



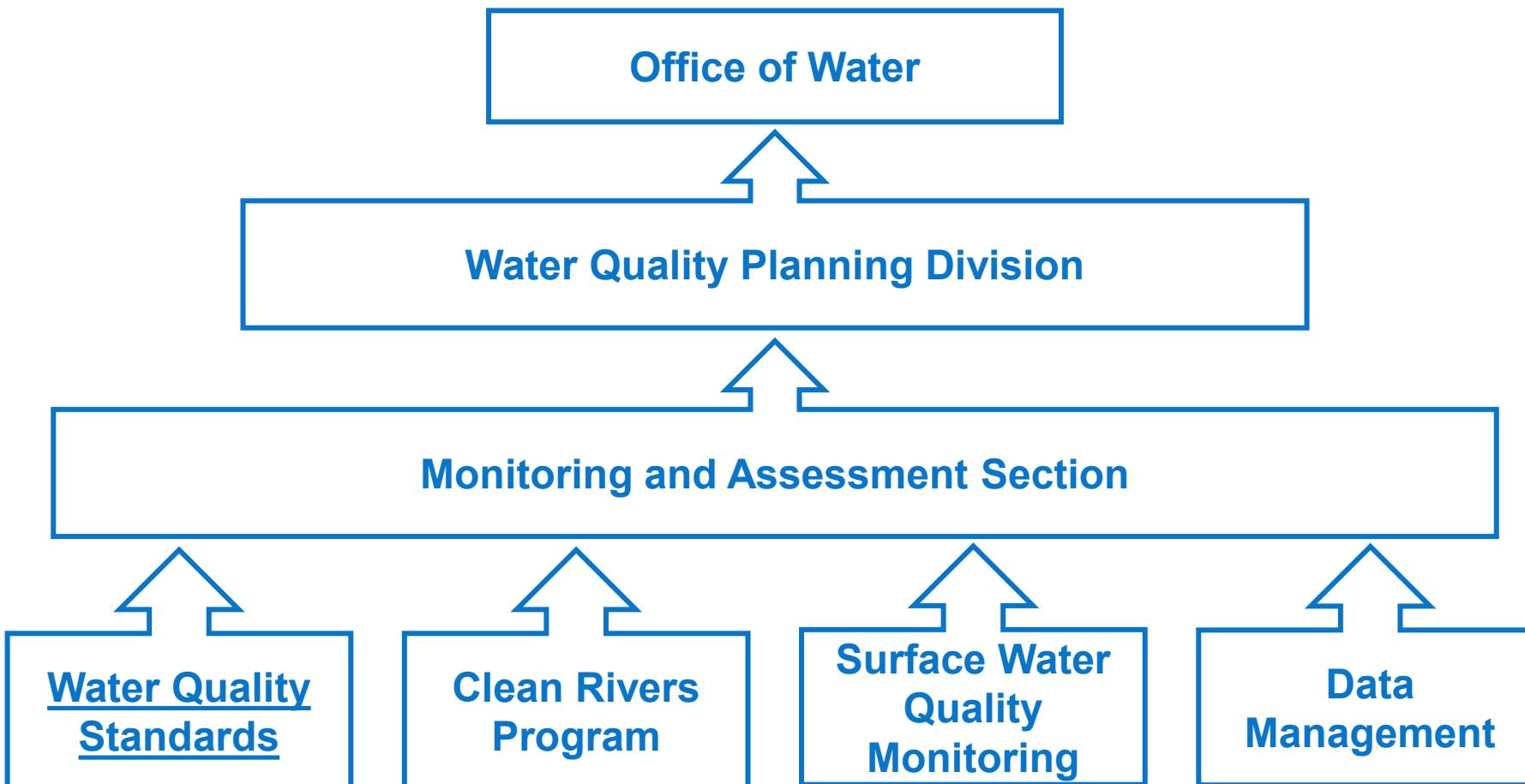
# **Texas Surface Water Quality Standards Update**

**Myriam Loving, Water Quality Standards Program**  
**June 2025**

# Presentation Topics

- What are the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards?
- How are water quality standards adopted?
- What are the current water quality standards?
- Status of EPA approvals (as of March 1, 2025)
- Current projects of the Water Quality Standards Program

# Water Quality Planning Division Structure



# Current Water Quality Standards Staff

- **Sarah Whitley**, Team Lead Water Quality Standards & CRP
- **Debbie Miller**, Toxics Criteria and Rules Coordinator
- **Eloy Montero-Hernández, PhD**, Site-Specific Coordinator
- **Bonnie Evans**, Bacteria Coordinator
- **Myriam Loving**, Nutrient Coordinator

# Water Quality Standards

- The Texas Surface Water Quality Standards (TSWQS), Title 30, Chapter 307 of the Texas Administrative Code, describe the chemical, physical, and biological conditions to be attained in the surface waters of Texas.
- Authority for adopting and revising water quality standards is contained in §26.023 of the Texas Water Code (TWC), and in §303(c) of the Federal Clean Water Act.

