

# Truckee River Water Quality Standards and TMDL section on TRIG Status update, collaboration: August 2013

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## Truckee River Third-Party Nutrient WQS and TMDL Review: Introduction

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The Cities of Reno and Sparks (Cities), Washoe County and the Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) are jointly leading a third-party effort to review and potentially revise the Truckee River Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorus (TP). The Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have agreed that a third-party review of the 1994 TMDL is appropriate to determine whether the assumptions underlying the 1994 TMDL still remain valid, and to identify new scientific and technical information and/or changes in conditions and river operations that may warrant a different approach to addressing nutrient issues in the watershed. Further, NDEP and EPA have agreed to consider any third-party proposed revisions to the nitrogen and phosphorus water quality standards in an effort to assure that the water quality standards are the most appropriate criteria and that any TMDL revision be based on best available water quality standards. The water quality standards review will be conducted prior to initiation of the TMDL review.

The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) represents the confluence where water quality science, regulatory implementation and oversight, and public interest converge in order to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of surface waters to support "the protection and propagation of fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water", as stated in the Clean Water Act of 1972 (as Amended 2002). The Clean Water Act is the primary federal law that governs and authorizes water quality control activities by EPA, the lead federal agency responsible for water quality management, and the states including Nevada and California.

Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act requires states to adopt water quality standards for all surface waters of the United States. Water quality standards consist of two elements: (1) designated beneficial uses of the water body in question (such as drinking, swimming, recreation, fisheries) and (2) water quality criteria that protect the designated uses. Water quality criteria are required to accurately reflect the latest scientific knowledge on the kind and extent of all effects on health and welfare that may be expected from the presence of pollutants in water. Where multiple uses exist, water quality standards must protect the most sensitive use. Section 303(d) lists the waterbodies and associated pollutants that exceed water quality criteria.

In Nevada, NDEP has developed this list, and Section 303(d) requires that the state develop a TMDL for each of the listed pollutants. The TMDL is the maximum amount of pollutant loading that the water body can receive and still be in compliance with water quality objectives. The TMDL is also a plan to reduce loading of a specific pollutant from various sources to achieve compliance with water quality objectives. The TMDL requires public meetings and input from all stakeholders, and must be based on credible science rather than competing ideologies. The TMDL must include an allocation of allowable loadings to point (such as wastewater treatment plants) and non-point (such as storm water) sources, with consideration of background or naturally occurring loadings and a margin of safety. The TMDL must also include an analysis that shows the linkage between loading reductions and the attainment of water quality objectives. The EPA must either approve a TMDL submitted by the state or disapprove the state's TMDL and issue its own. The goal of the TMDL program is the removal of the targeted pollutant from the 303(d) list and of the causes that led to placement of the pollutant on the list.

The power point attachments below must be unzipped before opening, be warned!

### TMDL Models

- Truckee River Water Quality Model Updates, July 2013
- TRHSPF Calibration Verification Report, 2008

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**TMDL Models**

- Truckee River Water Quality Model Updates, July 2013
- TRHSPF Calibration Verification Report, 2008
- WARMF Calibration Report 2007

**Focus Group Meeting 1**

- WQS Focus Group Meeting 1, Water Quality Model Background [11-02-2011]
- WQS Focus Group Meeting 1, NDEP Standards Background
- WQS Focus Group Meeting 1, Review Justification

**Focus Group Meeting 2**

- WQS Focus Group Meeting 2, Water Quality Model Updates [12-14-2011]
- WQS Focus Group Meeting 2, Model Application Process [12-14-2011]
- WQS Focus Group Meeting 2, Why Low Flow Important (NDEP) [12-14-2011]
- WQS Focus Group Meeting 2, Flow Modeling MBK [12-14-2011]
- WQS Focus Group Meeting 2, Select Flow Year [12-14-2011]
- TRHSPF Algorithms Memo (DRAFT) [12-14-2011]
- WQS Factsheet [12-14-2011]

**Focus Group Meeting 3**

- WQS Focus Group Meeting 3 [07-17-2013]

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**TMDL Resources**

- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) Final Report, February 1994
- Truckee River TMDL case study (historical document, 1994)
- Water Quality Modeling on Truckee River system: WARMF and TRHSPF

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