

Item G: Water Quality Standards Triennial Review

Report and Workplan

May 9, 2025
EQC Presentation

Overview

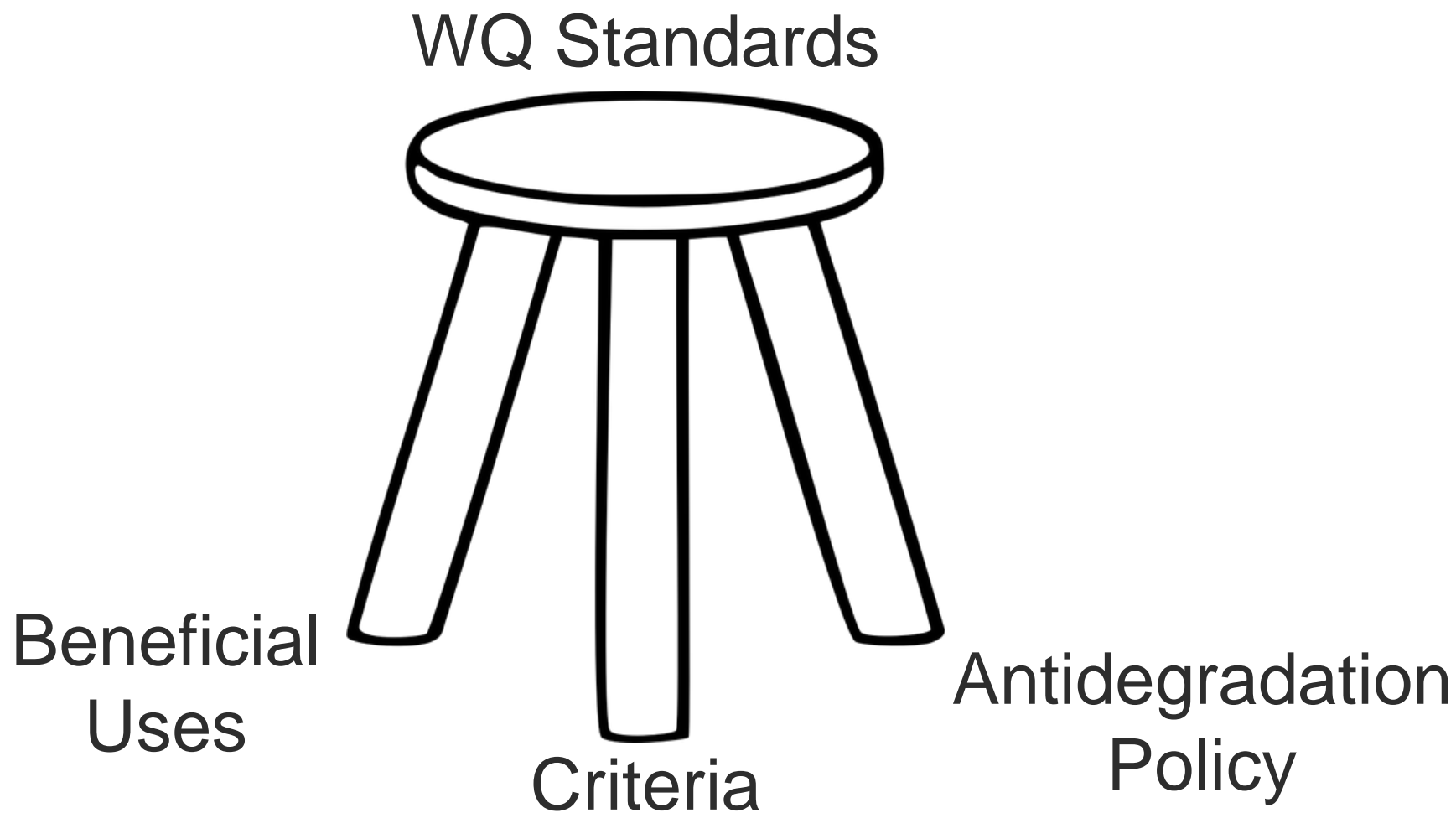
- Background on water quality standards
- Triennial review process
- Public engagement
- 2025-2028 Workplan

