



---

## Fact Sheet

### Summary

EPA is sponsoring a national symposium on the topic of "Designating Attainable Uses for the Nation's Waters" on June 3-4, 2002, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel in Washington, DC. We invite interested citizens, government officials, and regulated parties to attend. We request that persons who want to speak at the symposium submit abstracts of presentations for consideration as case studies or new approaches addressing this topic.

Many interested parties have expressed to EPA the need for additional guidance on establishing the protection levels or "designated uses" of waterbodies (e.g., aquatic life, recreation, navigation) and the process to follow when making designated uses more or less protective. EPA believes it is important to resolve questions concerning use designations and is considering developing guidance addressing key questions. This symposium will help EPA hear diverse views on this subject.

### Background

The Clean Water Act (CWA) requires states to establish water quality standards that protect public health and enhance water quality. Water quality standards are to be established for waterbodies taking into consideration their use and value for public water supplies, propagation of fish and wildlife, recreational purposes, and agriculture, industrial, and other purposes, and also taking into consideration their use and value for navigation. In addition, the CWA establishes the national goal that wherever possible, water quality support healthy fish, shellfish, and wildlife and provide for recreation in and on the water.

EPA's water quality standards regulations at 40 CFR Part 131 include several key provisions concerning use designation of waterbodies. The regulations provide that a state must conduct a use attainability analysis (UAA) whenever:

- The state designates or has designated uses that do not include support of healthy fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water, or
- The state wishes to remove such designated uses, or to adopt subcategories of uses which require less stringent criteria.

EPA regulations define a UAA as a "structured scientific assessment of the factors affecting the attainment of the use which may include physical, chemical, biological, and economic factors as described in 40 CFR 131.10(g).

EPA's water quality standards regulations also require states to periodically review and modify their water quality standards, including those for waterbody segments that do not include support of healthy fish, shellfish, and wildlife and recreation in and on the water, to determine if any new information is available. If such information indicates that these uses are attainable, water quality standards must be revised accordingly. Analyses supporting revisions to water quality standards, including UAAs, must be made available to the public so that the public can understand why the changes are proposed.

### **About the Symposium:**

The symposium will help EPA hear diverse views on this subject and will include a series of short (15 minute) presentations, grouped by topic, by speakers selected from among those submitting abstracts in response to this announcement. Speaker applicants should send abstracts of presentations on case studies or new approaches addressing specific topics, including any of the following questions:

- What factors should be used to determine an existing use (e.g., water quality, actual use, or both)?
- What data/analyses should be used to determine an existing use?
- Are there situations where an existing use has been irrevocably lost? If so, how should the new existing use be determined? Are there practical limits (i.e., costs, technical feasibility, time) to maintaining an existing use?
- What are appropriate subcategories of recreational uses, and how much and what type of data would support their designation?
- How should other uses be considered when determining whether primary contact recreation is an appropriate use (e.g., navigation, agricultural canals and drainage ditches, drinking water supply)?
- What are appropriate subcategories of aquatic life uses, and how much and what type of data would support their designation?
- How should flow conditions affect the designation of uses? How should information about low flow or intermittent streams be considered? Conversely, how should high flows be considered in designating uses?
- Under what circumstances should a designated use be revised to reflect improved water quality?
- Are existing processes for involvement of stakeholders and citizens in use designation decisions adequate?
- What analyses could support application of the “human caused conditions that cannot be remedied...” and “...substantial and widespread social and economic impact” UAA factors (see 40 CFR 131.10(g)), especially in cases where nonpoint sources are the cause of impairment?
- What methods are appropriate for conducting socioeconomic assessments of designated use impacts (e.g., cost effectiveness, benefits of environmental protection, equity assessment), and how would they be applied to a UAA?
- How should EPA assess economic and social impacts associated with implicit constraints on local development or growth caps? What data should be required?

### **How to Get Additional Information**

Please visit <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/symposium.html> for the most current information about the symposium. If you want to be a speaker at the symposium, please fill out the online registration form, including the abstract submission fields, and submit a 300-500 word abstract to EPA no later than **April 19, 2002**. Abstracts must be single-spaced, no more than two 8.5 x 11" pages, and must be submitted electronically as a Microsoft Word, WordPerfect or ASCII file, avoiding the use of special characters and any form of encryption. E-mail electronic abstracts to [lalley.cara@epa.gov](mailto:lalley.cara@epa.gov). Please do not send supplemental materials with the abstract.

EPA will notify authors of acceptance of abstracts by April 29th. Authors may submit electronic files of presentation materials to [lalley.cara@epa.gov](mailto:lalley.cara@epa.gov) by May 22nd if they want materials to be made available as handouts at the symposium. Presentations shall not exceed 15 minutes, and speakers should be prepared to answer audience questions afterward. Speakers will be responsible for paying their own travel expenses.

If you do not have Internet access, or you need special accommodations at this meeting (for example, wheelchair access or sign language translators), please contact Cara Lalley at (202) 260-0314.