

PUBLIC NOTICE

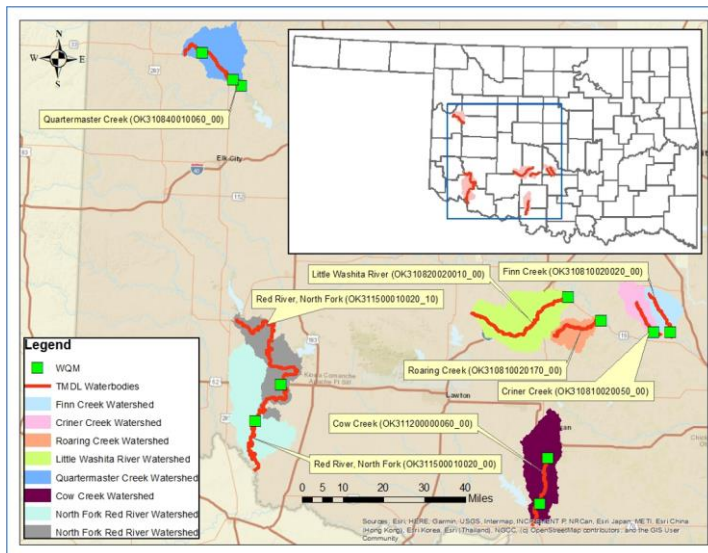
August 27, 2026

Availability of Draft Bacteria and Turbidity TMDLs for Oklahoma Streams in Basin 3 Oklahoma

Proposed Modification to Incorporate Basin 3 Oklahoma Bacteria and
Turbidity TMDLs into Oklahoma's Water Quality Management Plan

Request for Public Comments

Public Comment Period Ends on Monday, October 12, 2026



The [Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality \(DEQ\)](https://oklahoma.gov/deg) is seeking comments on a draft Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report entitled, "Bacterial and Turbidity TMDLs in Basin 3, Oklahoma". This report describes the reductions in *E. coli*, enterococci, and total suspended solids (TSS) needed to achieve compliance with water quality standards (WQS) for bacteria and turbidity and improve water quality in Basin 3, Oklahoma. This TMDL report is based on Oklahoma's 2022 Integrated Report (IR) and 303(d) list. DEQ is also proposing to incorporate these TMDLs into Oklahoma's Water Quality Management Plan (208 Plan). The full

TMDL report can be found on-line at: <https://oklahoma.gov/deg/divisions/water-quality/watershed-planning/tmdl.html>.

Beneficial Uses: The designated beneficial uses for Oklahoma streams in Basin 3 region:

- Aesthetics (AES)
- Agriculture (AG)
- Fish & Wildlife Propagation
 - Warm Water Aquatic Community (WWAC)
- Fish Consumption (FISH)
- Primary Body Contact Recreation (PBCR)
- Public & Private Water Supply (PPWS)
- Emergency Water Supply (EWS)

Table 1 is an assessment from Oklahoma's [2022 IR](#) on whether or not the waterbodies in the Study Area met their designated beneficial uses. The designated beneficial uses addressed in the Basin 3 Oklahoma TMDL Report are PBCR and WWAC.

Table 1: Assessed Beneficial Uses for Waterbodies in the Study Area

Waterbody ID	Waterbody Name	AES	AG	WWAC	FISH	PBCR	PPWS	EWS
OK310810020020_00	Finn Creek	F	F	F	X	N	I	
OK310810020050_00	Criner Creek	F	F	F	X	N	I	
OK310810020170_00	Roaring Creek	F	F	N	X	X	I	
OK310820020010_00	Little Washita River	F	N	N	X	F	I	
OK310840010060_00	Quartermaster Creek	F	N	N	X	F	I	
OK311200000060_00	Cow Creek	I	F	N	F	N		F
OK311500010020_00	Red River, North Fork	F	N	N	F	I	F	
OK311500010020_10	Red River, North Fork	F	N	N	F	N	I	
F – Fully supporting information		N – Not supporting		I – Insufficient		X – Not assessed		Source: DEQ 2022 Integrated Report

Impairments: Based on an assessment of water quality monitoring data for the 2022 IR, Oklahoma DEQ has determined that waterbodies in Table 1 are not supporting their designated uses for PBCR and/or Fish and Wildlife Propagation. Elevated levels of pathogen indicator bacteria in aquatic environments indicate that a waterbody is contaminated with human or animal feces and that a potential health risk exists for individuals exposed to the water. Elevated turbidity levels caused by excessive sediment loading and stream bank erosion impact aquatic biological communities.