2024 Water Quality Standards Triennial Review

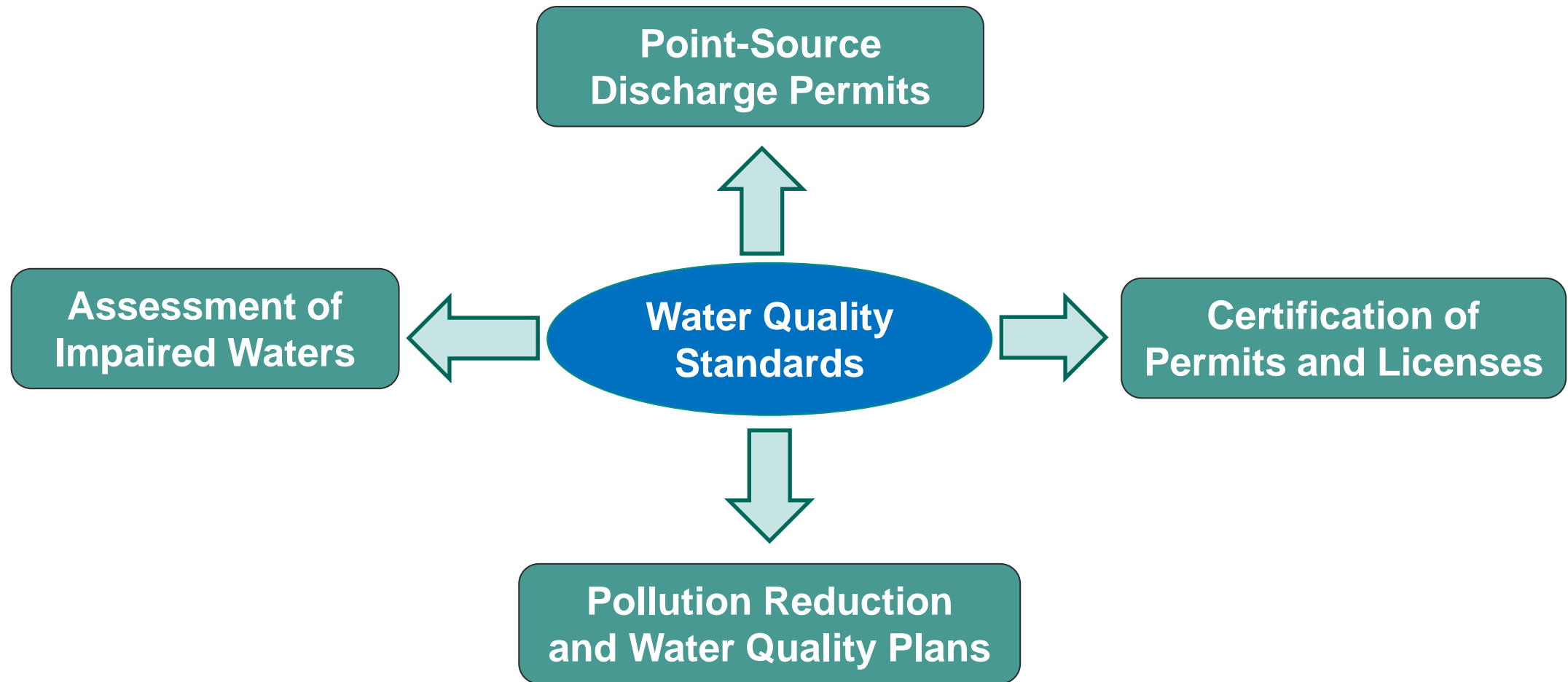
The Clean Water Act requires states and Tribes to hold a public hearing and review their water quality standards at least once every three years.

Result: A workplan of priority projects to start or complete between 2025 and 2028.

