

Bureau of Water Quality Planning

Changes to the Nevada Administrative Code revising the Nevada water quality regulations for former “Class Waters” located in the Lower Humboldt River Basin NAC 445A.1432 – 1578

Fact Sheet for Petition 2015-07 October 2015

Introduction

Nevada state law (NRS 445A.520) requires the state to establish water quality standards at a level necessary to protect beneficial uses of the surface waters of the state. Additionally, Section 303 of the Clean Water Act and 40 Code of Federal Regulations (40CFR) Part 131 require that States and authorized tribes routinely review and, as appropriate, modify surface water quality standards that protect the designated uses of a water body and provide a basis for controlling discharges or releases of pollutants. Water quality standards are composed of three parts: designated beneficial uses, water quality criteria to protect the uses, and antidegradation considerations. This Fact Sheet summarizes the revisions proposed in Petition 2015-07 by the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP), Bureau of Water Quality Planning (BWQP) to the water quality regulations associated with waters located in the Lower Humboldt River Basin (NAC 445A.1432 – 1578).

Background

NDEP has completed a review and an evaluation of the water quality standards for waterbodies located in the Lower Humboldt River Basin (LHRB) in Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, and Pershing Counties. For this review, the LHRB includes the main stem of the Humboldt River and its tributaries downstream from Palisade, Nevada. Changes are proposed to the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) revising the Nevada water quality regulations for the former “Class Waters” located in the LHRB. Table 1 lists the specific waterbodies addressed in this petition and indicates whether the waterbody is classified as a Trout or Non-Trout water which influences the proposed numeric criteria for nitrite, total suspended solids, and turbidity.

In 2008, the State Environmental Commission adopted revisions to the NAC which eliminated the “Class Waters” structure and designated specific water quality standards for each waterbody. At that time, no changes were made to the beneficial uses and the only numeric criteria added were for *Escherichia coli* and Total Ammonia (as N).

NDEP is now proposing to update the beneficial uses and numeric criteria for the LHRB waterbodies listed in Table 1 for consistency with other similar types of waters throughout Nevada.

Table 1: Specific Waterbodies Addressed in Petition 2015-07

Water Body Name	NAC Reference	Former Class Designation ¹
Humboldt River at Rodgers Dam	445A.1452	C – Non-Trout
Humboldt River at the Humboldt Sink	445A.1454	D – Non-Trout
Little Humboldt River	445A.1468	C – Non-Trout
Little Humboldt River, North Fork at the national forest boundary	445A.1472	A – Trout
Little Humboldt River, North Fork at the South Fork of the Little Humboldt River	445A.1474	B – Non-Trout

¹ Former Class A Waters are shaded.

Water Body Name	NAC Reference	Former Class Designation ¹
Little Humboldt River, South Fork at the Elko-Humboldt county line	445A.1476	A – Trout
Little Humboldt River, South Fork at the North Fork of the Little Humboldt River	445A.1478	B – Non-Trout
Rock Creek at Squaw Valley Ranch	445A.1518	A – Trout
Rock Creek below Squaw Valley Ranch	445A.1522	C – Non-Trout
Willow Creek at Willow Creek Reservoir	445A.1524	A – Trout
Willow Creek Reservoir	445A.1526	B – Trout
Pole Creek	445A.1528	A – Trout
Water Canyon Creek	445A.1532	A – Trout
Martin Creek at the national forest boundary	445A.1534	A – Trout
Martin Creek below the national forest boundary	445A.1536	B – Trout
Dutch John Creek	445A.1538	A – Trout
Reese River at Indian Creek	445A.1556	A – Trout
Reese River at State Route 722	445A.1558	B – Trout
Reese River below State Route 722	445A.1562	C – Non-Trout
San Juan Creek	445A.1564	A – Trout
Big Creek at the forest service campground	445A.1566	A – Trout
Big Creek below the forest service campground	445A.1568	B – Trout
Mill Creek	445A.1572	A – Trout
Lewis Creek	445A.1574	A – Trout

Summary of Proposed Revisions

- ❖ Add Industrial Supply as a beneficial use to the waters that were formerly categorized as Class A.
- ❖ Add Trout as an Aquatic Life Species of Concern to the waters that were formerly categorized as Class A.
- ❖ Add numeric criteria to the LHRB waters for the following parameters:

Table 2: Proposed Revisions to Numeric Criteria

Parameter	Criterion	Applicability	Most Restrictive Beneficial Use
Nitrate (as N)	S.V. ≤ 10.0 mg/l	Trout and Non-Trout Waters	Municipal or domestic supply
Nitrite (as N)	S.V. ≤ 0.06 mg/l	Trout Waters	Aquatic Life
	S.V. ≤ 1.0 mg/l	Non-Trout Waters	
Total Suspended Solids	S.V. ≤ 25 mg/l	Trout Waters	Aquatic Life
	S.V. ≤ 80 mg/l	Non-Trout Waters	
Turbidity	S.V. ≤ 10 NTU	Trout Waters	Aquatic Life
	S.V. ≤ 50 NTU	Non-Trout Waters	
Color	S.V. ≤ 75 PCU	Trout and Non-Trout Waters	Municipal or domestic supply
Chloride	1-hour avg. ≤ 860 mg/l	Trout and Non-Trout Waters	Aquatic Life
	96-hour avg. ≤ 230 mg/l		
Sulfate	S.V. ≤ 250 mg/l	Trout and Non-Trout Waters	Aquatic Life
Alkalinity (as CaCO ₃)	S.V. ≥ 20 mg/l	Trout and Non-Trout Waters	Aquatic Life

The rationale document and draft petition are available online at <http://ndep.nv.gov/admin/public.htm> under Water Quality Planning.

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