INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE OF WATER QUALITY NOTICE OF PUBLIC COMMMENT PERIOD FOR THE 2026 LIST OF IMPAIRED WATERS AND CONSOLIDATED ASSESSMENT AND LISTING METHODOLOGY UNDER SECTION 303(D) OF THE CLEAN WATER ACT

PURPOSE OF NOTICE

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is soliciting public comment for the development of its draft 2026 303(d) List of Impaired Waters (hereafter the "303(d) List") and the Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM) used to develop it. Any person having water quality data to support or refute the listing of a specific waterbody or to add a waterbody to the list will be able to provide that information to IDEM during this public comment period. Comments and suggestions regarding the CALM will also be accepted during this period. IDEM will review and respond to all comments received. IDEM plans to submit its finalized 2026 303(d) List as part of its 2026 Integrated Report to U.S. EPA by April 1, 2026. All public comments received during the public comment period and IDEM's responses will be included in its April 1, 2026, submittal to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

This notice and all appendices including IDEM's CALM and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Priority Framework are provided on IDEM's Integrated Water Monitoring and Assessment Report webpage. The Integrated Report webpage also contains all supporting tables in a spreadsheet format to provide the public the ability to search for information more effectively regarding specific waters of interest. Copies of these tables may also be obtained by contacting Paul McMurray in the IDEM Office of Water Quality Watershed Assessment and Planning Branch, Office of Water Quality, (317) 308-3210 or (800) 451-6027 (in Indiana).

AUTHORITY: IC 13-18-2-3

BASIC PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The IDEM Office of Water Quality (OWQ) is preparing to update its 303(d) List, as required by Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Water Quality Planning and Management regulation contained in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) at 40 CFR Part 130. Under the CWA, each state is required to assemble all existing and readily available water quality-related data and information for use in assessing its waters for compliance with the state's water quality standards (WQS). States may adopt national water quality criteria and/or develop state-specific criteria to protect the uses described in their WQS. In Indiana, these uses include recreational uses, aquatic life use, and the use of some waters as a drinking water resource. States are required to prepare and make public a list of waters that do not meet the WQS, and the methodology used to evaluate the data and determine impairment status. The 303(d) List will identify the following:

- The reach(es) of the stream or river that is impaired or the lake that is impaired (lakes are evaluated as a single waterbody).
- The pollutant(s) that does not meet the WQS, thereby causing the impairment.
- A schedule for development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

A TMDL evaluation is a process that quantifies the amount of a specific pollutant that a waterbody can assimilate and still meet WQS. A description of what constitutes a pollutant is provided in Section 502(6) of the CWA and includes materials such as sewage, chemical wastes, biological materials, and wastes from industrial, municipal, and agricultural operations. The definition also encompasses drinking water contaminants that are regulated under Section 1412 of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). A TMDL is a written, quantitative assessment that accomplishes the following:

- Identifies how much of the pollutant is coming from point sources and nonpoint sources.
- Specifies the amount of pollutant reduction necessary from each source to meet the WQS set for that pollutant.
- Lays the groundwork for developing and implementing a plan to reduce the amount of the pollutant coming from each source.

As part of IDEM's TMDL process, the public is invited to participate in the development and implementation of the TMDL.

Status of U.S. EPA Approval of Indiana's 303(d) List of Impaired Waters

Indiana submitted its finalized 2024 303(d) list to U.S. EPA on April 1, 2024. On May 17, 2024, U.S EPA issued a partial approval of Indiana's 303(d) list. More information regarding U.S. EPA's partial approval can be found on IDEM's Integrated Report webpage.

Applicable Federal Law

IDEM develops its 303(d) List pursuant to Section 303(d) of the federal CWA. This notice serves as a solicitation for any additional water quality-related information that may be used to

further develop and refine the 2026 303(d) list and satisfies the federal Water Quality Planning and Management regulation in 40 CFR Part 130.

Request For Public Comments

At this time, IDEM solicits the following:

- Water quality data or water quality-related information to support or refute the listing of a specific waterbody or to add a waterbody to the 303(d) list.
- Comments and suggestions regarding the Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM).

Comments may be submitted in one of the following ways:

- By mail or common carrier to the following address:

  Subject Line: 2026 Draft 303(d) List of Impaired Waters
  Paul McMurray - Integrated Report Coordinator
  Watershed Assessment and Planning Branch
  Office of Water Quality
  Indiana Department of Environmental Management
  100 North Senate Avenue
  MC65-40-2 SHADELAND
  Indianapolis, IN 46204-2251

- By electronic mail to pmcmurra@idem.IN.gov. To confirm timely delivery of your comments, please request a document receipt when you send the electronic mail. PLEASE NOTE: Electronic mail comments will NOT be considered part of the official written comment period unless they are sent to the address indicated in this notice.
- Hand delivered to the receptionist on duty at the IDEM Shadeland office reception desk, Suite 100, Western Select Building, 2525 North Shadeland Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Each comment document must clearly specify in the correspondence subject line or heading “2026 Draft 303(d) List of Impaired Waters” so that IDEM can properly associate the comment with the action it is intended to address.

Comment Period Deadline

All comments must be postmarked, or time stamped not later than March 21, 2026. Hand-delivered comments must be delivered to the appropriate office by 4:45 p.m. on the above-listed deadline date.

Additional information regarding this notice may be obtained from Paul McMurray in the Watershed Assessment and Planning Branch, IDEM Office of Water Quality, (317) 308-3210 or (800) 451-6027 (in Indiana).

