

## **D. Water Quality Standards**

### **1. Introduction**

DEQ's Office of Water Quality Standards (WQS) is located at the agency's Central Office in Richmond. Water quality monitoring requirements that are needed for the development of water quality criteria and standards are carried out under the auspices of the central and regional components of the WQMA Program.

Virginia's strategy for water quality standards is set forth under the State Water Control Law and the Clean Water Act, which mandates that the states must review and update their state water quality standards at least once every three years. Although the agency continually reviews and adapts its WQS, this scheduled triennial review includes regulatory updates to the basic elements of the regulation - criteria, use designations and anti-degradation. The elements included in this review, as well as other required updates to the water quality standards, are also specified under the Clean Water Act §106 grant funding and reporting requirements. The next decade of 106-required updates will focus on nutrient standards, use designation revisions, and criteria updates as necessary.

### **2. Criteria - Nutrient Standards**

The most recent iteration of the [Nutrient Criteria Development Plan](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/Water/WaterQualityStandards/NutrientCriteria/VADEQ_Nutrient_Criteria_Development_2010_update.pdf) [http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/Water/WaterQualityStandards/NutrientCriteria/VADEQ\_Nutrient\_Criteria\_Development\_2010\_update.pdf] is expected to be updated in 2013. The rulemaking process for nutrient criteria and new use designations for the Chesapeake Bay was completed late in 2005. The development of nutrient standards for freshwaters has begun with the adoption of lakes nutrient criteria in 2007. Rivers and streams nutrient criteria are still under development. The monitoring strategies for these standards-related activities are included under the agency's ambient and Chesapeake Bay monitoring program activities.

### **3. Triennial Review**

Another expected focus for the water quality standards program will be the revisions associated with the triennial review of the water quality standards. The need for numerous updates has become apparent as a result of the current emphasis on the assessments and TMDL processes. The next Triennial Review is scheduled to begin in 2013. Once it has begun, DEQ activities related to the triennial review of Water Quality Standards will be summarized on the [DEQ Water Quality Standards Rulemaking WebPages](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityStandards/RulemakingInfo.aspx). [http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityStandards/RulemakingInfo.aspx]

### **4. Anti-Degradation - Exceptional (Tier III) Waters Designations**

DEQ activities related to the designation of Exceptional State Waters (Tier III) are summarized on the agency's [Exceptional State Waters WebPages](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityStandards/ExceptionalStateWatersTierIII.aspx). [http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityStandards/ExceptionalStateWatersTierIII.aspx] The summaries provided there include lists of the petitions received for designation, fact sheets describing the nominated waters, and descriptions of the regulatory actions being undertaken.

Additional information concerning DEQ's Water Quality Standards Program is available at the agency's [Water Quality Standards WebPages](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityStandards.aspx).  
[<http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs/WaterQualityStandards.aspx>]

Direct contact may be made with:

Alex Barron  
(804) 698-4119

or

David Whitehurst  
(804) 698-4121

[Alex.Barron@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:Alex.Barron@deq.virginia.gov)

[David.Whitehurst@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:David.Whitehurst@deq.virginia.gov)

Department of Environmental Quality  
629 E. Main Street Richmond, VA 23219

or

PO Box 1105  
Richmond, VA 23218