

Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report 2016



The Colorado 2016 Integrated Water Quality Monitoring and Assessment Report summarizes water quality conditions in the State of Colorado. CWA Section 305(b) requires all states to assess and report on the quality of waters within their state. This 2016 report covers both the 2014 and 2016 reporting cycles.

Colorado's assessments of water quality were conducted during the past five years. Specifically, the report compares water quality of surface waters within Colorado to the corresponding standards in order to assess which waters are in attainment of the standards. The Integrated Report provides attainment status of all surface waters according to five reporting categories, defined in detail within the report. The report also includes descriptions of Colorado's Clean Water programs - including recent updates in monitoring, standards development, permitting, TMDL development and grant programs. Finally, the report includes a description of groundwater quality activity and links to agencies involved with groundwater monitoring.

2016 Report Highlights

- Colorado developed a new database for tracking integrated report data. The database will result in increased accuracy in reported sizes of waterbody segments.
- Expanded section on point source control programs with a detailed description of Colorado's program for permitting pesticide discharges to surface waters.
- Discussion of the new Nutrient Management Control Regulation - Regulation No. 85.
- New section on total maximum daily load bridge to restoration program with detailed descriptions of each project under this program.
- New section on water pollution control revolving fund measurable results initiative with detailed descriptions of each project under this program.
- Discussion of prioritization strategy for the total maximum daily load program.

What's Changed?

New Database

- The division migrated waterbody assessment data from the assessment database to a new GIS based database. This database allows for increased functionality and improved accuracy.

Assessment Unit Identifiers

- The new database groups assessment units based on the listing category for the segment or a portion of the segment. These are called AUID's and are different from previously reported assessment units.

Category 3b

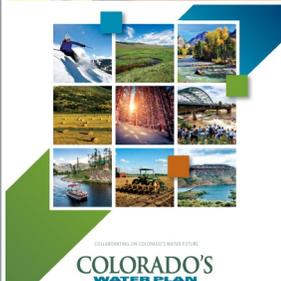
- A new state-specific subcategory 3b was created to track waters that are likely to be impaired but additional information needs to be collected to confirm the assessment decision. This category includes waterbodies on Colorado's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) List.

Greater Accuracy in Waterbody Sizes

- Great improvements in NHD/GIS layers have improved the accuracy of waterbody sizes for Colorado.

4-Year Summary

- Due to resource constraints, Colorado did not publish a 2014 IR. Therefore, this report reflects the status of water quality in Colorado from a four-year period instead of the typical 2-year period.



Events shaping Colorado's water quality for 2016

Statewide Nutrient Control Regulation and Standards

In June 2012, the Water Quality Control Commission adopted regulations for nutrient control and management. These regulations will be reviewed as part of a formal rulemaking hearing scheduled for fall 2017.

2013 Flood

In September 2013, large volumes of precipitation and heavy accumulation caused catastrophic damage on the front range. Flooding affected personal property and infrastructure and in some cases resulted in boil water advisories. Flooded waters contained high quantities of sediment, bacteria and other pollutants.

2015 Gold King Mine Spill

On August 5, 2015, an EPA team was working in the Gold King Mine and inadvertently released an excess of 3 million gallons of mine wastewater into Cement Creek. The contaminated water traveled for a week down the Animas River and eventually to Lake Powell. Ongoing monitoring is underway to assess long-term effects of the spill in the Animas River in Colorado.

Colorado Water Plan

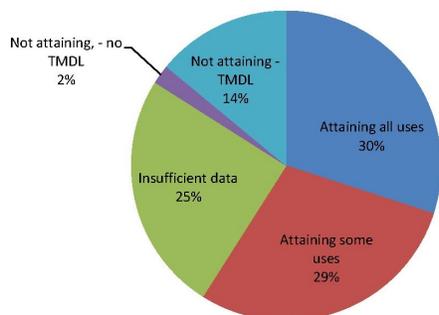
The Colorado Water Plan was finalized in December 2015. Goals include developing plans to address impairments through source identification, TMDL plan development and evaluating appropriate statewide standards.

Harmful Algal Blooms

In 2015, the division worked closely with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to develop guidance for managing recreational waters that may be impacted by harmful algal blooms. The division and CPW also reached out to Colorado Water Utility Council, Colorado Lake and Reservoir Management Associates, universities as well as other partners to form a harmful algal blooms workgroup. The workgroup met to develop Colorado specific drinking water monitoring guidance, create educational resources and discuss the latest developments.

Bodies of water and supporting standards and uses

Rivers and Streams - miles



Lakes and Reservoirs - acres

