

Non NPDES Source Group Meeting Sediment Policy (Draft)

Narrative criteria for sediment may be found in OAR 340-041-0007(12) and for road building and maintenance in OAR 340-041-0007(8).

Narrative criteria for sediment may be found in OAR 340-041-0036.

(1) Background. Bedded and suspended sediments affect the biological cycles of aquatic species and the use of water for drinking, and are a critical factor in maintaining and restoring healthy salmonid populations throughout the State. Chronic inputs or excesses of sediment from erosion can impair beneficial uses, as can inadequate amounts of coarse sediments (armoring of streams). Fine sediment can also serve as a conduit for toxic chemicals. Sediment is influenced by riparian condition, geology and soils, climate, channel morphology, large woody debris, natural disturbances, and stream hydrology. Sediment regimes can be affected by past and present human activities such as construction of roads and/or buildings, forestry, agriculture, dredging, and recreation.

(2) Policy. It is the policy of the Commission to protect aquatic ecosystems and drinking water source areas from anthropogenic degradation by sedimentation or armoring. The Commission intends to minimize the risk to aquatic ecosystems and drinking water source areas from sediment pollution, to encourage the restoration and protection of water quality and critical aquatic habitat, and to control disruption of natural sediment regimes due to anthropogenic activities. The Commission recognizes that some of the State's waters will, in their natural condition, not provide optimal bedded sediment conditions at all places and at all times where salmonid or drinking water use occurs. Therefore, it is especially important to minimize additional fine sediment sources due to anthropogenic sources or armoring of streams due to human activities. In addition, the Commission acknowledges that control technologies, best management practices and other measures to reduce anthropogenic disruptions of natural sediment cycles are evolving and that the implementation to meet these criteria will be an iterative process. The Commission understands that many toxic metals and compounds attach to and move with eroded fine sediment and, in many cases, control of toxic chemicals will require prevention of the movement of fine sediment into surface waters.

Possible directives:

EQC directs DEQ to:

- 1) Investigate the extent of movement of fine sediment and associated toxics into waters of the State and propose means of prevention. Sources to be examined should include urban, suburban, and rural residential areas, forestry, and agriculture.
- 2) Examine the need for a statewide and/or regional riparian policy and rule to control sediment pollution.
- 3) Examine the effects of human activities on natural sediment regimes and propose means to restore natural processes when necessary.