



**STATE OF IDAHO**  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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Brad Little, Governor  
Jess Byrne, Director

December 4, 2020

Kelly J. Urbanek, Chief  
U.S. ACOE Regulatory Division  
Walla Walla District  
720 East Park Boulevard, Suite 245  
Boise, Idaho 83712-7757

Subject: Final §401 Water Quality Certification for 2020 Nationwide Permits in Idaho

Dear Ms. Urbanek:

Enclosed please find the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) final water quality certification for the 2020 Nationwide Permits in Idaho. DEQ offered a 21-day public comment period, beginning on November 2, 2020, and ending on November 23, 2020.

DEQ received a single comment letter. After review of the comments received, minor modifications were made to the final certification in order to provide additional clarity.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this certification, please contact Jason Pappani at (208) 373-0515 or via email at [jason.pappani@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:jason.pappani@deq.idaho.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Anne Nelson".

Mary Anne Nelson, PhD  
Surface and Wastewater Division Administrator

MAN:JP:lf

cc: Jason Pappani, DEQ State Office  
DEQ Regional Administrators  
James Joyner, ACOE Walla Walla District  
Brent King, Idaho Attorney General's Office





## Idaho Department of Environmental Quality Final §401 Water Quality Certification

December 4, 2020

*2020 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers §404 Nationwide Permits (NWPs)*

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Pursuant to the provisions of Section 401(a)(1) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), as amended; 33 U.S.C. Section 1341(a)(1); and Idaho Code §§ 39-101 et seq. and 39-3601 et seq., the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has authority to review activities receiving Section 404 dredge and fill permits and issue water quality certification decisions.

Based upon its review of the proposed 2020 Nationwide Permits published in the Federal Register on September 15, 2020, DEQ certifies that if the permittee complies with the terms and conditions imposed by the permits, including the Regional Conditions set forth by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE), along with the conditions set forth in this water quality certification, then activities will comply with the applicable water quality requirements of Sections 301, 302, 303, 306, and 307 of the Clean Water Act, the Idaho Water Quality Standards (WQS) (IDAPA 58.01.02), and other appropriate water quality requirements of state law.

This certification does not constitute authorization of the permitted activities by any other state or federal agency or private person or entity. This certification does not excuse the permit holder from the obligation to obtain any other necessary approvals, authorizations, or permits, including without limitation, the approval from the owner of a private water conveyance system, if one is required, to use the system in connection with the permitted activities.

### **1 Antidegradation Review**

The WQS contain an antidegradation policy providing three levels of protection to water bodies in Idaho (IDAPA 58.01.02.051).

- **Tier I Protection.** The first level of protection applies to all water bodies subject to Clean Water Act jurisdiction and ensures that existing uses of a water body and the level of water quality necessary to protect those existing uses will be maintained and protected (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01; 58.01.02.052.01). Additionally, a Tier I review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.07).
- **Tier II Protection.** The second level of protection applies to those water bodies considered high quality and ensures that no lowering of water quality will be allowed unless deemed necessary to accommodate important economic or social development (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02; 58.01.02.052.08).

- Tier III Protection. The third level of protection applies to water bodies that have been designated outstanding resource waters and requires that activities not cause a lowering of water quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03; 58.01.02.052.09).

DEQ is employing a water body by water body approach to implementing Idaho's antidegradation policy. This approach means that any water body fully supporting its beneficial uses will be considered high quality (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.a). Any water body not fully supporting its beneficial uses will be provided Tier I protection for that use, unless specific circumstances warranting Tier II protection are met (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.c). The most recent federally approved Integrated Report and supporting data are used to determine support status and the tier of protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05).

### **1.1 Pollutants of Concern**

The primary pollutant of concern, for projects permitted under the 2020 NWP's administered by the ACOE, is sediment. In locations where heavy metals are present due to mining activities, or where high concentrations of nutrients may be associated with sediments, additional considerations may be necessary. If the project reduces riparian vegetation, then temperature (thermal loading) may also be of concern.

The procedures outlined in the Sediment Evaluation Framework for the Pacific Northwest<sup>1</sup> may be applied to assess and characterize sediment to determine the suitability of dredged material for unconfined aquatic placement, to determine the suitability of post dredge surfaces, and to predict effects on water quality during dredging (See Section 2.4 for more details).