Development Of Indiana's 2026 303(d) List of Impaired Waters

For the development of the 2026 Draft 303(d) List, IDEM has followed, to the degree possible, the 305(b) and 303(d) reporting methods outlined in U.S. EPA Guidance for 2004 Assessment, Listing and Reporting Requirements Pursuant to Sections 303(d), 305(b) and 314 of the Clean Water Act (U.S. EPA, 2003) and the additional guidance provided in U.S. EPA memorandums containing information concerning CWA Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 integrated reporting and listing decisions for the 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2022, 2024, and 2026 cycles[1] (U.S. EPA, 2005, 2006, 2009, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2021, 2023, 2025).

IDEM uses U.S. EPA's Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Load Tracking and Implementation System (ATTAINS) to support the tracking and reporting of water quality assessment information to the public and U.S. EPA. IDEM's interpretation of the readily available and existing water quality data and listing decisions considers U.S. EPA's guidance and IDEM's current CALM.

This notice identifies all changes to the 303(d) list that have been made since U.S. EPA's May 17, 2024 partial approval of Indiana's 2024 303(d) list.

Indiana's Consolidated List

One aspect of U.S. EPA's guidance calls for a comprehensive listing of all monitored or assessed waterbodies in a state, based on the state's assessment and listing methodology. Each waterbody assessment unit (AU), which may consist of an entire waterbody or a segment of a larger waterbody, is to be placed in one or more of five categories depending on the degree to which it supports designated uses. U.S. EPA guidance encourages states to place a waterbody AU in additional categories as appropriate to more clearly illustrate where progress has been made with TMDL development and other restoration efforts. Therefore, waterbodies are assigned to one category for each of the following designated uses: aquatic life use, recreational use, fish consumption[2], and public water supply[3]. A detailed explanation of the five categories is provided in IDEM's CALM in Attachment 1. The following is a summary of the five categories:

Category 5 - The available data and/or information indicate the individual designated use is impaired or threatened, and a TMDL is required due to one or both of the following reasons:

A. The individual designated use is impaired or threatened by one or more pollutants and requires a TMDL.

B. The waterbody is impaired due to the presence of mercury and/or PCBs in the edible tissue of fish at concentrations exceeding Indiana's human health criteria for these contaminants.

[1] U.S. EPA did not issue Integrated Reporting guidance for the 2020 cycle.
[2] Fish consumption is not a designated use in Indiana's Water Quality Standards (WQS). IDEM assesses Indiana waters for fish consumption pursuant to current U.S. EPA policy and in keeping with CWA goals, which are reflected in Indiana's WQS (327 IAC 2-1-1.5 and 327 IAC 2-1.5-3).
[3] The designation for public water supply use is applicable only to waters that serve as a routine or emergency source of water for a public water system or surface waters that are determined to potentially impact groundwater sources.

Category 4 - The available data and/or information indicate that the individual designated use is impaired or threatened but a TMDL is not required due to one or more of the following reasons:

A. A TMDL for one or more pollutants has been completed and approved by U.S. EPA and is expected to result in attainment of all applicable WQS.

B. Other pollution control requirements are reasonably expected to result in the attainment of all WQS applicable to the pollutant(s) in a reasonable period of time.

C. The impairment is not caused by a pollutant and does not require a TMDL.

Category 3 - The available data or other information is insufficient to determine if the individual designated use is supported.

Category 2 - The available data or information, or both, indicate the individual designated use is supported.

Category 1 - The available data or information, or both, indicate that all designated uses are supported, and no use is threatened.

The 303(d) List consists of all impairments listed in Category 5. This category includes waters where the WQS is not attained because the waterbody AU is impaired or threatened by one or more pollutant(s) for each of which a TMDL is required. However, due to the complex nature of the contaminants involved, IDEM categorizes all fish tissue-related impairments into Category 5B (a state-defined subcategory similar to U.S EPA's 5R subcategory) deferring development of a conventional TMDL to allow other contaminant cleanup efforts to remedy such impairments.

U.S. EPA Rules for Delisting Impairments

U.S. EPA's most recent guidance (U.S. EPA, 2025) does not change existing rules for listing and delisting impairments from Category 5. The existing regulations still require states, at the request of the U.S. EPA's Regional Administrator, to demonstrate good cause for not including impairments on the 303(d) List that were included on previous 303(d) lists (pursuant to 40 CFR 130.7(b)(6)(iv)). IDEM will consider delisting an impairment only if one of the following is true:

- New data indicate that WQS are now being met for the specific cause of impairment to the AU under consideration.
- The assessment or listing methodology, or both, has changed, and the AU would not be considered impaired in accordance with the new methodology.
- An error is discovered in the sampling, testing, or reporting of data that led to an inappropriate listing.
- IDEM determines that another program other than the TMDL program is better suited to address the water quality problem.
- IDEM determines that the water quality problem is not caused by a pollutant for which a TMDL can be developed.
- A TMDL has been approved by U.S. EPA for the impairment.

IDEM's Methods for Prioritizing TMDL Development

The CWA does not clearly define the timeline for TMDL development. However, IDEM works with U.S. EPA Region 5 during every 303(d) listing cycle to determine IDEM's short term TMDL schedule, which identifies the TMDLs to be developed for the next cycle. For the 2026 cycle, IDEM's TMDL development has been focused on the following watersheds:

- Black Creek watershed – TMDL approved on February 8, 2024.
- Big Raccoon - Wabash River watershed – TMDL approved on August 9, 2024.
- Lake Manitou – TMDL approved on June 16, 2025.
- Indian Creek – White River watershed – TMDL on public notice.
- Indian Creek (Monroe County) watershed –TMDL in development.

