



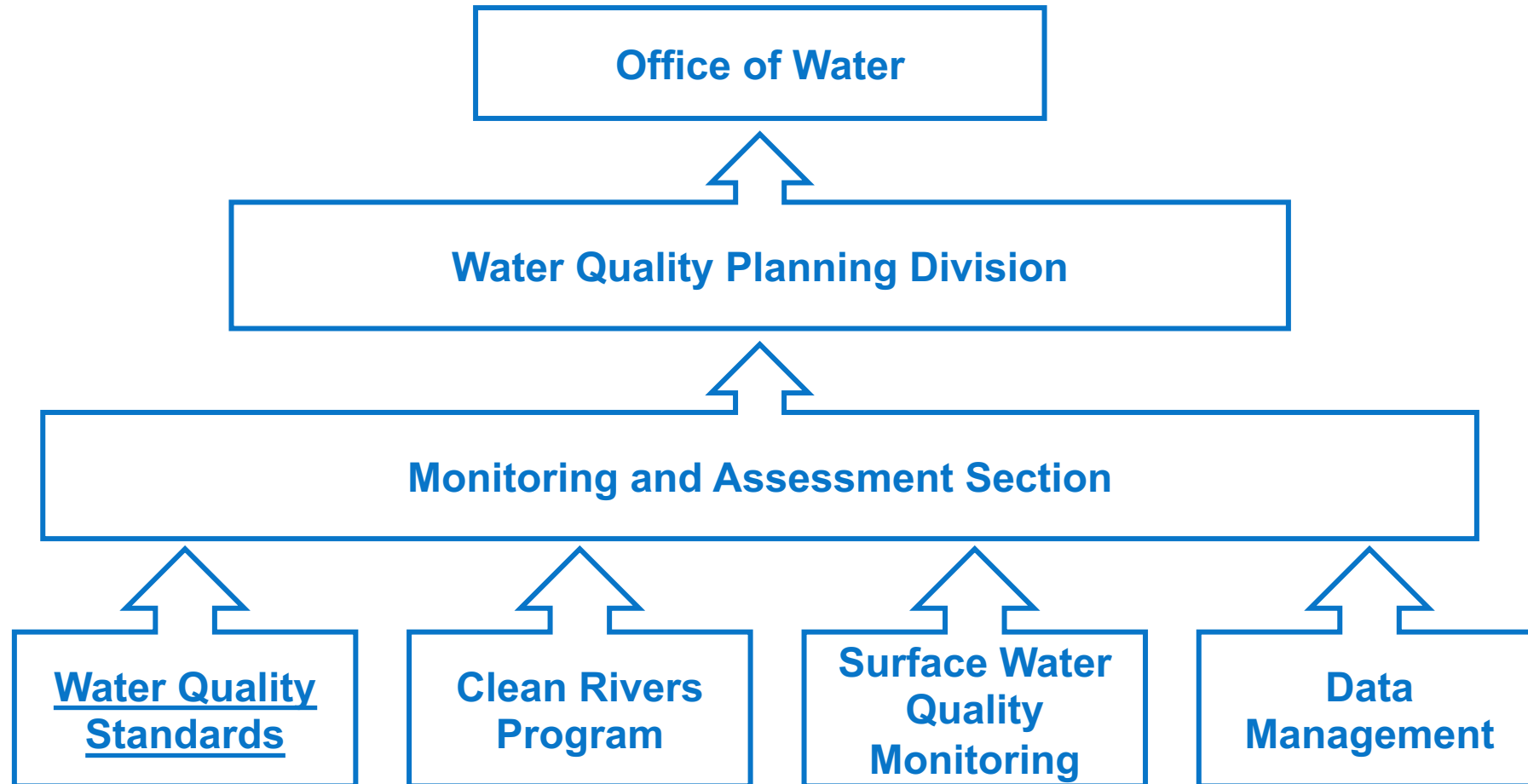
# **An Overview of the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards Program and Recent Standards Revisions.**

**Ryan Seymour, Water Quality Standards Nutrient Criteria Coordinator  
May 2023**

# What will I cover today?

- What are the Texas Surface Water Quality Standards?
- How are water quality standards adopted?
- What are the current water quality standards?
- A status of EPA approvals (as of March 1, 2023)
- 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
- **Ryan Seymour**, Nutrient Criteria Coordinator
- **Eloy Montero Hernández**, Site-Specific Coordinator
- **Bonnie Evans**, Bacteria 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 **Criteria to Evaluate** those uses.

