WHAT IS A TMDL?

Total Maximum Daily Load is a term used to describe the amount of a pollutant that a stream or lake can receive and still meet water quality standards. A TMDL study identifies sources of pollution and potential reductions needed to attain standards. Point sources (such as municipal or industrial discharges) and nonpoint sources (such as runoff from urban or agricultural lands, and natural background) are considered in calculating the TMDL. The study must also account for seasonal variation and include a margin of safety.

WHY DO WE PREPARE A TMDL?

The objective of the federal Clean Water Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters. To fulfill this objective, states assess their surface waters and identify which waters do not meet state surface water quality standards. A TMDL must be completed for each pollutant “impairing” (or not meeting surface water quality standards) these waterbodies.

TMDL STUDY AND IMPLEMENTATION

The TMDL study will examine the source and the extent of the water quality impairment, providing the appropriate information necessary for planning implementation actions designed to achieve surface water quality standards. Whereas the TMDL study establishes a pollution budget for an impaired surface water, the accompanying TMDL implementation plan provides an action plan outlining the affordable, efficient, and effective alternatives to restore water quality.

During both the TMDL study and implementation planning processes, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) involves stakeholders by coordinating public meetings and encouraging comments and input. Additionally, ADEQ will help stakeholders identify funding sources (such as Water Quality Improvement Grants) that can help pay for water quality improvements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

ADEQ encourages interest and involvement in the Queen Creek TMDL study. For more information on TMDL studies, please refer to the ADEQ Web site: www.azdeq.gov/environ/water/assessment/tmdl.html

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