During the 2028 cycle, IDEM's TMDL development will focus on the following watersheds:

- Honey Creek watershed (2026)
- Leatherwood Creek watershed (2027)

IDEM will submit its finalized list of TMDLs developed and approved for the 2026 cycle with the submittal of its 2026 Integrated Report.

IDEM's long term schedule for TMDL development was developed in accordance with the methods described in IDEM's TMDL Program Priority Framework (Attachment 2). This framework was updated in 2024 and describes IDEM's methods for prioritizing waters for TMDL planning and watershed restoration. It also includes the agency's long term TMDL development schedule, which identifies the watersheds in which TMDLs will be developed through the 2026 cycle. More detailed information on IDEM's 303(d) TMDL Program Priority Framework and the long-term schedule for TMDL development can be found in IDEM's CALM (Attachment 1).

As with IDEM's short-term schedule, the watersheds identified on IDEM's long-term schedule may change based on unanticipated circumstances. While the specific watersheds IDEM focuses on may change, IDEM will prioritize TMDL development using the methods described in its Program Priority Framework to help ensure consistency with U.S. EPA's long-term vision.

How Impairment Information Is Organized on Indiana's 303(d) List of Impaired Waters

IDEM maintains assessment information for all Indiana waters in ATTAINS for CWA 305(b) reporting and 303(d) listing purposes and to provide assessment information when requested by the public. Every lake, stream, or stream segment in ATTAINS is assigned a unique assessment unit identification code (AUID). Generally, each lake or reservoir is considered one AU and is assigned a single AUID. For flowing waters, the size of AUs vary based on several factors such that a single AUID may represent an entire stream or only one reach of it. IDEM's methods for defining representative AUs are discussed in the CALM.

On the 303(d) list, impairments are listed individually to achieve consistency with the way U.S. EPA tracks TMDL development and to facilitate more effective planning by IDEM. Therefore, a single AU may appear on the 303(d) list for one or more impairments.

How IDEM Developed the Draft 2026 303(D) List

Each 303(d) list builds upon the previous list. To develop the draft 2026 303(d) list in this notice, IDEM used as its basis 2024 303(d) list. The tables in this notice identify all impairments removed from and added to Category 5 as well as those added to Category 4A based on the approval of TMDLs developed for them. Tables summarizing all changes made to date for the 2026 cycle are also provided in this notice.

IDEM's Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology

The impairments on Indiana's draft 303(d) list were identified through IDEM's CWA Section 305(b) water quality assessment process. Water quality assessments are made for each designated use and waterbody type by comparing the available data with the applicable WQS following the methods described in IDEM's Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM), which is provided in Attachment 1. IDEM's CALM may be modified from cycle to cycle for one or more of the following reasons:

- New science or other information becomes available to support the development of new assessment methods or revisions to existing methods.
- Changes in Indiana's WQS, such as the adoption of new water quality criteria, make a change in the applicable assessment methodology necessary.
- IDEM identifies a change that will result in more accurate or representative water quality assessment and/or allows the use of additional existing and readily available data in its water quality assessment processes.

IDEM's Use of External Data

The majority of the data used in IDEM's CWA Section 305(b) water quality assessments come from IDEM's water monitoring programs. However, Section 303(d) of the CWA requires that states consider all readily available data sources in the preparation of their 303(d) lists. During the 2026 cycle, IDEM implemented the External Data Framework (EDF) to provide a systematic, transparent, and voluntary means for external organizations to share the water quality data they collect with IDEM for potential use in its CWA assessment and listing processes. Water quality data submitted by several external organizations was used in the development of the 2026 303(d) list, both to add and remove impairments. The public is invited to explore IDEM's EDF webpage to learn more about the EDF and how to submit water quality data for potential use in the development of IDEM's 303(d) list for future cycles.

The public is also encouraged to use this comment period as an opportunity to provide feedback to IDEM regarding the EDF. All comments received during the public comment period for the 2026 303(d) list will be reviewed and evaluated to identify potential improvements to the process or to suggest any changes in IDEM's policies regarding the use of external data in its decision-making processes.

Impairments Removed from Category 5A as a Result of TMDL Development

During the 2026 cycle, IDEM submitted three TMDL reports to U.S. EPA. The TMDL report for the Black Creek watershed was approved on February 8, 2024, resulting in IDEM moving thirty-three (33) impairments from Category 5 to Category 4A. The TMDL report for the Big Raccoon - Wabash River watershed was approved on August 9, 2024, resulting in IDEM moving

twenty-five (25) impairments from Category 5 to Category 4A. The TMDL report of Lake Manitou, IDEM's first TMDL on a lake or reservoir, was approved on June 16, 2025, resulting in IDEM moving one (1) impairment from Category 5 to Category 4A. An additional five (5) impairments were classified as 4A as a result of segment reindexing.

To facilitate public review of the resulting changes to the 303(d) list, all impairments moved into Category 4A for the 2026 cycle as of this notice are identified in Attachment 3 (provided in the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet). The TMDL reports for the Black Creek watershed, Big Raccoon - Wabash River watershed, and Lake Manitou and interactive story maps for 2028-cycle TMDLs currently under development can be found on the IDEM Total Maximum Daily Load Reports webpage.