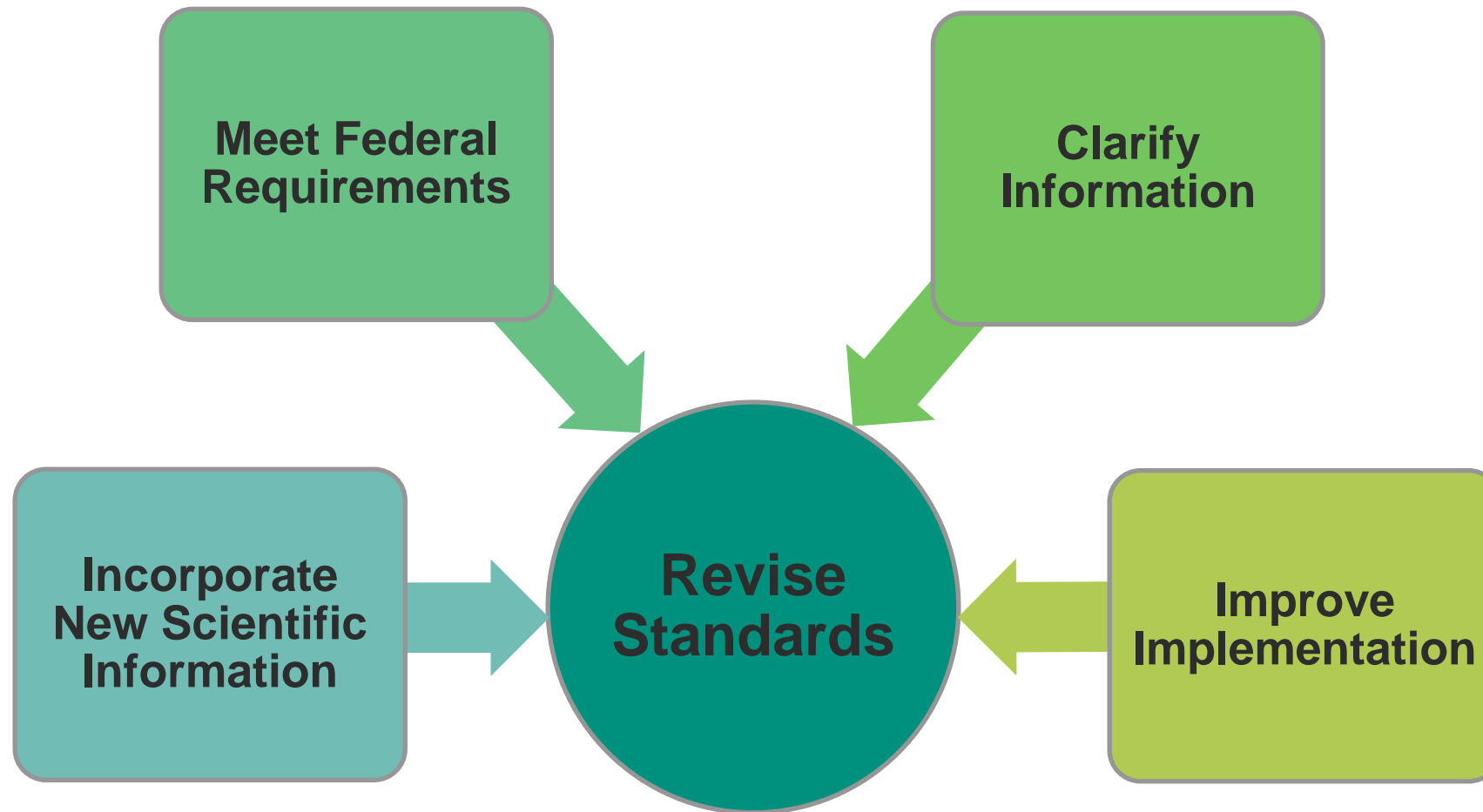
Clean Water Act and Water Quality Standards



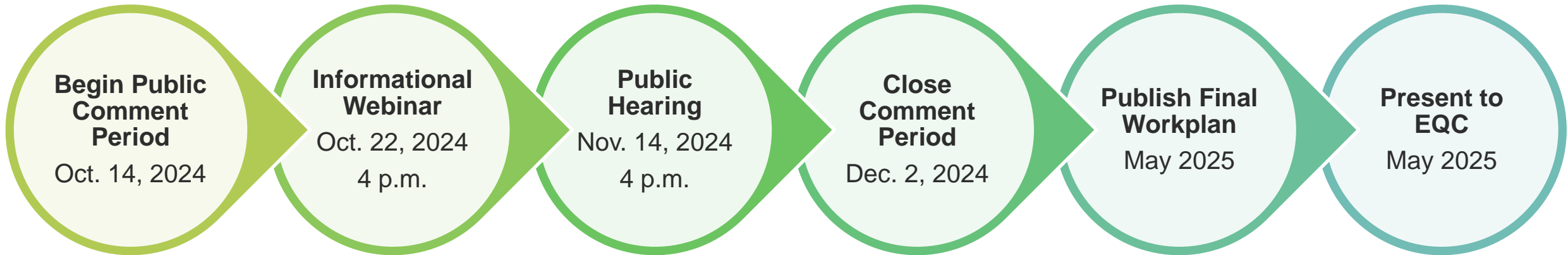
Foundation for Water Quality Programs



Why revise standards?



