

Wyoming Surface Water Quality Standards Summary

Water Quality Rules and Regulations, Chapter 1, Wyoming Surface Water Quality Standards, identify designated uses, water quality criteria, and antidegradation provisions to maintain water uses and water quality. The standards are intended to be consistent with the Wyoming Environmental Quality Act and the federal Clean Water Act. The following fact sheet is provided for informational purposes only and should not be used in lieu of Wyoming’s Water Quality Rules and Regulations and implementation materials that can be found on the Secretary of State’s [Administrative Rules website](#) and the DEQ’s [Surface Water Quality Standards webpage](#), respectively.

DESIGNATED USES

Designated uses are assigned to surface waters of the state via a hierarchical classification system. See the [Wyoming Surface Water Classification List](#) to determine the classes and designated uses assigned to surface waters of the state.

Table 1. Waterbody description and designated uses assigned to non-Class 1 surface waters.

Class	Subclass	Waterbody Description	Aquatic Life Uses				Human Health Uses		Agriculture, Industry, Wildlife, Scenic Value Uses	Recreation Uses	
			Coldwater Game Fish	Warmwater Game Fish	Nongame Fish	Aquatic Life Other Than Fish	Drinking Water	Fish Consumption		Primary Contact	Secondary Contact
1		Outstanding waters	Determined during water quality assessment, stormwater permitting, or 401 certifications.								
2	2AB	Game fish, nongame fish, and drinking water	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Recreation Uses Web Map	
	2A	Drinking water without fish	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes		
	2B	Game fish and nongame fish	Yes	Yes*	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		
	2C	Nongame fish only	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		
	2D	Effluent-dependent with fish	If Present	If Present	If Present	Yes	No	Yes	Yes		
3	3A	Isolated without fish	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		
	3B	Intermittent and ephemeral streams without fish	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		
	3C	Perennial waters without fish	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		
	3D	Effluent-dependent waters without fish	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes		
4	4A	Artificial canals and ditches without fish	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes		
	4B	Intermittent and ephemeral streams without aquatic life	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes		
	4C	Isolated waters without aquatic life	No	No	No	No	No	No	Yes		

*2AB and 2B waters are designated for coldwater game fish unless identified as warmwater.

WATER QUALITY CRITERIA

Water quality criteria are adopted to protect designated uses and surface water quality.

Table 2. Narrative and numeric surface water quality criteria specified by designated use. Water quality criteria shown as “-” are not applicable to particular designated uses.

Water Quality Criteria	Section of Water Quality Standards	Aquatic Life				Human Health		Agriculture	Industry	Wildlife	Scenic Value	Recreation	
		Cold Water Game Fish	Warm Water Game Fish and Nongame Fish	Aquatic Life Other Than Fish	Effluent Dependent Aquatic Life	Consumption of Drinking Water and Fish	Consumption of Fish					Primary Contact Recreation	Secondary Contact Recreation
		2ABcw, 2Bcw	2ABww, 2Bww, 2C	2A, 3	2D, 3D	2AB, 2A	2B, 2C					2, 3, 4	2, 3, 4
Settleable Solids	15	Narrative				Narrative	-	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative	-	
Floating and Suspended Solids	16	Narrative				Narrative	-	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative	-	
Taste, Odor, and Color	17	-				Narrative		-	-	-	Narrative	Narrative	
Human Health, Appendix B	18	-				Numeric	Numeric	-	-	-	-	-	
Industrial Water Supply	19	-				-		-	Narrative	-	-	-	
Agricultural Water Supply	20	-				-		Narrative	-	-	-	-	
Aquatic Life, Appendix B	21	Numeric			Numeric, Can Be Modified	-		-	-	-	-	-	
Aquatic Life, Chloride		Numeric		Narrative		-		-	-	-	-	-	
Aquatic Life, Ammonia		Numeric		Narrative		-		-	-	-	-	-	
Radioactive Materials	22	Numeric and Narrative				Numeric	-	Narrative	-	Narrative	-	-	

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		2ABcw, 2Bcw	2ABww, 2Bww, 2C	2A, 3	2D, 3D	2AB, 2A	2B, 2C					Uses Not Determined By Class	
Turbidity	23	Coldwater Numeric	Warmwater Numeric	-		Drinking Water Numeric	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Dissolved Oxygen	24	Coldwater Numeric	Warmwater Numeric	Narrative		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Temperature	25	Coldwater Numeric	Warmwater Numeric	Narrative		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
pH, Narrative		Narrative					-	-	-	-	-	-	
E. coli	27	-					-	-	-	-	-	Numeric	
Oil and Grease, Narrative	29	Narrative					Narrative		-	-	-	-	-
Total Dissolved Gases	30	Numeric		-		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Biological Criteria	32	Narrative					-	-	-	-	-	-	

Table 3. Surface water quality criteria outlined in Water Quality Rules and Regulations, Chapter 1, that do not specify a designated use.

Water Quality Criteria	Section of Water Quality Standards	Description of Criteria
Toxic Materials	13	Narrative
Dead Animals and Solid Waste	14	Narrative
pH, Numeric	26	≥ 6.5 and ≤ 9.0 Standard Units
Undesirable Aquatic Life	28	Narrative
Oil and Grease, Numeric	29	≤ 10 mg/L

ANTIDegradation

Antidegradation protections are intended to maintain water quality and waterbody uses.

Table 4. Antidegradation requirements outlined in Water Quality Rules and Regulations, Chapter 1, Sections 7 and 8, and the [Antidegradation Implementation Policy](#).

Classes	Description	Antidegradation Requirements
All Waters	Existing Use Protection	Existing in-stream water uses shall be maintained and protected in all surface waters of the state, except for special considerations regarding effluent-dependent waters (i.e., 2D, 3D, and 4C). In circumstances where existing uses are not sufficiently protected by the current classification of a surface water, DEQ will ensure that existing uses are fully protected based on implementation of appropriate numeric or narrative water quality criteria or criteria guidance.
1	Outstanding Waters	Class 1 waters are outstanding surface waters designated by the Wyoming Environmental Quality Council where the water quality and physical and biological integrity that existed on the water at the time of designation will be maintained and protected. The water quality and waters uses shall be maintained by: applying appropriate best management practices to control nonpoint sources of pollution; not allowing new point source discharges other than from dams to be permitted; not allowing existing point sources other than from dams to increase their quantity of pollution being discharged; controlling storm water and construction related discharges of pollution through permits, Clean Water Action Section 401 Certifications, and/or by the application of best management practices. Controls may be imposed on Class 1 waters or their tributaries.
2AB 2A 2B 2C	High Quality Waters	Water quality may be lowered, as long as the water quality is not lowered below existing standards, if the resulting degradation is: (1) insignificant (i.e., permitted under WYPDES general permit; < 10% of total existing load; <20% of assimilative capacity; or activity is temporary); or (2) necessary for socioeconomic development and no other economically viable alternatives exist.
2D 3 4	Use Protected Waters	Water quality may be lowered as long as water quality criteria are not exceeded and existing uses are maintained. The Water Quality Division Administrator may determine, on a case by case basis, that a “High Quality Water” review of a proposed discharge needs to be conducted prior to authorizing an activity. Special circumstances may include, but are not limited to, exceptional recreational or ecological significance (e.g., location in a park or urban greenway, presence of rare or sensitive plant or animal species, contains unique aquatic features such as wetland fens or geothermal springs, etc.).