Impairments Removed from Category 5 Based on New or Revised Assessments Indicating that Applicable WQS Are Being Met

This section includes impairments removed from Category 5 based on more recent data or other information that have become available since U.S. EPA approval of IDEM's 2024 303(d) list, some through new assessments and others through review of existing assessment information. IDEM has identified a total of three hundred twenty-five (325) previously identified impairments for which WQS are now being met (see Attachment 5 in the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet). These impairments have been removed from Category 5 for the 2026 cycle.

Impairments Removed from Category 5 Based on IDEM's Ongoing Review to Identify Errors and Omissions and to Ensure Consistency with Indiana's WQS

IDEM routinely reviews its 303(d) list for errors and omissions, and to ensure consistency with Indiana's WQS and the information IDEM maintains in ATTAINS. For the 2026 cycle, IDEM has identified one hundred ninety (190) impairments that should be removed from Category 5 (see Attachment 6 in the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet).

Impairments Added to Category 5 Based on New or Revised Assessments

This section includes impairments added to Category 5 based on more recent data or other information that have become available since IDEM's 2024 303(d) list was approved by U.S. EPA. For a lake or stream to be listed, IDEM must have sampling data representative of that waterbody, and the data collected must support 303(d) listing in accordance with IDEM's CALM. Based on assessments performed during the 2026 3030(d) List development cycle, IDEM has added a total of two hundred thirty-seven (237) impairments to Category 5 (see Attachment 7 in the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet).

Summary of Changes to Indiana's 303(d) List for the 2026 Cycle

Table 1 summarizes the proposed removals from and additions to Indiana's 303(d) list and the impact of these changes in terms of:

- The total number of impairments and the total number of individual waterbodies impaired. Note that these values differ because a single waterbody may be listed for one or more individual impairments.
- The total number of impairments and individual waterbodies impaired, broken out by waterbody type (streams versus lakes).

- The total number of stream miles and lake acres impaired.

Table 2 provides a comparison of the approved 2024 303(d) list and the draft 2026 303(d) list in terms of the types of changes made (removals and additions to Category 5).

Table 3 shows the total number of impairments identified in Categories 4 and 5 of this notice in terms of waterbody type and total size.

Table 4 provides a comparison of the types of impairments in Category 5 identified on the 2024 303(d) list with those identified on the draft 2026 303(d) list. This comparison also includes Category 4 impairments for both cycles to provide a comprehensive view of the parameters impairing Indiana waters.

A Comprehensive Picture of Impairment to Indiana Waters

The 303(d) list is a subset of Indiana's Consolidated List, which provides a comprehensive accounting of all assessment information IDEM has for Indiana waters to date including waters that have been found fully supporting of one or more designated uses (Categories 1 and 2), those that have yet to be assessed (Category 3), and waters that are impaired (Categories 4 and 5). The 303(d) list is comprised of Category 5 impairments only, which includes Category 5A (water-column impairments) and Category 5B (fish tissue impairments).

While this notice pertains specifically to changes made to Category 5 impairments, it is important to note that to gain a fully comprehensive view of all impaired waters in Indiana, one must also consider Category 4 waters, which are impaired but do not require a TMDL for one of the following reasons:

- Category 4A – A TMDL for one or more pollutants has been completed and approved by U.S. EPA and is expected to result in attainment of all applicable WQS.
- Category 4B – Other pollution control requirements are reasonably expected to result in the attainment of all WQS applicable to the pollutant or pollutants in a reasonable period of time.
- Category 4C – The impairment is not caused by a pollutant and, as such, does not require a TMDL.

Indiana's draft 2026 303(d) list includes all Category 5 impairments (see Attachment 8 of *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet) and all Category 4 waters (see Attachments 9a, 9b, and 9c in the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet). Together, these appendices provide the most comprehensive assessment of impairment of Indiana waters to date.

Additionally, several changes made during the course of assessment unit re-segmenting (or re-indexing) which resulted in the addition or removal of impaired parameters and changes in the total stream miles and lake acres assessed in the 2026 cycle.

- U.S. EPA provided IDEM with a list of 19 AUs which had been included in the 2024 Consolidated List but were not present in the GIS data submitted along with the listing decisions. Review of these AUs revealed that most had been created during earlier listing cycles as placeholders for waterbodies not included in the GIS hydrography map layers available at that time. Subsequent revisions to the GIS

hydrography map layers used by IDEM included these waterbodies but they were sometimes assigned new AUIDs and the earlier decisions were not transferred. For the 2026 cycle, these previous decisions were applied to the current AU and the older, un-indexed, AU was retired; these AUs are listed in Attachment 11 of the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet. These revisions also resulted in one new Category 4B assessment listed in Attachment 4 of the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet.

- Per the transfer of 165.81 acres of land from the Bureau of Indian Affairs to the trust of the Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians, Michigan and Indiana on November 18, 2016, AU INK0125_07 Dixon Ditch was segmented into two sections with the uppermost segment of 0.66 miles transferred into management of the Pokagon Band. The remaining 1.52 miles was renamed INK0125_09 Dixon Ditch. This AU change is listed in Attachment 12 of the *2026 NOC Listing Tables.xlsx* spreadsheet.

With the combined changes made for the 2026 cycle, Indiana's draft 2026 303(d) List identifies a total of 6,618 impairments that will require TMDLs. To date, IDEM has completed a total of 3,105 TMDLs, which have been approved by U.S. EPA for impairments to Indiana waters. Attachment 10 provides a TMDL key that can be used to associate the Category 4A impairments identified in Attachment 9a with their associated TMDLs, which are available on the IDEM Total Maximum Daily Load Reports webpage.

