

Guidelines for Submission of Water Quality Data for the West Virginia DEP Integrated Report

Introduction

Every two years, the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection actively solicits water quality data from various local, state, federal, public and private entities for evaluation. One of the primary reasons for the solicitation is the federal requirement to compile and publish a biennial report describing both a general assessment of state waters (305(b) report) and a list of state waters not meeting water quality standards (303(d) list). Compliance with both of these sections of the Clean Water Act requires DEP to evaluate all readily available data while developing these reports. Beginning in 2004, DEP combined these two reporting requirements into the “2004 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report.”

This document has been prepared to assist entities wanting to submit data for consideration by DEP. These guidelines set forth minimum requirements for data to be used in preparing the Integrated Report.” The quality of data submitted can vary across a broad scale and can be used in various ways based on how it is qualified. These guidelines contain requirements which must be met for the data to be used in the impaired streams listing process. If the data do not meet these minimum requirements, it may still be useful for targeting of future monitoring by DEP. For example, a single or limited number of samples which do not qualify for listing purposes may be used to prioritize waters for future sampling by DEP. In addition, data reported from samples analyzed with methods other than those approved by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or DEP may be used to target additional sampling with approved methods and required lower level detection limits.

The first step for any entity planning a sampling effort should be to obtain a thorough understanding of West Virginia’s water quality standards. The standards can be found at the following web address (select 47-02 under **Title Series** → **Select From The List**):

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

Additionally, the West Virginia Save Our Streams program has published “Guidelines for Watershed Groups Preparing River Monitoring Study Design Plans” which addresses many of the aspects to consider to ensure accurate water quality data is obtained. The document is located at:

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

Another resource for those wishing to submit data to DEP for listing consideration is Sections Four and Five of the “2010 Integrated Water Quality and Assessment Report” available on the DEP’s website:

http://www.dep.wv.gov/WWE/watershed/IR/Pages/303d_305b.aspx

These sections discuss what constitutes an ample dataset, the different types of designated uses for waters and how the different types of water quality standards are interpreted. All of this information helps provide insight into how data can be used by DEP in preparing the biennial Integrated Report. Finally, all data submitted for consideration must include the raw data with information such as date, time, location, etc. See information required below. Anyone with questions regarding these guidelines, including how to obtain copies, should contact Steve Young at stephen.a.young@wv.gov or call (304) 926-0499, Ext. 1042.

Contact Information

All data submitted to DEP for evaluation must be accompanied by contact information including organization represented, name, address and phone number. The contact information may be used to answer any questions that evaluators may have about the data. If the data is approved, the name of the party submitting the data will be identified in the Integrated Report.

Sample Information

The data package submitted must include certain information for all sample results. This information must include the sampler's name, along with date and location of sample. Copies of the chain of custody may substitute for this information if it contains all required information. If not supplied with the initial submittal, copies of the chain of custody may be requested as part of the evaluation process. In addition, the data package should include a description of the types of preservation used, if any, for the different types of samples.

Sample Location

Each sample site for which data is submitted must be identified by either latitude/longitude or UTM coordinates. Also, the coordinates need to be identified as NAD 27 or NAD 83. These coordinates can be obtained from a GPS unit or topographic map. GPS coordinates are preferred and they should be checked to ensure accuracy. In addition, verbal descriptions of the sample sites may be helpful for data interpretation. Some examples include Laurel Branch at mouth, Greenbrier Fork immediately above Laurel Branch and Laurel Branch 2.3 miles above mouth. For any questions regarding site description or GPS coordinates, please contact Chris Daugherty at chris.a.daugherty@wv.gov or call (304) 926-0499, Ext. 1097.

Additional Sample Information

In addition to the sampler's name, the data package should contain a brief description of any training that the sampler has taken, such as West Virginia Save Our Streams, etc. Other required information includes the date of sampling and a signed statement verifying that all water quality samples were analyzed by a laboratory certified by the state of West Virginia to perform the particular analysis using an approved method. 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. A current list of certified laboratories and the parameters for which they are certified for can be found as a PDF file or Word document at:

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

Questions concerning laboratory certification direct to Dan Arnold daniel.t.arnold@wv.gov or call (304) 926-0499, Ext. 1341.

Any data from samples not analyzed by a certified laboratory to appropriate detection limits using approved methods cannot be used in the 303(d) listing process. However, this data could be useful in prioritizing future monitoring by DEP.

Return of Information

All information submitted for consideration will be kept on file at DEP's Charleston headquarters. The information is kept as part of the official record for each Integrated Report and will be subject to Freedom of Information Act requests.

Checklist for Water Quality Data Submission Package

- Contact person, including name, address, phone number, e-mail and organization. _____
- Certified laboratory used for analysis _____
- Sampler identification (sample training, if any) _____
- Date of sampling _____
- Sample location including [Lat/Long or UTM coordinates - decimal degrees preferred including datum if projected (see example of conversion at bottom of page) or points on a topographic map]
- Sample preservation, if required _____
- Parameters sampled for, (fecal, aluminum, etc) _____
- Copies of chain of custody, if requested _____
- Analytical method used _____
- Detection limit _____

Format : latitude / longitude including identification as NAD 27
or NAD 83

Conversion : Degrees, minutes, seconds to decimal Degrees

Degrees + $\frac{(\text{Minutes} + \frac{\text{seconds}}{60})}{60}$ = Decimal degrees

Example: 35° 43' 24"

$35 + \frac{(43 + \frac{24}{60})}{60} = 35.7233$ Decimal degrees