- **Bacteria:** The PBCR beneficial use is assigned waterbodies in Oklahoma in which the potential exists for recreational activities that could result in immersion. Oklahoma's Water Quality Standards contain criteria for *E. coli* and enterococci. These pathogens are indicator organisms whose presence is indicative of fecal matter entering waterbodies from sources such as sewage discharges, leaking septic tanks, or runoff from animal feedlots.
- **Turbidity:** When more than 10% of turbidity samples in a lake are greater than the turbidity standard (50 NTU for WWAC) based on long-term record of most recent 5 years, the Fish and Wildlife Propagation beneficial use will be considered not attained. Turbidity is a measure of water clarity, so it cannot be expressed as a mass load. Total suspended solids (TSS) are therefore modeled and evaluated as a surrogate for turbidity using a site-specific relationship derived from TSS and turbidity measurements.

Watershed: The Basin 3 Study Area is located in the north-central part of Oklahoma. The waterbodies and their watersheds addressed in this report are scattered over Caddo, Comanche, Custer, Dewey, Garvin, Grady, Greer, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, McClain, Roger Mills, Stephens, and Tillman counties. The watersheds range in size from 42,432.4 acres (Finn Creek, OK310810020020_00) to 163,207.5 acres (North Fork Red River, OK311500010020_00).

Point Source Discharges:

- **OPDES regulated municipal wastewater treatment facilities:** There are three municipal facilities in the study area. Municipal WWTFs are designated with a Standard Industrial Code (SIC) number 4952. They discharge organic TSS with limits for CBOD₅ so they are not

considered a potential source of turbidity. Therefore, the Town of Cyril will not receive a TSS WLA, and Comanche WWT and the City of Altus will only receive a bacteria WLAs in this TMDL report. This can be found in Table 3-1 of the TMDL report.

- **OPDES regulated industrial wastewater treatment facilities:** There are four industrial facilities (three active and one inactive) considered for a TSS source in the study area, but two active facilities (Haliburton Energy and Dolese Bros.) in the Cow Creek (OK311200000060_00) watershed have been assigned WLA from previous TMDLs and Georgia-Pacific Gypsum LLC in Little Washita River (OK310820020010_00) did not receive a WLA due to no wastewater discharge.
- **OPDES regulated stormwater discharges:** DEQ regulates stormwater discharges from Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), industrial sites, and construction sites. However, DEQ's stormwater program does not include the discharges from Indian Country lands, discharges related to oil & gas extraction, or discharges associated with agricultural purposes. For details about DEQ's Stormwater Program, go to <https://oklahoma.gov/deq/permits/water-permits/stormwater-permitting.html>.
 - **MS4s:** There is only one Phase II MS4 in the TMDL study area [the city of Altus (OKR040043)]. The City of Altus's Phase II MS4 will have a MS4 WLA in North Fork Red River (OK311500010020_00) bacterial TMDL calculation.
 - **Multi-Sector General Permit (MSGP):** An NPDES permit authorization to discharge stormwater from an industrial activity must be obtained prior to the start of any operations. The owner/operator permit holder must also develop and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWP3) for the industrial facility that is available at the site. There are 19 MSGP facilities in the study area. This information is provided in Table 3-3 of the TMDL report.
 - **Construction Sites:** A [Construction General Permit \(OKR10\)](#) is required for any stormwater discharges associated with construction activities that result in land disturbance of equal to or greater than one (1) acre, or less than one (1) acre if they are part of a larger common plan of development or sale that totals at least one (1) acre. A [stormwater pollution prevention plan \(SWP3\)](#) must be developed and implemented according to the requirements of the OKR10 permit. There were 24 OKR10 permits for construction projects in the study area. This information is located in Table 3-2 of the TMDL report.
- **No-Discharge Facilities:** For the purposes of these TMDLs, it is assumed that no-discharge facilities (such as towns with **total retention lagoons**) do not contribute indicator bacterial or TSS loading. However, It is possible that the wastewater collection system associated with no-discharge facilities could be a source of pollutant loading to streams, or that discharges from the WWTP may occur during large rainfall events that exceed the storage capacity of the wastewater system. There are four no-discharge facilities in the Study Area.
- **Sanitary Sewer Overflows (SSO):** SSOs are a common result of the aging wastewater infrastructure around Oklahoma. Oklahoma has been ahead of other states and, in some cases EPA itself, in its handling of SSOs. Due to the widespread nature of the SSO problem, DEQ has focused its limited resources to first target SSOs that result in definitive environmental harm (such as fish kills) or lead to citizen complaints. All SSOs falling into these two categories are addressed through DEQ's formal enforcement process. While not all sewer overflows are reported, DEQ has some data. For example in the study area between 1993 and 2022, 151 SSO occurrences were reported with amounts ranging from a minimal quantity to eight million gallons. Details about these SSOs are summarized in Table 3-6 of the TMDL report.