REFERENCES CITED

Indiana Administrative Code (IAC): Title 327 Water Pollution Control Division.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2003. Guidance for 2004 Assessment, Listing and Reporting Requirements Pursuant to Sections 303(d) and 305(b) of the Clean Water Act. July 21, 2003 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Regional Water Division Directors. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2005. Guidance for 2006 Assessment, Listing and Reporting Requirements Pursuant to Sections 303(d), 305(b) and 314 of the Clean Water Act. July 29, 2005 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Regional Water Division Directors. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2006. Information Concerning 2008 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. October 12, 2006 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Regional Water Division Directors and Directors in U.S. EPA's Region 1 Office of Environmental Measurement and Evaluation, Region 2 Division of Environmental Science and Assessment, Region 7 Environmental Sciences Division, and Region 10 Office of Environmental Assessment. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2009. Information Concerning 2010 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. May 5, 2009 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Regional Water Division Directors and Directors in U.S. EPA's Region 1 Office of Environmental Measurement and Evaluation, Region 2 Division of Environmental Science and Assessment, Region 7 Environmental Sciences Division, and Region 10 Office of Environmental Assessment. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2011. Information Concerning 2012 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. March 21, 2011 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Regional Water Division Directors and Directors in U.S. EPA's Region 1 Office of Environmental Measurement and Evaluation, Region 2 Division of Environmental Science and Assessment, Region 7 Environmental Sciences Division, and Region 10 Office of Environmental Assessment. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2013. Information Concerning 2014 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. September 3, 2013 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Regional Water Division Directors and U.S. EPA Region 1 Office of Environmental Measurement and Evaluation. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2015. Information Concerning 2016 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. August 13, 2015 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Regional Water Division Directors and U.S. EPA Region 1 Office of Environmental Measurement and Evaluation. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2017. Information Concerning 2018 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. December 22, 2017 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Water Division Directors, Regions 1-10 and U.S. EPA Environmental Services Division Directors. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2021. Information Concerning 2022 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. March 31, 2021 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Water Division Directors, Regions 1-10 and U.S. EPA Environmental Services Division Directors. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2023. Information Concerning 2024 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. March 29, 2023 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Water Division Directors, Regions 1-10 and U.S. EPA Environmental Services Division Directors. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. 2025. Information Concerning 2026 Clean Water Act Sections 303(d), 305(b), and 314 Integrated Reporting and Listing Decisions. January 14, 2025 Memorandum from U.S. EPA Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watershed to U.S. EPA Water Division Directors, Regions 1-10 and U.S. EPA Environmental Services Division Directors. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Table 1: Changes to the U.S. EPA approved 2024 303(d) List.

Nature of Change	Total Number of Impairments	Total Number of Individual Waterbodies[4]	Stream Impairments	Individual Streams[5]	Stream Miles	Lake Impairments	Individual Lakes[6]	Lake Acres[6]
Impairments Removed from Category 5								
Impairments moved from Category 5 to Category 4A based on TMDL development	64	41	62	39	253	2	2	1,426
Impairments removed from Category 5 based on new or revised assessments	325	271	325	271	1923	0	0	0
Impairments removed from Category 5 based on IDEM's ongoing review for errors and inconsistencies	190	166	184	161	934	6	5	4,692
Impairments Added to Category 5								
Impairments added to Category 5 based on new or revised assessments	237	176	231	170	1097	6	6	1,527

[4] The term "waterbodies" includes streams, stream reaches, and Great Lakes shoreline reaches, which are measured in miles and are included in the values shown for streams. Lakes are also considered waterbodies.
[5] The term "streams" refers to all streams, reaches of streams, and Great Lakes shoreline reaches defined by a unique Assessment Unit ID (AUID).
[6] For accurate year-to-year comparisons, this value does not include Lake Michigan, which is 154,176 acres in size.

Table 2: Changes to Indiana's 303(d) List of Impaired Waters in terms of the total number of impairments added or removed from the U.S. EPA approved 2024 303(d) list.

Total Number of Impairments in the U.S. EPA 2024 approved 303(d) List	**6,687**
Impairments moved from Category 5 to Category 4A based on TMDL development	64
Impairments removed from Category 5 based on new or revised assessments	325
Impairments removed from Category 5 based on IDEM's ongoing review for errors and inconsistencies	190
Delistings Total	**579**
Impairments added to Category 5 based on new or revised assessments	237
Additions Total	**237**
Total Number of Impairments in the Indiana Draft 2026 303(d) List	6,618

Table 3: Total number of impairments identified in Categories 4 and 5 of this notice.

303(d) List	Total Number of Impairments	Total Number of Individual Waterbodies[7]	Stream Impairments	Individual Streams[8]	Stream Miles	Lake Impairments	Individual Lakes[9]	Lake Acres[9]
Category 5 (303(d) Listed Waters)	6,618	4,374	6,444	4,200	20,490	174	137	55,411
Category 4 (Impairments for which a TMDL is not required)	3,189	2,756	3,185	2,753	13,837	4	3	2,982

[7] The term “waterbodies” includes streams, stream reaches, and Great Lakes shoreline reaches, which are measured in miles and are included in the values shown for streams. Lakes are also considered waterbodies.
[8] The term “streams” refers to all streams, reaches of streams, and Great Lakes shoreline reaches defined by a unique Assessment Unit ID (AUID).
[9] For accurate year-to-year comparisons, this value does not include Lake Michigan, which is 154,176 acres in size.