As part of the Section 401 water quality certification, DEQ is requiring the applicant to comply with various conditions to protect water quality and to meet Idaho WQS, including the criteria applicable to sediment.

### **1.2 Receiving Water Body Level of Protection**

The ACOE NWP's authorize construction activities in waters of the United States. In Idaho, jurisdictional waters of the state can potentially receive discharges either directly or indirectly from activities authorized under the NWP's. DEQ applies a water body by water body approach to determine the level of antidegradation protection a water body will receive. (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05).

All waters in Idaho that receive discharges from activities authorized under a NWP will receive, at minimum, Tier I antidegradation protection because Idaho's Tier I antidegradation policy applies to all state waters (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.01). Water bodies that fully support their aquatic life or recreational uses are considered *high quality waters* and will receive Tier II antidegradation protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02). Because of the statewide applicability, the antidegradation review will assess whether the NWP permit complies with both Tier I and Tier II antidegradation provisions (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.03).

Although Idaho does not currently have any Tier III designated outstanding resource waters (ORWs), it is possible for a water body to be designated as an ORW during the life of the NWP's.

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<sup>1</sup> Northwest Regional Sediment Evaluation Team (RSET). 2018. Sediment Evaluation Framework for the Pacific Northwest. Prepared by the RSET Agencies, May 2018, 183 pp plus appendices.

Because of this potential, the antidegradation review also assesses whether the permit complies with the outstanding resource water requirements of Idaho's antidegradation policy (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03).

To determine the support status of the receiving water body, the most recent EPA-approved Integrated Report, available on Idaho DEQ's website, is to be used:

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/monitoring-assessment/integrated-report/>. (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05).

High quality waters are identified in Categories 1 and 2 of the Integrated Report. If a water body is in either Category 1 or 2, it is a Tier II water body.

Unassessed waters are identified in Category 3 of DEQ's Integrated Report. These waters require a case by case determination to be made by DEQ based on available information at the time of the application for permit coverage (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.b). For activities occurring on unassessed waters under this certification, DEQ has determined that complying with the conditions of the NWP, the regional conditions, and this certification will ensure the provisions of IDAPA 58.01.02.052 are met.

Impaired waters are identified in Categories 4 and 5 of the Integrated Report. Category 4(a) contains impaired waters for which a TMDL has been approved by EPA. Category 4(b) contains impaired waters for which controls other than a TMDL have been approved by EPA. Category 5 contains waters which have been identified as "impaired", for which a TMDL is needed. These waters are Tier I waters, for the use which is impaired. With the exception, if the aquatic life uses are impaired for any of these three pollutants—dissolved oxygen, pH, or temperature—and the biological or aquatic habitat parameters show a healthy, balanced biological community, then the water body shall receive Tier II protection, in addition to Tier I protection, for aquatic life uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.05.c.i).

DEQ's webpage also has a link to the state's map-based Integrated Report which presents information from the Integrated Report in a searchable, map-based format:

<http://www.deq.idaho.gov/assistance-resources/maps-data/>.

Water bodies can be in multiple categories for different causes. If assistance is needed in using these tools, or if additional information/clarification regarding the support status of the receiving water body is desired, please feel free to contact your nearest DEQ regional office or the State Office (Table 1).

**Table 1. Idaho DEQ Regional and State Office Contacts**

<i>Regional Office</i>	<i>Address</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>	<i>Email</i>
Boise	1445 N. Orchard Rd., Boise 83706	208-373-0550	<a href="mailto:kati.carberry@deq.idaho.gov">kati.carberry@deq.idaho.gov</a>
Coeur d'Alene	2110 Ironwood Parkway, Coeur d'Alene 83814	208-769-1422	<a href="mailto:chantilly.higbee@deq.idaho.gov">chantilly.higbee@deq.idaho.gov</a>
Idaho Falls	900 N. Skyline, Suite B., Idaho Falls 83402	208-528-2650	<a href="mailto:troy.saffle@deq.idaho.gov">troy.saffle@deq.idaho.gov</a>
Lewiston	1118 "F" St., Lewiston 83501	208-799-4370	<a href="mailto:sujata.connell@deq.idaho.gov">sujata.connell@deq.idaho.gov</a>
Pocatello	444 Hospital Way, #300 Pocatello 83201	208-236-6160	<a href="mailto:matthew.schenk@deq.idaho.gov">matthew.schenk@deq.idaho.gov</a>
Twin Falls	650 Addison Ave. W., Suite 110, Twin Falls 83301	208-736-2190	<a href="mailto:balthasar.buhidar@deq.idaho.gov">balthasar.buhidar@deq.idaho.gov</a>
State Office	1410 N. Hilton Rd., Boise 83706	208-373-0502	<a href="mailto:jason.pappani@deq.idaho.gov">jason.pappani@deq.idaho.gov</a>