2024 Triennial Review Process



How does DEQ identify projects?

Internal

- Water Quality program staff
- Previous Triennial Reviews
- EQC directives

External

- Interested groups
- Legislative directives
- EPA
- Other agencies
- Tribal governments

How does DEQ prioritize projects?

| Value | Urgency | Effort | Risk | Environmental Justice |
|--|---|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental• Administrative | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work in progress• DEQ work impeded?• External drivers | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resources required• Guidance available?• Scope/complexity | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level of experience• Availability of data/information• Approvals needed | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disproportionate impacts an underrepresented groups of people• Yes, No, Potentially or Unknown |

New considerations for the 2024 Review

- Outstanding Resource Water nomination process
- EPA Tribal Reserved Rights rule

Response to Public Comment

- Comments from 63 people or organizations
- Made changes to project list or workplan resulting from 11 comments
- Modified overall priority of two existing projects
- Added three new projects to the priority list

Key issues from public comment

- Strong support for ORW rulemaking for Illinois River and Rough and Ready Creek
- Support for our narrative criteria implementation projects:
 - Excessive algal growth
 - Toxics
 - Sedimentation
- Support or concern how to address temperature criteria
- Request to evaluate bacteria standard and implementation for seafood processing effluent

High priority projects

In Progress

Toxics narrative guidance

**Excessive algal growth
narrative guidance**

Biocriteria procedures

**Revisions to Three Basin
Rule**

Retained from 2021 Triennial Review

**Sedimentation narrative
guidance**

**Antidegradation
guidance**

New high priority projects

**Designated use –
canals for water reuse**

**Outstanding Resource
Water Designation –
Illinois River**

**Outstanding Resource
Water Designation –
Rough and Ready Creek**

**Designated uses –
resident trout spawning
inventory**

**Cool Water Species –
Malheur River Basin**

Temperature

High Priority Projects: Narrative Implementation

Toxics narrative procedures

- Review and update internal procedures to implement the narrative toxics criterion for protection of aquatic life
- *In progress*

High Priority Projects: Narrative Implementation

Excess algal growth - narrative procedures

- Implementation of nuisance algal growth narrative criterion and chlorophyll-a action value to address algal growth impacts to fish and aquatic life
- *In progress*

High Priority Projects: Narrative Implementation

Biocriteria - Assessment procedures

- Assist a cross-program team in developing procedures to interpret and apply the narrative biocriteria
- Aquatic life protection value
- *In progress*

High Priority Projects: ORW

Outstanding Resource Waters (Rulemaking)

- Illinois River (Rogue Basin)
- Rough and Ready Creek (Rogue Basin)

High Priority Projects: Three Basin Rule

Three Basin Rule – Revisions (Rulemaking)

- In response to a rulemaking petition, EQC directed DEQ to conduct a rulemaking to revise the Three Basin Rule

High Priority Projects: Antidegradation

Antidegradation – Update Procedures

- Revise current antidegradation implementation procedures to incorporate issue-specific memos

High Priority Projects: Aquatic Life Uses

Designated Uses – Resident Trout Spawning Inventory

- Develop map or database of location of resident trout spawning habitat to apply dissolved oxygen criteria

High Priority Projects: Temperature

Temperature – Site-specific alternatives

- Review instances where temperatures cannot naturally attain biologically based numeric criteria and if necessary, establish site-specific alternatives that fully protect the designated use

Cool Water Species – Malheur River Basin

- Site-specific interpretation of cool water species narrative for Malheur River basin

Projects to be included as resources allow

Designated Use Revisions – Canals for Water Reuse

- Review designated uses for specific canals to determine barriers to reuse of treated wastewater

Sedimentation Narrative Procedures

- Procedures to apply the narrative criterion pertaining to suspended and bedded sediment

Schedule Overview

| Projects | 2025 | | 2026 | | | | 2027 | | | | 2028 | |
|--|------|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|------|----|
| | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 |
| Three Basin Rulemaking | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ORW Rulemakings | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Narrative Standards - Procedures | | | | | | | | | | | | → |
| Biocriteria - Assessment Procedures | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Malheur Basin Cool Water Species | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Resident Trout Spawning Inventory | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Temperature – site-specific alternatives | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Antidegradation - Procedures Update | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Bacteria – seafood effluent options | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Designated Uses - Water Re-Use | | | | | | | | | | | | → |

Questions?



North Fork Smith River, Oregon

Title VI and alternative formats

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