Table 4: Comparison of impairments in Category 5 identified in the U.S. EPA approved 2024 303(d) list with those identified in the draft 2026 303(d) list. This comparison includes Category 4 impairments for both cycles to provide a comprehensive view of the parameter impairing Indiana waters.

Cause of Impairment	Category 5 Impairments (303d Listed)		Category 4 Impairments (TMDL Not Required)	
	2024 Category 5	2026 Category 5	2024 Category 4	2026 Category 4
E. coli	2,266	2,276	2,622	2,641
Biological Integrity	1,545	1,555	223	239
PCBs (Fish Tissue)	1,265	1,264	0	0
Dissolved Oxygen	526	541	75	74
Nutrients	422	421	174	176
Total Mercury (Fish Tissue)	141	141	0	0
Dioxin (Water)	69	69	0	0
PCBs (Water)	69	69	0	0
Total Mercury (Water)	47	42	0	0
Phosphorus	50	49	0	1
Lead	3	40	0	0
pH	60	38	7	7
Chloride	46	38	3	3
Ammonia	22	19	5	4
Sulfate	13	13	0	0
Algae	8	8	0	0
Taste and Odor	5	5	0	0
Oil and Grease	5	5	0	0
Zinc (Dissolved)	4	4	0	0
Free Cyanide	3	3	0	0
Pesticides	3	3	0	0
Cadmium (Dissolved)	2	2	0	0

Cause of Impairment	Category 5 Impairments (303d Listed)		Category 4 Impairments (TMDL Not Required)	
	2024 Category 5	2026 Category 5	2024 Category 4	2026 Category 4
Zinc	2	2	0	0
Cadmium	1	1	0	0
Sedimentation/Siltation	1	1	5	5
Copper (Dissolved)	1	1	0	0
Copper	0	1	0	0
Nickel (Dissolved)	1	1	0	0
Nickel	1	1	0	0
Fluoride	0	1	0	0
Nitrogen (Nitrate + Nitrite)	0	1	0	0
Nitrite	0	1	0	0
Iron	105	0	0	0
Habitat Alteration	0	0	9	9
Temperature	0	0	6	6
Total	6,687	6,616	3,129	3,165

Attachment 1: Draft 2026 Consolidated Assessment and Listing Methodology (CALM) – (*Attached as a separate document to the 2026 303(d) List Notice of Comment submission*)

Attachment 2: Indiana's TMDL Program Priority Framework 2.0 (2025).

TMDL Program Priority Framework 2.0:

A Process for Implementing the National CWA 303(d) Long-Term Vision in Indiana

Watershed Planning and Restoration Section

Watershed Assessment and Planning Branch

Office of Water Quality

Indiana Department of Environmental Management

February 20, 2025

Background

Since the first cycle of the *Vision for the Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Program* wrapped up in 2022, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) has worked with State program managers to evaluate the Vision. In Section 303(d) of the CWA, States are required to develop a list of impaired waters that do not meet State water quality standards and establish priority rankings for waters on the list to develop Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). The purpose of this Vision is to assist with focusing State efforts to build the effectiveness of the program in the future. Currently there are five goals that form the basis of the national long-term Vision:

Planning and Prioritization - States, territories, and tribes develop an overall strategy for implementation of Vision Goals, prioritize waters or watersheds for TMDL and other plan development (restoration and/or protection), and report on the progress towards development of plans for important waters.

Restoration – States, territories, and tribes design TMDLs and other restoration plans to meet and maintain water quality standards, help lead meaningful progress, and fix impaired waters.

Protection - In addition to recognizing the protection benefits that TMDLs and other restoration plans can provide, states, territories, and tribes may develop protection plans to prevent impairments and improve water quality, as part of an overall watershed approach.

Data and Analysis – The CWA Section 303(d) program coordinates with other government and non-governmental groups to lead data production and sharing and analyzes data and information necessary to fulfill its multiple tasks.

Partnerships – The CWA Section 303(d) program meaningfully communicates and collaborates with other government programs and non-governmental groups to restore and protect water quality effectively for the long term.

Indiana's Current Approach

The CWA Section 303(d) Program in Indiana is led by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) Watershed Assessment and Planning Branch (WAPB). As required by the CWA, the WAPB monitors the current water quality status of Indiana waters, using a nine-year rotating basin approach. Water quality data collected are assessed using water quality criteria in the State's water quality standards and waterbodies are placed into one or more categories of the state's Consolidated List, available every two years in Indiana's Integrated Report.

While only a portion of the 63,000 miles of streams and rivers in Indiana have been monitored to date (leaving approximately 19,000 miles unassessed due to lack of data), approximately 21,000 miles of streams are listed as impaired under Category 5. Since the beginning of the TMDL program in Indiana, 58 TMDL documents have been developed resulting in 1,829 individual TMDLs moving waterbodies from the 303(d) List of Impaired Waters Category 5 into Category 4a. Prior to the commencement of the Vision, IDEM's WAPB worked with U.S. EPA Region 5 every cycle to determine the number of TMDLs to be developed. With the development of a national focus on showing results of water quality improvement, including several U.S. EPA focused success measures, Indiana has been moving toward a more general approach of TMDL development. In 2005, the TMDL and Nonpoint Source Program (NPS) were combined into the same group to gain efficiencies and better include the work of the two programs; with the thought that better outreach to watershed groups would lead to success of the of the TMDL.

