

Additional Topics for Brief Discussion at the December 9th Stakeholder's Meeting

December 9, 2004

Handout #3

Evaluation of Support of Narrative Criterion for Ambient Water Color

307.4 (b)(5) specifies that waste discharges shall not cause substantial and persistent changes from ambient conditions of turbidity or color.

Support of the color standard will be based on an evaluation of a number of factors. Some of the factors that may be used include:

- Quantitative data
 - The platinum-cobalt method (Standard Method 2120B) for water samples collected from both upstream and downstream of discharges
 - The magnitude and areal extent of color changes will be quantified
- Qualitative information
 - Photographic evidence
 - Local information (public or professional)

Additional information may be considered, such as:

- Color sample results for other water bodies in the same ecoregion maybe used with upstream samples

Support of the narrative criterion under 307.4(b)(5) applies only to waste discharges. Determination of support of 307.4(b)(5) will be based on a combination of the methods described above, and should include quantitative measures using the platinum-cobalt method or other applicable methods approved by the executive director's staff.

Ambient Sediment Toxicity Assessment

A revised verison of the discussion document from the last meeting will be distributed.

New subcategory for the 303(d) list (Category 5)

We are proposing for discussion the formation of a new subcategory for Category 5, the 303(d) List. Here are the current definitions for Categories, 5a, 5b and 5c:

Category 5 - The water body does not meet applicable water quality standards or is threatened for one or more designated uses by one or more pollutants

5a A TMDL is underway, scheduled, or will be scheduled

5b A review of the water quality standards will be conducted before a TMDL is scheduled

5c Additional data and information will be collected before a standards review or TMDL is scheduled

5d For unclassified water bodies, a determination of appropriate Aquatic Life Use and dissolved oxygen criteria will be made and nonattainment of these standards will be established before a TMDL will be scheduled

A new subcategory 5d will be useful to identify impairments for administrative purposes and to communicate TCEQ actions to address the impairment.

For purposes of assessment, we determine aquatic life use (ALU) and DO criteria based on flow-type for water bodies that are not in Appendix A or D of the Texas Water Quality Standards (TSWQS). Perennial streams are assigned High ALU, intermittent streams are assigned Minimal ALU. As a first step an appropriate assessment will be performed to determine if the ALU and criteria used for assessment are accurate.

Note that there are 40 unclassified water bodies (those not in Appendix A) that are impaired for DO in an area that is not assigned an ALU or DO criteria in Appendix D. There are also two unclassified water bodies that have impaired biological communities in assessment areas that are not described in Appendix D.

A path forward for these water bodies is to do a standards review, assign an ALU and criteria, then determine support status of the use and criteria. Delist if criteria are attained; if not attained, schedule a TMDL or other remedial action.

If we were to apply this new category to the 2004 assessment results, eight 5a impairments and eight 5b impairments would be moved to the new Category 5d.

Note that non-supporting 5b segments would be either designated either in Appendix A or in Appendix D. For 5b segments a UAA will be scheduled to determine if the standard is accurate.