### **1.3 Protection and Maintenance of Existing Uses (Tier I Protection)**

A Tier I review is performed for all new or reissued permits or licenses, applies to all waters subject to the jurisdiction of the Clean Water Act, and requires demonstration that existing uses and the level of water quality necessary to protect existing uses shall be maintained and protected (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01; 052.01 and 04). The numeric and narrative criteria in the WQS are set at levels that ensure protection of existing and designated beneficial uses.

Water bodies not supporting existing or designated beneficial uses must be identified as water quality limited, and a total maximum daily load (TMDL) must be prepared for those pollutants causing impairment (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.02). Once a TMDL is completed, discharges of causative pollutants shall be consistent with the allocations in the TMDL (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.05). Prior to the completion of a TMDL, the WQS require the application of the antidegradation policy and implementation provisions to maintain and protect beneficial uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.04).

The general (non-numeric) effluent limitations in the NWP and associated Regional Conditions for the ACOE Walla Walla District address best management practices (BMPs) aimed at minimizing impacts to the aquatic environment, especially sediment and turbidity impacts including: vegetation protection and restoration, de-watering requirements, erosion and sediment controls, soil stabilization requirements, pollution prevention measures, prohibited discharges, and wildlife considerations. Although the NWP do not contain specific (numeric) effluent limitations for sediment or turbidity, the conditions identified in the permits and in this water quality certification will ensure compliance with DEQ's water quality standards, including the narrative sediment criteria (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.08) and DEQ's turbidity criteria (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e).

In order to ensure compliance with Idaho WQS, DEQ has included a condition requiring the permittee(s) to comply with Idaho's numeric turbidity criteria, developed to protect aquatic life

uses. The criterion states, “Turbidity shall not exceed background turbidity by more than 50 nephelometric turbidity units (NTU)<sup>2</sup> instantaneously or more than 25 NTU for more than 10 consecutive days” (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e). DEQ is requiring turbidity monitoring when project activities result in a discharge to waters of the United States that causes a visible sediment plume (IDAPA 58.01.02.054.01) (See Section 2.5 for more details).

If an approved TMDL exists for a receiving water body that requires a load reduction for a pollutant of concern, then the project must be consistent with the provisions of that TMDL (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.05).

For authorized activities requiring a pre-construction notification (PCN), the Corps will have the opportunity to evaluate the NWP activities on a case by case basis to ensure that the activity will not cause more than a minimal adverse environmental effect, individually and cumulatively. The Corps has agreed to forward the verification letters to the appropriate DEQ regional office (Table 1) for all authorized activities including the NWP activities that require a PCN. This will better inform DEQ of the authorized activities that are occurring throughout the state and determine if additional conditions will need to be implemented when the ACOE reissues the NWPs.

### 1.3.1 DEQ’s Determination

DEQ concludes that, given the nature of the activities authorized by the 2020 NWPs, such activities will comply with Idaho’s Tier I requirements under IDAPA 58.01.02.051.01 and 58.01.02.052.07, provided the permitted activities are carried out in compliance with the limitations and associated requirements of the 2020 NWPs, Regional Conditions, and conditions set forth in this water quality certification.

## 1.4 Protection of High-Quality Waters (Tier II Protection)

Water bodies that fully support their beneficial uses are recognized as high-quality waters and will be provided Tier II protection in addition to Tier I protection (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02; 58.01.02.052.05.a). Water quality parameters applicable to existing or designated beneficial uses must be maintained and protected under Tier II, unless a lowering of water quality is deemed necessary to accommodate important economic or social development (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02; 58.01.02.052.08).