Since the first project using this approach in 2013, the Assessment, TMDL, and Nonpoint Source staff at IDEM have worked together to provide watershed monitoring at 290 sites; produce 574 TMDLs in 86 HUC-12 watersheds; and provided nearly $7 million in funding to thirteen watershed groups to complete watershed planning and put efforts on the ground to implement those TMDLs. The environmental results of some projects are still being seen as funding has not yet been put on the ground for the latest funded projects. As we move into this next Vision cycle, IDEM sees continuing to use this model of monitoring, producing the TMDL, and funding implementation to successfully lower nonpoint source pollution in Indiana.

Moving forward with Vision 2.0

As the first cycle of the Vision was ending, Indiana discussed the prioritization process, what worked well, and what could be improved. Work on priorities for Vision 2.0 began in late 2020 with state data being analyzed for selecting watersheds for TMDLs.

Indiana's TMDL Program Prioritization

Priority Watershed Selection Criteria

The focus of this process document is defining the method used to choose which waters will be the focus of TMDL planning and watershed restoration. The process for determining the TMDL priority

watersheds will meet the following criteria (Figure 1). The first four parts are required pieces, while the remaining are additional areas when choosing between watersheds identified by working through the first four.

(1) First, the prioritization will begin by identifying those watersheds with impairments and the severity of those impairments based upon Indiana's water quality standards and 303(d) list, since the CWA mandates that TMDLs be developed for impaired waterways. As the monitoring and assessment process continues to find new impairments, the priority list will be updated from the 303(d) impaired waters list.

(2) The second part ranks watersheds based on their current ability to meet Indiana's aquatic life use. Waters that have poor biological communities but show an ability for improvement by means of a "good" habitat score (QHEI) will be considered first for TMDL development. Indiana has a highly changed landscape, and where current law and codes prohibit physical stream restoration, NPS improvements will most likely show biological community changes where good habitat already exists.

(3) The third part will select those watersheds where neither a TMDL, nor a watershed planning project has been completed. This piece lowers times where work is already progressing to improve water quality.

(4) The fourth part for TMDL selection is the reasonable expectation that a group to lead planning efforts exists in the watershed. Part of the TMDL process requires the State to provide "reasonable assurance" that the load reduction recommendations will be met. The presence of a local group (e.g. watershed group) wanting to implement a TMDL will allow the reasonable assurance of NPS reductions.

Additional Parts Considered:

- Identify those surface waters that provide a source of water for public drinking water use. People rely on clean water for drinking and business uses for everyday life.

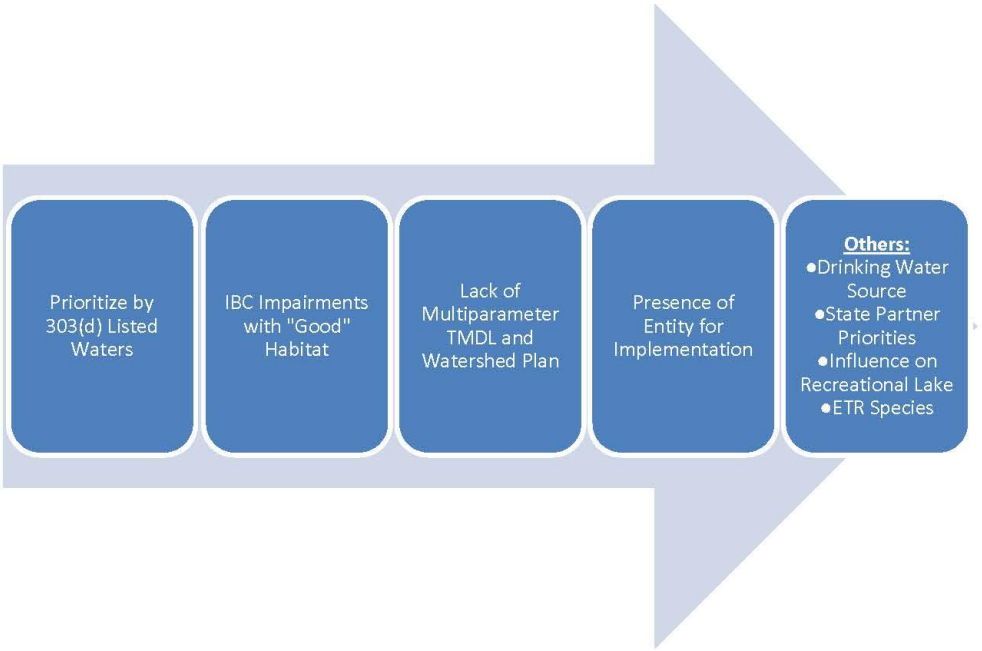
- Identify waters that are upstream of public-access lakes used for activity. Harmful algal blooms have been on the rise recently in Indiana lakes and reservoirs, threatening the use of these waterbodies for primary contact activities.

- Identify waters that are home to endangered, threatened or rare species. Water quality pollution and loss of habitat have lowered the number of some species to poor numbers; restoration and protection of the remaining groups should be important.

- TMDL development is based on goals specific to the State of Indiana. This step is based on conversations about overlapping priorities with agency partners such as the Indiana

Conservation Partnership (ICP)[1], as well as consideration of time sensitive or current relevant high-profile issues (e.g. Western Lake Erie Basin eutrophication).

