

WAC 173-201A-230 Establishing lake nutrient criteria. (1) The following table shall be used to aid in establishing nutrient criteria:

(Table 230(1)) The ecoregional and trophic-state action values for establishing nutrient criteria:

Coast Range, Puget Lowlands, and Northern Rockies Ecoregions:		
Trophic State	If Ambient TP (µg/l) Range of Lake is:	Then criteria should be set at:
Ultra-oligotrophic	0-4	4 or less
Oligotrophic	>4-10	10 or less
Lower mesotrophic	>10-20	20 or less
	<u>Action value</u>	
	>20 ...	lake specific study may be initiated.
Cascades Ecoregion:		
Trophic State	If Ambient TP (µg/l) Range of Lake is:	Then criteria should be set at:
Ultra-oligotrophic	0-4	4 or less
Oligotrophic	>4-10	10 or less
	<u>Action value</u>	
	>10 ...	lake specific study may be initiated.
Columbia Basin Ecoregion:		
Trophic State	If Ambient TP (µg/l) Range of Lake is:	Then criteria should be set at:
Ultra-oligotrophic	0-4	4 or less
Oligotrophic	>4-10	10 or less
Lower mesotrophic	>10-20	20 or less
Upper mesotrophic	>20-35	35 or less
	<u>Action value</u>	
	>35 ...	lake specific study may be initiated.

Lakes in the Willamette, East Cascade Foothills, or Blue Mountain ecoregions do not have recommended values and need to have lake-specific studies in order to receive criteria as described in subsection (3) of this section.

(2) The following actions are recommended if ambient monitoring of a lake shows the epilimnetic total phosphorus concentration, as shown in Table 1 of this section, is below the action value for an ecoregion:

(a) Determine trophic status from existing or newly gathered data. The recommended minimum sampling to determine trophic status is calculated as the mean of four or more samples collected from the epilimnion between June through September in one or more consecutive years. Sampling must be spread throughout the season.

(b) Propose criteria at or below the upper limit of the trophic state; or

(c) Conduct lake-specific study to determine and propose to adopt appropriate criteria as described in subsection (3) of this section.

(3) The following actions are recommended if ambient monitoring of a lake shows total phosphorus to exceed the action value for an ecoregion shown in Table 1 of this section or where recommended ecoregional action values do not exist:

(a) Conduct a lake-specific study to evaluate the characteristic uses of the lake. A lake-specific study may vary depending on the source or threat of impairment. Phytoplankton blooms, toxic phytoplankton, or excessive aquatic plants, are examples of various sources of impairment. The following are examples of quantitative measures that a study may describe: Total phosphorus, total nitrogen, chlorophyll-a, dissolved oxygen in the hypolimnion if thermally stratified, pH, hardness, or other measures of existing conditions and potential changes in any one of these parameters.

(b) Determine appropriate total phosphorus concentrations or other nutrient criteria to protect characteristic lake uses. If the existing total phosphorus concentration is protective of characteristic lake uses, then set criteria at existing total phosphorus concentration. If the existing total phosphorus concentration is not protective of the existing characteristic lake uses, then set criteria at a protective concentration. Proposals to adopt appropriate total phosphorus criteria to protect characteristic uses must be developed by considering technical information and stakeholder input as part of a public involvement process equivalent to the Administrative Procedure Act (chapter 34.05 RCW).

(c) Determine if the proposed total phosphorus criteria necessary to protect characteristic uses is achievable. If the recommended criterion is not achievable and if the characteristic use the criterion is intended to protect is not an existing use, then a higher criterion may be proposed in conformance with 40 C.F.R. part 131.10.

(4) The department will consider proposed lake-specific nutrient criteria during any water quality standards rule making that follows development of a proposal. Adoption by rule formally establishes the criteria for that lake.

(5) Prioritization and investigation of lakes by the department will be initiated by listing problem lakes in a watershed needs assessment, and scheduled as part of the water quality program's watershed approach to pollution control. This prioritization will apply to lakes identified as warranting a criteria based on the results of a lake-specific study, to lakes warranting a lake-specific study for establishing criteria, and to lakes requiring restoration and pollution control measures due to exceedance of an established criterion. The adoption of nutrient criteria are generally not intended to apply to lakes or ponds with a surface area smaller than five acres; or to ponds wholly contained on private property owned and surrounded by a single landowner; and nutrients do not drain or leach from these lakes or private ponds to the detriment of other property owners or other water bodies; and do not impact designated uses in the lake. However, if the landowner proposes criteria the department may consider adoption.

(6) The department may not need to set a lake-specific criteria or further investigate a lake if existing water quality conditions are naturally poorer (higher TP) than the action value and uses have not been lost or degraded, per WAC 173-201A-260(1).

[Statutory Authority: RCW 90.48.035. WSR 06-23-117 (Order 06-04), § 173-201A-230, filed 11/20/06, effective 12/21/06. Statutory Authority: Chapters 90.48 and 90.54 RCW. WSR 03-14-129 (Order 02-14), § 173-201A-230, filed 7/1/03, effective 8/1/03.]