- NPDES regulated **Animal Feeding Operations (AFOs)**: The [Agricultural Environmental Management Services \(AEMS\)](#) is a program within the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry (ODAFF). Through regulations established by the Oklahoma **Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Act**, **Swine Feeding Operation (SFO) Act**, and the **Registered Poultry Feeding Operation (PFO) Act**, AEMS helps develop, coordinate, and oversee environmental policies and programs aimed at protecting the Oklahoma environment from pollutants associated with agricultural animals and their waste. This is done through the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs). BMPs include dikes, berms, terraces, ditches or other similar structures used to isolate animal waste from outside surface drainage. ODAFF is the NPDES-permitting authority for CAFOs and SFOs in Oklahoma under the **Agriculture Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (AgPDES)**. PFOs are smaller animal feeding operations so they are not required to get NPDES permits. They are only required to register with ODAFF and follow PFO rules. There are two CAFOs located within the study area.

Nonpoint Sources Discharges:

Fecal coliform loads from the four major nonpoint source categories (commercially raised farm animals, pets, deer, and septic tanks). Loading estimates are provided in Section 3.3 of the TMDL report.

- **Wildlife** – Estimated numbers of wild deer range from 506 to 1,519 in the study watersheds.
- **Farm animals** – Estimated numbers of farm animals are summarized in Table 3-12 of the TMDL report. The magnitude of loading to the land surface from farm animals is the largest, but may not necessarily reflect the magnitude of bacterial loading to a stream.
- **Pets** – Estimated numbers of pets (cats and dogs) range from 684 to 5,597 in the study watersheds.
- **Failing Septic Systems** – Estimated numbers of failing septic systems range from 24 to 181 in the study watersheds.

TMDL Calculations:

The purpose of a TMDL is to identify sources of pollutants in a watershed and calculate the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards. The Basin 3 Oklahoma Study Area contains waterbodies that are in violation of Oklahoma WQS with respect to bacteria and/or turbidity. The TMDL calculates the reduction in bacteria and TSS that would be needed in order for these streams to be in compliance with Oklahoma WQS. This was accomplished using load duration curves. The calculations include present and future sources as well as a margin of safety. For more information on how the TMDLs were developed, see Sections 4 & 5 and Appendixes B, C & D of the TMDL report.

TMDL Results:

The TMDLs were calculated using the load duration curves in this report. Table 2 provides the amount that each pollutant will need to be reduced [Percent Reduction Goal (PRG)] in order for an impaired waterbody to meet water quality standards and attain its designated beneficial uses:

Table 2: PRG Needed for Waterbody to meet Water Quality Standards

WBID	Waterbody Name	These impairments must be reduced by the following amounts in order to meet water quality standards.		
		<i>E. coli</i>	Enterococci	Turbidity
OK310810020020_00	Finn Creek	16.6%		
OK310810020050_00	Criner Creek	44.1%		
OK310810020170_00	Roaring Creek			35.1%
OK310820020010_00	Little Washita River			27.9%
OK310840010060_00	Quartermaster Creek			64.6%
OK311200000060_00	Cow Creek	71.8%		
OK311500010020_00	Red River, North Fork		97.3%	49.4%
OK311500010020_10	Red River, North Fork	57.2%		

Providing comments

- DEQ invites your comments. The comment period will be open for 45 days. The TMDL report is a draft document and is subject to change based on comments received during the public participation process.
- You may also request a public meeting in writing. If there is a significant degree of interest, DEQ will schedule a public meeting.
- All official comments for the record must be submitted either in writing or by e-mail before the end of the comment period. DEQ will prepare a responsiveness summary addressing all comments received. After evaluating comments received and making any necessary changes, the TMDL report will be submitted to EPA for final approval. The final results of the TMDL will be incorporated into Oklahoma's Water Quality Management Plan.

Please submit your comments in writing to: Soojung Lim, Water Quality Division, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, P.O. Box 1677, Oklahoma City, OK 73101-1677; (405) 702-8195; E-mail: Water.Comments@deq.ok.gov

Comments must be received by 4:30 pm on Monday, October 12, 2026.

Obtaining copies: You may view the full TMDL Report by going to the DEQ website at: <https://oklahoma.gov/deq/divisions/water-quality/watershed-planning/tmdl.html> or by picking up copies at the DEQ main office, Water Quality Division, 707 North Robinson, Oklahoma City from 8:30 am – 4:00 pm. A document copying fee may apply.

You are receiving this notice because you are either on DEQ's list to receive all public notices, or you requested notices about your watershed. In addition to proposed TMDL reports, DEQ's Watershed Planning Section sends out public notices about proposed wasteload allocations (208s), proposed changes to the CPP or Integrated Report, 404 projects, and 401 Certification requests.

If you would like to receive any or all of these public notices via e-mail, please send your e-mail address to Water.Comments@deq.ok.gov. Also, please let us know if you want to receive notices for the entire State or just for your watershed.

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