADEQ uses these Standards to help make sure state waterways can be used as a source of drinking water or for swimming, fishing, industrial and agricultural use. The Standards restrict what individuals, businesses or farms may discharge into waterways.

What is the basis for the Standards?

The Standards are based on how each waterway has been used and the uses which the Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission designates for each waterway.

What are the uses the Commission has assigned waterways in the state?

Outstanding Resource Waters

- < Extraordinary Resource Waters
- < Ecologically Sensitive Water bodies
- < Natural and Scenic Waterways

Specific Uses

- < Swimming (primary contact)
- < Wading (secondary, or incidental contact)
- < Fishing (fisheries)
- < Drinking water source
- < Industrial water source
- < Agricultural water source



How often are the Standards reviewed?

The federal government requires that each state review its Standards every three years. ADEQ is starting to update the Arkansas Standards.

How will Arkansas review Standards?

The Department is analyzing Water Quality data to determine if current Standards are adequate to protect the uses of the waters of the State. ADEQ may determine current Standards are adequate or propose new Standards. ADEQ held meetings during Fall 2001 to encourage citizens to make specific comments on their needs and priorities for Arkansas waterways.

What's next in the process?

ADEQ has established a task force of citizen and environmental groups, industries and other state agencies to discuss possible revisions to the Standards. ADEQ will work with the task force to develop a working draft. After one or more formal public hearings on the draft, the PC& E Commission will vote on any proposed changes to the Standards.

Are there documents which contain information about the standards?

Arkansas Pollution Control and Ecology Commission Regulation No. 2 contains the standards and explanation of them. The *Arkansas Water Quality Inventory Report 2000* contains information about the quality of the state's waters. The ADEQ Internet web site provides access to both documents. Paper copies are available from ADEQ for a nominal charge.

How can citizens participate in reviewing the Standards?

- < Familiarize yourself with the procedure for changing the Standards.
- < Write down your ideas.
- < Review proposed Water Quality Standards when they are issued.
- < Submit comments for formal consideration.
- < Return the attached participation coupon to ADEQ to receive notices about meetings on Water Quality Standards.

How can I keep up with the Process?

The ADEQ web site, www.adeq.state.ar.us provides updated information on Water Quality Standards review, as well as other environmental topics.

ADEQ

To protect, enhance and restore the natural environment for the well-being of all Arkansans.

Questions?

Your concerns are important. Let us know if you have questions about Arkansas Water Quality Standards.

Send this coupon to ADEQ to receive more information on this topic.

Please Print

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State, Zip Code: _____

My question is: _____

Mail this coupon to:

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Protecting Arkansas' Water



A Citizen's Guide to Participation

ADEQ
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Department of Environmental Quality