

The State of Wyoming
 Jim Geringer, Governor
 Department of Environmental Quality

Herschler Building 0 122 West 25th Street * Cheyenne, Wyoming 82002

ADMIN/OUTREACH	ABANDONED MINES	AIR QUALITY	INDUSTRIAL SITING	LAND QUALITY	SOLID & HAZ. WASTE	WATER QUALITY
307-777-7758	307-777-6145	307-777-7391	307-777-7369	307-777-7756	307-777-7752	307-777-7781
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June 17, 1999

Mr. Don Simpson
 Deputy State Director
 USDI Bureau of Land Management
 PO Box 1828
 Cheyenne, WY 82003-1828

Dear Don:

This summer, the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality - Water Quality Division (DEQ) is soliciting data and information for the year 2000 305(b) Water Quality Assessment Report [305(b) Report]. As you may know, states are required by the Clean Water Act to periodically conduct water quality assessments and compile existing water quality assessment information on the waters of the state (streams, lakes, and reservoirs). Each state's 305(b) Reports are then compiled and summarized by the EPA and reported to Congress. Historically, Wyoming's 305b Report was driven in large part by information suggesting water quality problems on specific waterbodies, rather than an overall assessment of the waters in Wyoming. This reporting led to 305(b) Reports which may have focused more on problems. In 1998, DEQ began reporting on a watershed basis to better track overall trends and water quality conditions. Currently, many areas of the state still have large data gaps and we are requesting water quality assessment information which exists for the waters of Wyoming. Our intent is to make the 305(b) Report a user friendly document that provides accurate and useable information to water quality professionals and resource managers, as well as the interested public,

It is important to distinguish between the 303(d) List of Waterbodies Requiring TMDLs [303(d) List] and the 305(b) Report. The 303(d) List identifies specific waters which have quantified data showing they do not meet all applicable water quality standards, or threaten to not meet standards, and require development of TMDLs or watershed improvement measures to ensure standards will be met. Wyoming's 303(d) List is divided into three tables: Waters which do not meet standards, Table A; Threatened waters which require review and possible modification of Waste Load Allocations for permitted point source discharges, Table B; and Waters which have other clearly identified water quality threats, Table C. Due to commitments we made in our TMDL workplan, and recent legislation, there are certain stringent data requirements to list waters on the 303(d) List.

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On the other hand, the 305(b) Report is a broad scale characterization of the water quality conditions in the state. Although it reports results of detailed watershed analyses, such as those used to generate the 303(d) List, it is also the reporting tool for less detailed analyses, such as professional judgement based on Proper Functioning Condition or other field observations. In many ways the 305(b) Report is a tracking system for existing and needed water quality data and information. It records where existing information shows no threats to water quality, where further data is needed to determine whether or not water quality problems exist, and where data clearly indicates an impairment problem.

To better incorporate the information, it is important that we have a reasonable understanding of the watersheds and the activities which are taking, or have taken place. Additionally, we want to acknowledge water quality improvement efforts in watersheds. Therefore, we think the most efficient way to transfer this information is to have our 305(b) Coordinator, Mark Conrad, personally visit each field office to talk directly with your field personnel and outline areas on a map where your personnel feel there are no significant water quality threats, and areas where water quality concerns exist. Mark recently visited the Rawlins District Office, and the process for that District took about five hours. He sat down with one or two people at a time to identify watersheds or stream reaches and take notes to document the following types of information:

- Areas with no apparent water quality problems and no apparent threats.
- Areas where roads, recreation, mineral development/exploration, or grazing (domestic and/or wild) impacts on water quality may be of concern.
- Areas where water quality concerns have been, or are scheduled to be, addressed via management changes, etc.
- Habitat improvement projects which may improve water quality. Water quality monitoring locations.

Rick Schuler suggested that these visits could be timed with staff meetings when your personnel be in the office to reduce interference with field work as much as possible. I realize that summers are an extremely busy time for your staff, but the first draft of the 305(b) report needs to be available to the public this fall. I ask for your cooperation in this matter so the field interviews can be completed before September.

Sincerely,

/s/ Gary Beach

Gary Beach
Administrator
Water Quality Division

GB/MAC/bb/91494.1tr
cc: Rick Schuler, BLM - Cheyenne
Mark Conrad
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