

# 10. Water Quality Standards

## Water Quality Standards Database Reports

Water quality standards define the goals for a waterbody by designating its uses and defining criteria to protect those uses. They also establish provisions to protect water quality with anti-degradation policies and specific caveats on implementing standards such as low-flow variances or mixing zones.

The National Water Quality Standards Database (WQSDB) is an on-line database consisting of a compilation of "designated uses," used by each state to describe the functions each waterbody is intended to support—fishing, swimming, drinking water source, etc. Last updated in December 2007, the WQSDB includes state approved information on designated uses for 50 states, the District of Columbia, two territories, and one tribe. EPA does not plan to update this database in the future and is transitioning from the centralized WQSDB to a distributed set of state databases that will provide access to water quality standard information.

EPA no longer provides public access to the WQSDB, however you can access WQS reports with information about designated uses, waterbody names, state numeric water quality criteria, and EPA recommended numeric water quality criteria. Using these standard reports, WQS information from across the country can be compared.

- 10.1 Open the [Water Quality Standards Database](#).
- 10.2 Click [WQS Reports](#).
- 10.3 Scroll down the page and click the first link, [Designated Use and Class Data by State](#). Through this link, a listing of designated uses and classes for a state can be accessed.
- 10.4 Choose **Florida** from the dropdown list. Click **Run Report**.  
**How many different State DU Names exist in Florida?** \_\_\_\_\_
- 10.5 Use the **Back** button to return to the Reports page.
- 10.6 Click [Designated Use and Class Data by State Waterbody](#) (third link).
- 10.7 Choose **Florida** from the dropdown list. Click **Run Report**.
- 10.8 Scroll down to the Waterbody Names dropdown list. Select **Woods Creek** and click the **Run Report** button.

**What are the 3 state designated uses for the segments of this waterbody?**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

## Locating Waterbody Classifications in a State

EPA's State, Tribal & Territorial Standards pages are continually updated as water quality standards (WQSs) are approved by EPA. Searching for water quality standards is simple through the home page's dropdown list and clickable map of the United States and territories.

- 10.9 Open the [Water Quality Standards Home Page](#). State-specific waterbody classifications and definitions are found here.
- 10.10 On the map click **North Carolina**.
- 10.11 Select **Sections .0100-.0300, Classifications and Water Quality Standards Applicable to Surface Waters and Wetlands of North Carolina (PDF) (145 pages, 931 K)**.

This is known as the *Red Book* and it contains the Standards for North Carolina waters. North Carolina has different classifications for its waters. The letters **WS-I, C**, and so on, describe different uses supported by each classification that must be protected by the water quality standards code.

**How is WS-IV different from WS-I?**

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**What are two sensitive activities supported by Class C waters?**

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**What is the numeric criterion for Dissolved Oxygen in Class C waters?**

**Trout waters:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Non-Trout waters: Daily Average:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Non-Trout waters: Instantaneous Value:** \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the numeric criterion for Fecal Coliform?** \_\_\_\_\_

## Locating a Particular Waterbody of Interest and Its Classifications

- 10.12 Click the **Back** button to close out of the first PDF. Select [Section .0302-.0317, Designated Uses for Waters of the State by Major River Basin \(PDF\) \(291 pp, 742 K\)](#).
- 10.13 Click the binoculars tool in the Adobe Reader to search the document. In the search text box type in **Crowders Creek** and click **Search**.
- 10.14 Result listings can appear on different pages. Confirm that you are on PDF document page 113 of 291.

**What is Crowders Creek's classification?** \_\_\_\_\_

- 10.15 A listing of links to all available state, tribe and territory water quality Web sites can be found on EPA's [State, Tribal and Territorial Standards](#) page.