

GUIDANCE FOR CONTRIBUTING WATER QUALITY DATA

Every two years, the WVDEP actively solicits water quality data from local, state, federal, public and private entities for evaluation. One of the primary reasons for the solicitation is federal Clean Water Act requirement to prepare a biennial report describing both a general assessment of state waters Section 305(b) and a list of state waters not meeting water quality standards Section 303(d). Compliance with the Clean Water Act requires DEP to evaluate all existing and readily available data.

The following guidance has been prepared to assist entities collecting and submitting data for consideration by WVDEP. The quality of data contributed varies, thus data can be used in various ways. Certain requirements, such as number of samples, analytical method, quality assurance/quality control, must be met for data to be used in 303(d) listing decisions for the Integrated Report. Data that do not meet these requirements, may still be useful for prioritizing future monitoring or characterizing pollutant sources in restoration plans.

COLLECTING DATA

Water Quality Standards

To be used in assessments, the monitored constituent must have a WV Water Quality Standard. When developing a monitoring plan or deciding which data to submit, check out the standards to make sure water is analyzed for the correct constituent (e.g. dissolved aluminum vs total aluminum; fecal coliform vs. *E coli*). The standards can be found at the following website. Once on the website select Title-Series 47-02 in the search engine.

<http://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/index.aspx>.

Designing a Monitoring Plan

The WVDEP Save Our Streams Program provides training and resources for designing monitoring plans, including training workshops, standard operating procedures, survey data sheets, quality assurance and control information; all of which can help ensure accurate and relevant water quality data is collected. For more information or to request assistance, visit:

<http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/getinvolved/sos/Pages/default.aspx>

Ample Dataset

The number of samples being submitted must be “ample” for assessment and include when and where the data were collected. The Integrated Report defines an ample data set as those with 20 or more distinct observations or samples in a five-year evaluation period. The Integrated Report provides additional information about datasets, assessment methodology, and how different water quality standards apply to designated uses. To see the most recent Integrated Report, visit: http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/watershed/IR/Pages/303d_305b.aspx

Certified Laboratory

For use in 303(d) listing decisions, water quality samples must be analyzed by a laboratory certified by the State of West Virginia to perform the analyses using approved analytical methods. For example, data submitted for dissolved aluminum and fecal coliform samples must have been analyzed by a laboratory certified for both dissolved aluminum and fecal coliform. Data from laboratories located outside of West Virginia which are subject to a certification program from their state may be deemed acceptable for 303(d)/305(b) purposes. A current list of certified laboratories and the parameters for which they are certified for can be found at:

<http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/Programs/lab/Pages/default.aspx>

Any data from samples not analyzed by a certified laboratory using approved methods may still be useful in prioritizing future monitoring by WVDEP.



SUBMITTING DATA

Electronic data submission is requested and preferred. Refer to the Checklist and descriptions below to make sure all necessary information is provided. A template Excel spreadsheet is available online, as an example and submission tool, but is **not** required.

Contact Information

All data submitted to DEP for evaluation must be accompanied by contact information for the person who can answer questions about data collection and analysis. Include name, email, and telephone number in submission correspondence.

Sample Information

The data package submitted must include certain information for all samples, including: sampler's name, sampler training (if any), date when sample was collected, location where sample was collected, parameter, analytical method, detection limits, sample preservative (if any), and laboratory name. Copies of the chain of custody may substitute for some of this information. If not supplied with the initial submittal, copies of the chain of custody may be requested as part of the evaluation process. If available, also submit data quality assurance plans.

Sample Location

Each site for which data is submitted must be identified by either latitude/longitude or UTM coordinates. These coordinates can be obtained from a GPS unit or topographic map. If collected by GPS unit, the coordinates need to be identified as NAD 27 or NAD 83. GPS coordinates should be checked to ensure accuracy. Coordinates in degrees/minutes/seconds should be converted to decimal degrees. The example Excel spreadsheet provides a tool for this conversion. In addition, descriptions of the sample locations are helpful for data interpretation. For example, descriptions may include distance to the mouth of a stream or confluence with a tributary. Ideally, data would include the official stream name and stream code, which can be obtained from the WVDEP TAGIS application:

<http://tagis.dep.wv.gov/streamflow/>

Checklist for Data Submission

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| ✓ Contact person: name, phone number, e-mail and organization. |
| ✓ Certified laboratory name |
| ✓ Sampler Name (sampler training, if any) |
| ✓ Date & Time of sampling |
| ✓ Sample location coordinates |
| ✓ Sample location description |
| ✓ Sample preservation, if required |
| ✓ Parameter (fecal, iron, etc.) |
| ✓ Analytical method |
| ✓ Detection limit |
| ✓ Copies of chain of custody (if requested) |
| ✓ Quality Assurance Plans |



Please direct questions and/or data submissions to:

Nick.S.Murray@wv.gov 304-925-0499 x. 43887

DWWM – Water Quality Standards and Assessment Section

Attn: Nick Murray

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Note: All information submitted for consideration will be kept on file as part of the official record for the Integrated Report and will be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.