New Mexico Environment Department

Total Maximum Daily Loads for Bluewater Lake

What is a TMDL?

A Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards.

A TMDL is a planning document that establishes specific goals to meet water quality standards. It includes current pollution loadings, reduction estimates for pollutants, information on probable sources of pollution, and suggestions to restore or protect the health of the waterbody.

The New Mexico Environment Department-Surface Water Quality Bureau (NMED-SWQB) conducted water quality monitoring at Bluewater Lake in 2011 as part of a regular scheduled water quality survey (summary report at www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/water-quality-monitoring/). Additional data were collected in 2014. Bluewater Lake was determined to be impaired due to excess nutrient levels. Total nitrogen levels were found to be 53.3% above applicable water quality thresholds, while total phosphorous levels were found to be 116.6% above applicable water quality thresholds

A 30-day comment period for the draft TMDL document opens on February 18, 2021 and closes on March 22, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. MST. A virtual public meeting will be held via WebEx remote meeting software on Thursday, February 25, 2021 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. All public comments submitted in writing to SWQB staff will be responded to and included as an additional appendix in the Final Draft TMDLs that will be submitted to the Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) for their approval at their next available meeting. Once WQCC approval is received, the TMDLs will be submitted to EPA Region 6 for final approval.

TMDL Next Steps

Stakeholder public outreach and involvement in the implementation of these TMDLs will be ongoing. A Watershed-based Plan (WBP) is a written plan intended to provide a long-range vision for various activities and management of resources in a watershed. It includes opportunities for private landowners and public agencies in reducing and preventing nonpoint source impacts to water quality. This long-range strategy will become instrumental in coordinating efforts to achieve water quality standards in the watershed. The WBP is essentially the Implementation Plan, or Phase Two of the TMDL process. The completion of the TMDLs and WBP leads directly to the development of on-the-ground projects to address surface water impairments in the watershed. SWQB can potentially provide Clean Water Act §319(h) or §604(b) funding to assist in the development of WBPs and on-the-ground projects.

For more information on the New Mexico TMDL program, visit:
https://www.env.nm.gov/surface-water-quality/tmdl/

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