

The Columbia River

Improving Water Quality

Idaho DEQ, Oregon DEQ, Washington Dept. of Ecology, and US EPA Region 10
In coordination with the Columbia Basin Tribes
Joint Fact Sheet #2, Fall 2002

Columbia/Snake River Mainstem TMDL Process and Schedule

Background

The states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington and EPA Region 10 are working in coordination with the Columbia Basin Tribes to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for Temperature and Total Dissolved Gas (TDG) on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. A TMDL is a technical analysis resulting in a determination of quantities of a given pollutant (load) that can be released into a given waterbody each day while still maintaining Water Quality Standards (WQS). A TMDL also allocates responsibilities to “contributors” for reductions in the pollutant load that are necessary to achieve WQS. TMDLs are often referred to as Water Quality Improvement Plans.

Most of the Columbia River Mainstem and the Lower Snake River Mainstem fail to meet state and/or tribal Water Quality Standards for critical periods of time (mainly in the spring and summer months) for both water temperature and total dissolved gas. The Columbia/Snake Mainstem TMDLs will identify the sources of temperature and TDG causing or contributing to water quality impairment, and allocate responsibility for TDG and temperature reductions needed to achieve WQS.

Four separate but related TMDLs are being developed to achieve this objective: 1) Columbia/Snake River Mainstem Temperature TMDL 2) Lower Columbia River Total Dissolved Gas TMDL 3) Mid Columbia/Lake Roosevelt TDG TMDL, and 4) Lower Snake River. This fact sheet lays out the process and schedule for each of these TMDLs.

Columbia/Snake River Mainstem Temperature TMDL

The geographic scope of the Columbia/Snake River Mainstem Temperature TMDL includes the Mainstem Snake River from river mile (RM) 188 to its confluence with the Columbia River, and the Mainstem of the Columbia River, from the Canadian Border to Astoria Bridge at the River mouth. EPA has agreed to take the lead on this effort, but it will work closely with the states of Idaho, Oregon and Washington and the Columbia Basin Tribes. The Temperature TMDL is expected to be completed by June 2003, and will proceed according to the following timeline:

- Public Release of Draft Preliminary TMDL and posting on website - September 13, 2002
- TMDL Public Workshops/Informational Meetings on Preliminary Draft Temperature TMDL - September 25 in Lewiston, ID, September 26 in Kennewick, WA and October 1 in Portland, OR
- Draft TMDL - October and November 2002
- 90 Day Comment Period/Public Meetings on Draft Temperature TMDL - Nov/Dec/Jan
- Respond to Public Comments - Feb/March/April 2003
- Final Temperature TMDL issued – May 2003

Lower Columbia Total Dissolved Gas TMDL

The geographic scope of the Lower Columbia Total Dissolved Gas TMDL included the Columbia River Mainstem from below the confluence of the Snake its mouth at the Pacific Ocean. Because the Columbia River forms the border between the states of Oregon and Washington, these two states would share the lead on developing this TMDL. The states would work closely with EPA.

In Spring 2002, public comments were solicited and public meetings were held on March 18 in Kennewick, WA, on March 19 in Pendleton, OR and in March 22 in Portland, OR and Vancouver, OR. The final Oregon/Washington Lower Columbia TDG TMDL is scheduled to be completed by September 2002.

Mid Columbia/Lake Roosevelt and Lower Snake River Total Dissolved Gas TMDLs

This TMDL is an extension of the Lower Columbia TDG TMDL. The geographic scope of the Mid-Columbia/Lake Roosevelt Snake River Mainstem TDG TMDL includes the Mainstem Snake River from the confluence of the Salmon River to its confluence with the Columbia River, and the Mainstem of the Columbia River from the Canadian Border to the Oregon/Washington border.

Washington will take the lead on developing the TDG TMDL for the portions of the Columbia and Snake that flow through Washington, and Idaho will take the lead on developing the TMDL for the portion of the Snake that flows through Idaho. EPA will take the lead on developing the TDG TMDL for any river segments that run through tribal lands, including Lake Roosevelt.

The final Mid Columbia TDG TMDL is scheduled for completion by June 2003. The Lower Snake River TDG TMDL may be finalized as early as December 2002. These work efforts will complement one another and will proceed according to the following timeline:

- Draft Lower Snake TDG TMDL – Fall 2002
- Final Lower Snake TDG TMDL submitted to EPA – December 2002
- Draft Mid-Columbia TDG TMDL – Winter 2003
- Final Mid-Columbia TDG TMDL submitted to EPA – June 2003

For Workshop Materials, Fact Sheets, Documents, Maps and other Information

Log onto the Internet at

[Http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/columbiainstemtmdl.htm](http://www.epa.gov/r10earth/columbiainstemtmdl.htm)

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