# What are included in the Water Quality Standards?

- The TSWQS establish explicit goals for the quality of streams, rivers, lakes and bays throughout the state.
- Defines **Appropriate Uses** along with the water quality **Criteria to Evaluate** those uses.

**Aquatic Life**



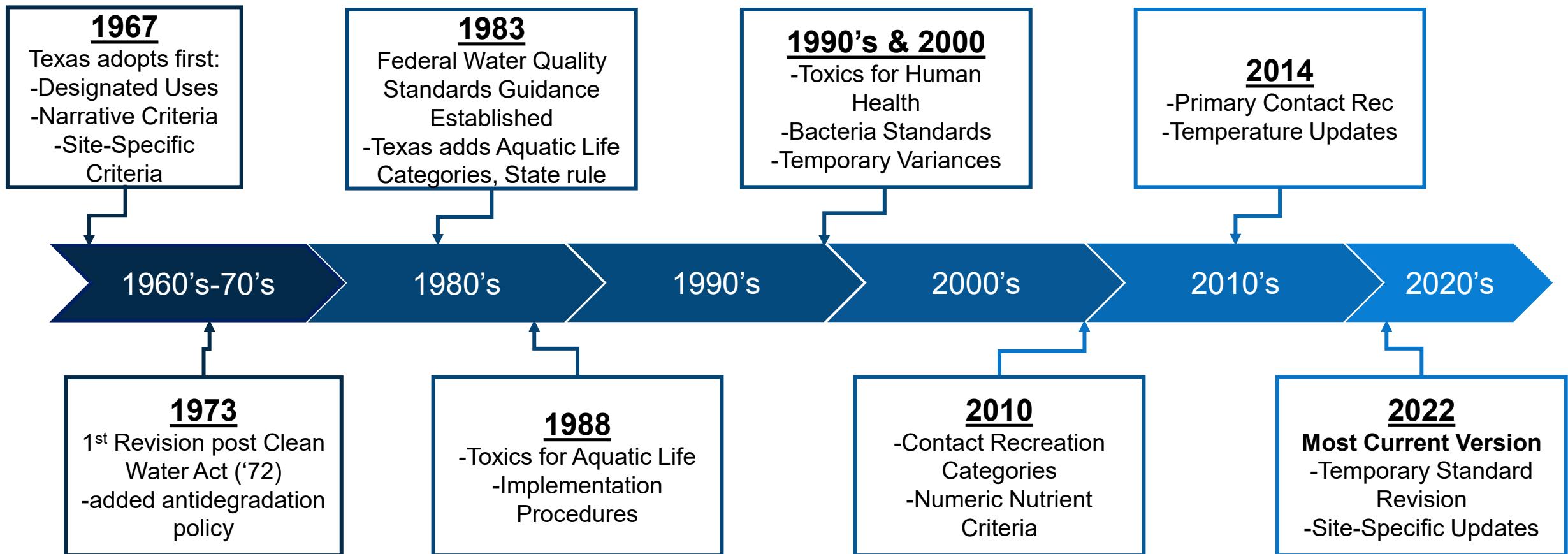
**Recreation**



**Public Water Supply**



# Timeline of Major Achievements



# How are the TSWQS Adopted?

- The TSWQS are revised on a triennial basis
- Revision timeline begins 2 years prior to adoptions
  - Rule Team Created
  - Publication of Request for Preliminary Comments for Upcoming Revision
  - Surface Water Quality Standard Advisory Workgroup Meetings
- Participate in our next Surface Water Quality Standard Advisory Workgroup Meeting
  - <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/stakeholders/swqsawg.html>
  - Email: [Standards@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:Standards@tceq.texas.gov)

# Adoption Process Continued

- Year of Adoption
  - Rule and Preamble Drafted
  - Commissioner Agenda to approve Distribution of Draft Rule
  - 45-Day Public Comment Period
  - Response to Public Comment and Revision of Rule
  - Final Internal Review and Sign Offs
- Adoption of TSWQS by TCEQ Commissioners
- Submit adopted TSWQS to EPA for approval to use in Clean Water Act activities

# 2026 TSWQS Revision – Tentative Dates

- Preliminary public comment period in June 2024
- Workgroup meeting in March 2025
- Agenda date for proposal in November 2025
- Public hearing in January 2026
- Agenda date for adoption in May 2026

# 2022 Texas Surface Water Quality Standards

- 2022 Version adopted on Sept. 7, 2022
- Effective as State Rule on Sept. 29, 2022
- Submitted to the EPA for approval on Nov. 7, 2022
- TCEQ received EPA Action Letters on April 26 and August 18, 2023
- Currently awaiting EPA approval for final items

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Questions or Comments: [standards@tceq.texas.gov](mailto:standards@tceq.texas.gov)

## 2022 Texas Surface Water Quality Standards

Information about the 2022 revision of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards and how they are approved, and links to previous versions of the standards including supporting documents.

