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Iowa Department of Natural Resources Revises Water Quality Standards

Revisions to Iowa's Water Quality Standards became effective March 22, 2006. With the new rule revisions the IDNR is taking the "Top-Down" approach to stream classifications. Revisions include:

1. Reclassification of all General Use Streams to Class B (WW-1) and elimination of exceptions to the design low flow requirement
2. Designation of Class A1 for all of Iowa's perennial rivers, streams and intermittent streams with perennial pools

What does this mean?

Reclassification of General Use Streams and elimination of the protected low flow means that aerated lagoon facilities with ammonia limits discharging into previously designated General Use Streams will most likely not be able to meet new ammonia effluent limits. Also, ammonia limits may be added to aerated lagoon facilities currently without such limits. Unless Use Attainability Studies by the IDNR result in a lower stream classification, these lagoon facilities will most likely require major upgrades or replacement with mechanical treatment processes at significant expense.

Reclassification to recreational Class A1 (primary contact recreational) means that disinfection is required.

The IDNR will be conducting Use Attainability Analyses (UAA's) on all of Iowa's streams to determine whether or not the Class B (WW-1) and Class A1 designations are appropriate. If the IDNR receives additional funding/staffing the UAA's may be complete by December 2007. If the IDNR does not receive funding, the UAA's may take 3-4 years to complete. The IDNR will not be renewing any NPDES permits for affected facilities until the UAA's are complete."

See the IDNR website www.iowadnr.com for additional details on the revised regulations.

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