

Hi, Katherine,

I am a reporter in Baxter County working on a story about the 2016 impaired streams list the newspaper received notification about recently from ADEQ.

I understand the Clean Water Act requires Arkansas to perform an assessment of the state's water quality every two years, and this year, I see that Baxter County has at least one noted impaired stream - Hicks Creek.

The Baxter Bulletin is planning on running the story in the paper tomorrow (Tuesday). Here are my questions for the ADEQ about Baxter County as well as questions of clarification based on my review of the online documents:

1. Why is Hicks Creek on the draft 2016 303(d) list for Baxter County (what makes it an impaired stream)?

ADEQ: Bacteria levels in the Creek are higher than the water quality standards.

2. According to the notice, Hicks Creek does not support its designated use -- primary contact. What does ADEQ mean by "primary contact"?

Primary Contact is full body contact, wading, swimming,...

3. What does TMDL stand for? (Example: Hicks Creek is an impaired stream with a TMDL.)

TMDL stands for Total Maximum Daily Load. A TMDL is a calculation developed for some waters that are not meeting or are at risk of not attaining water quality standards. The TMDL calculates the maximum amount of a constituent a waterbody can receive and still meet the standards. See more at <https://www.adeq.state.ar.us/water/planning/integrated/tmdl.aspx>.

4. What makes a stream or lake a "Category 5"?

EPA developed a five (5) category classification system that a stream can be placed in depending on its impairment status and the amount of data that is available for the water body:

Category 1 = Attaining all water quality standards for all designated uses;

Category 2 = Available data and/or information indicate that some, but not all of the designated uses are supported.

Category 3 = There is insufficient data to determine if any of the water quality standards or designated uses are attained.

Category 4 = Water quality standards and/or a designated use is not attained, but there is a TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load) or other management strategies developed to address the issue.

Category 5 = The waterbody is impaired, or one or more water quality standards are not attained.

5. It appears by law that the state is required to hold a public hearing and comment period, but correct me if I'm wrong. What are you hoping to hear from the public? Aside from the law, why hold a comment period?

You are correct that the state must hold a public comment period concerning the list of impaired water bodies.

It is always very helpful to hear, first hand, the thoughts and concerns about the list of impaired waterbodies from the citizens of Arkansas. Many times, the questions or concerns in a comment letter can be missed interpreted, thus leading to responses that are not understandable or do not actually address the concern of the commenter.

6. Is there anything else you think the public should know when viewing the proposed 2016 impaired waterbodies list? If so, what should readers understand when looking at the data?

Citizens should know that there is a water body, or waterbodies not only in their county, but across the state that are not attaining the water quality standards that have been established to protect them. They should also understand what the problem is and what might be causing the problem. Most importantly, the citizens of Arkansas should understand that the protection of the State's waterbodies begins with all Arkansans.

Thank you for your time,

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