**On this page:**

- [TCEQ Adopted Revisions to Standards](#)
- [Standards Acted on or Under Review](#)
- [The 2022 Standards Background Information](#)
- [EPA Review of the 2022 Water Quality Standards](#)
- [The 2022 Standards and Associated Documents](#)
- [Contact the Standards Group](#)

### TCEQ Adopted Revisions to Standards

On September 7, 2022, the commissioners adopted revisions to the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards, as codified by rule in Texas Administrative Code, Title 30, (30 TAC), Chapter 307. The 2022 Standards became effective as a state rule on September 29, 2022.

TCEQ submitted the 2022 Standards revisions and supporting documentation to EPA for review and approval on November 7, 2022. EPA must approve the 2022 Standards before TCEQ may use them for federal permitting programs and other Clean Water Act (CWA) purposes.

<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/2022-texas-surface-water-quality-standards>

# Types of Actions by EPA

- **Approved** – available for use in all Clean Water Act (CWA) activities – permitting, 305(b) assessment, TMDL
  - **Conditional approval** – subject to completion of consultation with USFWS under Endangered Species Act
- **Disapproved** – not available for use in CWA activities
- **No action** – not considered water quality standards under the CWA
- **Under review** – the previously EPA approved revision of the TSWQS remain in effect for CWA purposes

# EPA Actions

- Many of the 2022 TSWQS revisions were approved by EPA
- Action letters are posted on TCEQ Website for each TSWQS revision to which they apply
  - **2022 TSWQS Website:**  
<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards/2022-texas-surface-water-quality-standards>
- Highlighted rule indicates status of approval
  - **2022 TSWQS highlighted rule:**  
<https://www.tceq.texas.gov/downloads/water-quality/standards/2022/highlighted-standards.pdf>

# EPA Actions since Last Trade Fair

- 2022 revision
  - April 2023 – approved definitions, site-specific criteria for classified segments, drinking water supply sources, toxic criteria, and recreational criteria for an unclassified waterbody
  - August 2023 – approved toxic criteria
- 2018 revision
  - October 2024 – approved toxic criteria
- 2014 revision
  - October 2024 – approved site-specific criteria for classified segments
  - November 2024 – approved recreational criteria for one unclassified waterbody; disapproved recreational criteria for two unclassified waterbodies

# Items pending EPA action: 2010 TSWQS Revision

- Revised temperature criteria for reaches of two classified segments
- Revised dissolved mineral (i.e., TDS, SO<sub>4</sub>, Cl) criteria for 19 classified segments

# Items pending EPA action: 2014 TSWQS Revision

- Revised ALU and/or DO criteria for five classified segments and four unclassified water bodies
- Revised dissolved mineral criteria for eight classified segments
- Revised pH criteria for three classified segments
- Revised segment boundary descriptions for six classified segments

# Items pending EPA action: 2018 TSWQS Revision

- Toxic criteria for the protection of aquatic life
  - Acrolein and Carbaryl
- Revised provision relating to nutrient assessment being based on multiple uses
- Revised recreational use for one classified segment and 26 unclassified water bodies
- Revised ALU and/or DO criteria for two unclassified water bodies

# Items pending EPA action: 2022 TSWQS Revision

- Updates to Aquatic Life criteria (Table 1)
  - Cadmium: acute and chronic for freshwater and saltwater
- Updates to Human Health criteria (Table 2)
  - benzo(a)anthracene, benzo(a)pyrene, chrysene, 1,2-dichloropropane, 1,3-dichloropropene, dichloromethane and tetrachloroethylene
- Addition of geometric mean criteria of Enterococci for high saline inland waters with PCR2 (54 colonies per 100 mL)
- Revised ALU and/or DO criteria for three unclassified water bodies

# Current Projects of the Water Quality Standards Program

- Recreational Use-Attainability Analysis (RUAs)
  - Ash Creek (0809B)
  - Dosier Creek (0809C)
  - Derrett Creek (0808D)
- Use-Attainability Analysis (UAs)
  - Nichols Creek (0502A)
  - Hurricane Bayou (off Segment 0804)
  - Peach Creek (1803C)
- Special Studies
  - Development of an Index of Biotic Integrity for Tidal Streams of the Texas Coast, Phase 4
  - Development of a Multi-species Multi-nutrient Plankton Model for Texas Estuaries, Expansion into Matagorda and Baffin Bays
  - Researching salinity criteria for bays

# Questions?

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