Figure 1 Priority watershed selection process



[1] The ICP is comprised of eight Indiana agencies and organizations who share a common goal of promoting conservation. Members include the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Indiana Department of Environmental Management, Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Indiana State Department of Agriculture, Purdue Cooperative Extension Service, Indiana State Soil Conservation Board, USDA Farm Service Agency and the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Priority List

The key to IDEM's current TMDL strategy is the presence of a local group ready, willing, and able to lead the TMDL. Due to the nature of such groups, the availability of a strong group of people to lead a watershed planning efforts after completion of a TMDL is often unknown on a long-term basis. Therefore, though IDEM's process for choosing TMDL watersheds remains consistent, its list of priority watersheds is always changing. IDEM also finds itself with resources that limit its TMDL development commitment to providing TMDLs for one watershed project per fiscal year, typically at the 10-digit scale. These TMDLs will be limited to streams and rivers with poor biotic communities (IBC) and *E.coli* impairments caused by one or more of the following conditions:

- Dissolved oxygen
- Algae
- Total Suspended Solids
- Phosphorus

TMDLs for nutrients and dissolved oxygen impairments may be considered for development based on agency resources and suitable pollutant connections identified. However, these impairments should not be considered commitments before development at this time.

IDEM has agreed with U.S. EPA to make progress towards development three TMDLs that are already in progress using the Vision prioritization method, each focused on 10-digit watershed scales. These three TMDLs are high priority for completion in the short term, as watershed groups are set to develop plans and lead efforts in the area. These three TMDLs and their completion years are as follows:

- Indian Creek-White River (FFY2026)
- Indian Creek (Monroe County) (FFY2027)
- Honey Creek (FFY2028)

In 2020, IDEM received support to develop technical guidance for applying lake modeling efforts in Indiana lakes and reservoirs. The intent of the project was to begin exploring the program ability to add lake TMDL development into the program. From this effort, Lake Manitou was identified as an example project for TMDL development. Due to this being a program development project, IDEM is not proposing to set specific time commitments on this project. However, this project is anticipated to be completed during FFY2025.

- Lake Manitou (FFY2025)

The 10-digit watersheds listed in Appendix A may meet IDEM's criteria for TMDL development during this Vision cycle. Each watershed has been picked using the four priority watershed selection parts. They have been further chosen using the additional watershed selection conditions, categorizing them as either high (green), medium (coral), or low (blue). IDEM will select one 10-digit watershed per year for TMDL development after 2026 and through 2032, as agreed upon with U.S. EPA.

APPENDIX A - Potential IDEM Priority Watershed Selections

HUC_10	Watershed Name	County	TMDL	WMP	Lake Influence	Drinking Water	ETR	TMDL Priority	Partnership Notes
512020810	Leatherwood Creek-East Fork White River	Lawrence	No	No	No	Yes	Y (fish)	High	Lawrence County SWCD has strong interest. Also interested in Guthrie Creek, but more interested in
512011107	Honey Creek	Vigo	No	No	Yes	No	No	High	
512020702	Graham Creek	Jennings/Ripley	No	No	Yes	No	Y (mussels)	High	Ripley Co. SWCD/HHH has strong interest; there is possible interest from Jennings Co. SWCD.
512010607	Mill Creek	Fulton/Pulaski	No	No	No	No	Y (fish)	High	Fulton County expressed strong interest in doing work in the Mill Creek watershed through this process. They said that it would be a 1-person operation and would need to work with a contractor to do a WMP.
512010606	Bruce Lake Outlet-Tippecanoe River	Pulaski	No	No	Yes	Yes	Y (fish, mussels)	High	Bruce Lake and Mill Creek said that they may have future interest.
512020606	Hough Creek-East Fork White River	Jackson	No	No	No	No	Y (fish, mussels)	High	Interest from Jackson County SWCD but would have to discuss with Board before committing.
514010408	Whiskey Run-Blue River	Washington	No	No	Yes	No	No	High	Strong interest from Washington County SWCD.
512010807	East Fork Coal Creek	Fountain	No	No	Yes	No	Y (mussels)	Medium	
512010809	Coal Creek	Fountain	No	No	No	No	Y (mussels)	Medium	
514010412	Oil Creek	Perry	No	No	Yes	No	Y (fish)	Medium	
512011006	Sugar Creek	Montgomery	No	No	Yes	No	Y (fish)	Medium	Montgomery County, who just completed a WMP project for Upper Sugar Creek, expressed that lower Sugar isn't really their focus for the next few years since they are hoping to start implementation in Upper Sugar now. They said they could likely do work there in 5-10 years and that they've had multiple requests from partners to do work in the lower Sugar. They are a very active/capable group.
514010411	Little Blue River	Harrison	No	No	Yes	No	Y (mussels)	Medium	
512010403	Sugar Creek-Eel River	Whitley	No	No	Yes	No	No	Medium	
512020802	Guthrie Creek	Lawrence	No	No	No	No	Y (mussels)	Medium	Some interest from Lawrence County SWCD; there is interest from Jackson County SWCD but would have to discuss with Board before committing.
512010401	Blue River	Whitley	No	No	Yes	No	Y (mussels)	Medium	
512020703	Otter Creek	Jenning/Ripley	No	No	Yes	No	No	Medium	Ripley Co. SWCD/HHH possibly interested (would be in partnership with Jennings Co. SWCD); Jennings Co. possibly interested.
514010409	Blue River	Harrison	No	No	Yes	No	Y (mussels)	Medium	
512010407	Eel River	Cass	No	No	Yes	No	No	Medium	
514010402	Buck Creek	Harrion	No	No	No	No	Y (mussels)	Low	
514010414	Yellowbank Creek-Ohio River	Perry	No	No	Yes	No	No	Low	
514020101	Deer Creek	Perry	No	No	No	No	No	Low	