**Aquatic Life**



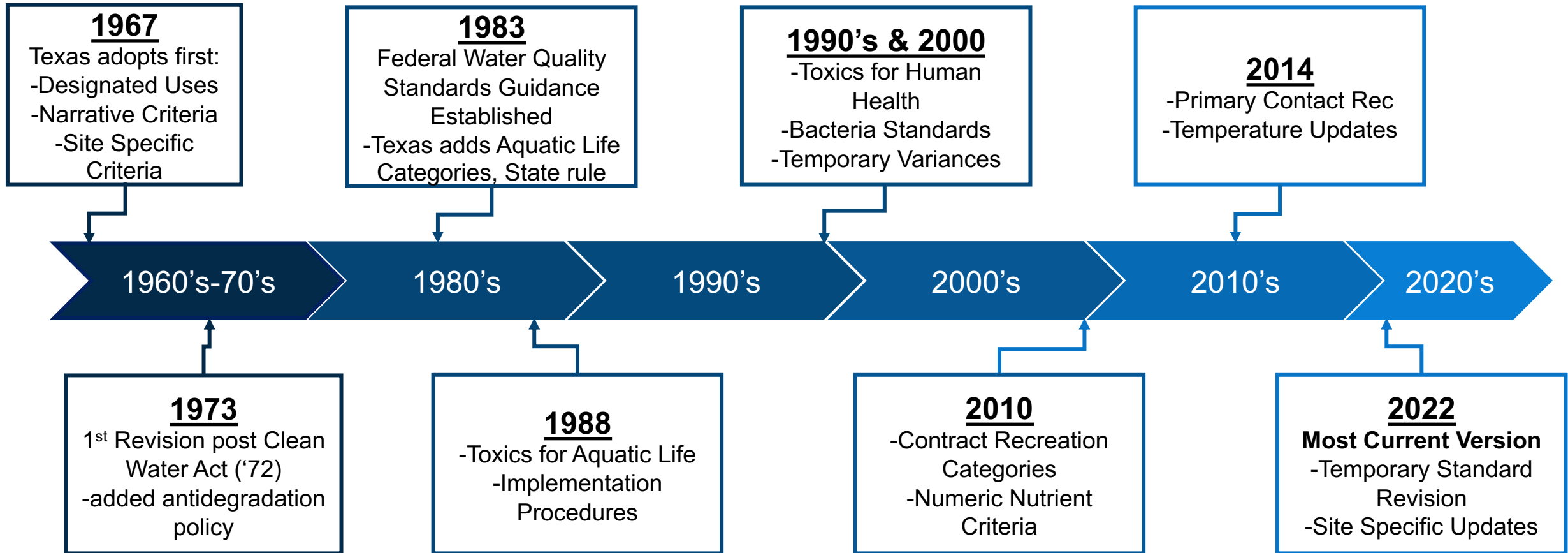
**Recreation**



**Public Water Supply**



# Timeline of Major Achievements



# How are the TSWQS Adopted?

- The Standards 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 SWQSAWG
  - <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 Texas Surface Water Quality Standards by the Commissioners of the TCEQ

# 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
- Currently Awaiting EPA Approval

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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, 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**

# No EPA Action since Last Trade Fair

- Action letters are posted on TCEQ Website for each revision they apply to
  - **Website:** <https://www.tceq.texas.gov/waterquality/standards>
- Highlighted rule indicates status of approval
  - 2022 highlighted rule will be posted when 1<sup>st</sup> action letter citing the 2022 TSWQS is received

# Items pending EPA action

- From the 2010 TSWQS:
  - 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



# 2014 TSWQS items pending EPA action

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

# 2018 TSWQS items pending EPA action

- 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
- Revised ALU and/DO criteria for two unclassified water bodies
- Revised recreational uses for 26 water bodies

# 2022 TSWQS items pending EPA action

- Revision to temporary standards language to improve consistency with 40 CFR §131.14
- Updates to Aquatic Life criteria (Table 1):
  - Cadmium: freshwater and saltwater, both acute and chronic
- Updates to Human Health criteria (Table 2)
- Addition of geometric mean criteria of E-Coli for high saline inland waters with PCR2 (54 colonies per 100 mL)

# 2022 TSWQS items pending EPA action continued

- Revisions to Appendix A: Site-Specific Uses and Criteria for Classified Segments
- Revisions to Appendix B: Sole-source Surface Drinking Water Supplies
- Revisions to Appendix C: Segment Descriptions
- Revisions to Appendix D: Site-specific Uses and Criteria for Unclassified Water Bodies
- Revisions to Appendix E: Site-specific Toxic Criteria
- Revisions to Appendix G: Site-specific Recreational Uses and Criteria for Unclassified Water Bodies

# Current Project of the Water Quality Standards Program

- Recreational Use Attainability Analysis (RUAA's)
  - Black Cypress Bayou (0410A)
  - Lower Keechi Creek (0804A)
- Use Attainability Analysis
  - Upper Leon (1907)
  - Nicholas Creek (0502A)
- Special Studies
  - Development of an Index of Biotic Integrity for Tidal Streams of the Texas Coast, Phase 3



# Future Projects of the Water Quality Standards Program

- Recreational Use Attainability Analysis (RUAA's)
  - Ash Creek (0809B)
  - Dosier Creek (0809C)
  - Derrett Creek (0808D)
- 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

# Questions?

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