

**From:** alice andrews <alice209ok@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 10, 2018 2:06 PM  
**To:** WaterbodyComments  
**Cc:** alice andrews  
**Subject:** 303(d) list of impaired streams 2018 Categories 4b and 5

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the 303(d) list, particularly on Categories 4b and 5 for Ozark and Boston Mountain streams. My focus is on Big Creek, near Mt. Judea, a large tributary to the Buffalo National River and the Buffalo River.

Utilizing the Assessment Methodology (AM), Big Creek was assessed as impaired for low dissolved Oxygen. Independent scientific studies by PhD level experts in Chemistry, Hydrogeology, Soils and Karst in Big Creek indicate trends of increasing levels of E.coli, Phosphorus and Nitrogen also. This information has been largely ignored, creating public frustration. The Buffalo River Watershed's four Assessment Units, (AU) are identified as impaired and placed in Category 4b, three for bacteria and one for dissolved oxygen and eight streams in Category 5.

In my view, this is one of the more difficult matters on which to comment since there are reasonable arguments for both Category 4b and Category 5. I disagree with placing the four AUs, identified as impaired stretches, in the Buffalo River Watershed in Category 4b. Unfortunately, ADEQ expects to attain water quality standards here by depending on the "Beautiful Buffalo River Action Committee" (BBRAC) to restore water quality in this watershed. Governor Hutchinson directed 5 state agencies to initiate development of a Buffalo River Watershed Management Plan. They submitted a final plan which was approved by EPA, June 2018. It is clearly understood that BBRAC is based on volunteers coming up with a proposal for an improvement of water quality and acquiring funding to implement their plan. This is a "Band-Aid" approach, whereby the tape doesn't stick to the patient. Volunteer effort translates to a long wait before, or if, any significant project is born. Simply, it is unrealistic.

Another critical issue that seems to be ignored is the Anti-degradation policy. The Buffalo River is long been designated an Extraordinary Resource Water, an Outstanding Resource Water and a National Resource as well as stretches of the Buffalo listed as "Wild and Scenic". Why does the anti-degradation policy not come into play? The four described BR Watershed AUs are, at times, not meeting "designated uses" the summer of 2018. Consider safe body contact (swimming, wading, fishing). Other state or federal agencies monitor health issues in our streams and lakes but ADEQ has the responsibility to acknowledge the Anti-degradation policy and designated uses of streams.

If it is correct that a 4b designation does not preclude asking for a TMDL, why not ask Director Keogh, the Governor and the Natural Resources Commission to move Big Creek to "high priority stream" level? Then a TMDL or other corrective action could be developed. Otherwise, I support a Category 5 choice since it is the only one currently meeting the Clean Water Act. State and Federal regulations must be considered. TMDLs are and have been needed for many years for Buffalo River Watershed streams. Numeric nutrient criteria must also be developed before TMDLs can be established. I know that this is a long, difficult, expensive process but "gotta" start - please!

ADEQ does not seem willing to make decisions based on "Best professional judgment" or "growing weight of evidence".

Therefore, 1. I support a change to Category 5 for the BR Watershed impaired streams.

2. I respectfully request that ADEQ bring the Anti-degradation Policy out of the closet for consideration. If there is no AM for this, there should be.

Respectfully submitted,

Alice B. Andrews, 63 Robinwood Drive, Little Rock, AR 72227 501-912-4597 or <[alice209ok@yahoo.com](mailto:alice209ok@yahoo.com)>