The ACOE does not authorize projects with more than minimal individual and cumulative impacts on the aquatic environment under a NWP (33 U.S.C.A. § 1344(e)). As required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) the Corps has analyzed the individual and cumulative effects for the NWP activities. DEQ recognizes that short term changes in water quality may occur with respect to sediment as a result of the authorized activities, but has determined that adherence to the terms and conditions imposed by the permits, including the Regional Conditions set forth by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE or Corps), along with the conditions set forth in this water quality certification will ensure that there are no long-term adverse changes to water quality or beneficial use support as a result of any activity authorized under this certification (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.03). As a general principle, DEQ believes degradation of water quality should be viewed in terms of permanent or long-term adverse

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<sup>2</sup>NTU is a unit of measure of the concentration of suspended particles in the water (turbidity). It is determined by shining a light through a sample and measuring the incident light scattered at right angles from the sample.

changes. Short-term or temporary reductions in water quality, if reasonable measures are taken to minimize them (such as the certification conditions in Section 2), may occur without triggering a Tier II analysis (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.03; 080.02).

To ensure proposed regulated activities will not cause more than minimal individual and cumulative impacts on the aquatic environment, certain NWP's require project proponents to notify district engineers (in the form of a PCN) of their proposed activities prior to conducting regulated activities. This level of review gives the district engineer the opportunity to evaluate activities on a case by case basis to determine whether additional conditions or mitigation requirements are warranted to ensure that the proposed activity results in no more than the minimal individual and cumulative impacts on the aquatic environment.

DEQ has denied certification for NWP 16, NWP 23, and NWP 53 (see Section 3.1); and for certain activities associated with NWP 3, NWP 12, NWP 13, NWP 14, NWP 21, NWP 29, NWP 39, NWP 40, NWP 42, NWP 43, NWP 44, NWP 50, NWP 51, NWP 52, NWP C, NWP D, and NWP E (see Section 3.2). Projects seeking coverage under these NWP's will need to request individual certification from DEQ. DEQ will consider any additional conditions or denial of certification if necessary to ensure no lowering of water quality occurs for any of these projects proposed on Tier II water.

Additionally, if an authorized project causes a visible sediment plume then turbidity monitoring is required (see Section 2.5 for more details).

#### **1.4.1 DEQ's Determination**

DEQ concludes that the activities authorized by the 2020 NWP's and this certification will comply with Idaho's Tier II requirements under IDAPA 58.01.02.051.02 and 58.01.02.052.08 providing permitted activities are carried out in compliance with the limitations and associated requirements of the 2020 NWP's, Regional Conditions, and conditions of this water quality certification.

### ***1.5 Protection of Outstanding Resource Waters (Tier III Protection)***

Idaho's antidegradation policy requires that the quality of outstanding resource waters (ORWs) be maintained and protected from the impacts of point and nonpoint source activities (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03). No water bodies in Idaho have been designated as ORWs to date. Because it is possible waters may become designated during the term of the 2020 NWP's, DEQ has evaluated whether the NWP's comply with the ORW antidegradation provision.

DEQ has denied certification for any activities on any Outstanding Resource Water (ORW) (see Section 3) and is requiring that any activities proposed on an ORW apply for individual certification (see Section 2.3).

#### **1.5.1 DEQ's Determination**

DEQ concludes that the activities authorized by the 2020 NWP's and this certification will comply with Idaho's Tier III requirements under IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03 providing permitted activities are carried out in compliance with the limitations and associated requirements of the 2020 NWP's, Regional Conditions, and conditions of this water quality certification.

## 2 Conditions Necessary to Ensure Compliance with Water Quality Standards or Other Appropriate Water Quality Requirements of State Law

For all activities covered under this certification, the following conditions are necessary to ensure that permitted projects comply with water quality requirements.

### ***2.1 Design, Implementation, and Maintenance of Appropriate Best Management Practices***

Best Management Practices (BMPs) must be designed, implemented, and maintained by the permittee to fully protect and maintain the beneficial uses and ambient water quality of waters of the state and to prevent exceedances of WQS (IDAPA 58.01.02.350.01.a).

BMPs must be selected and properly installed. Proper installation and operation of BMPs are required to ensure the provisions of IDAPA 58.01.02.052 are met. In order to ensure that BMPs are operating properly and to demonstrate that degradation has not occurred, the permittee must monitor and evaluate BMP effectiveness daily during project activities to assure that water quality standards are being met.

Approved BMPs for specific activities (mining, forestry, stream channel alteration, etc.) are codified in IDAPA 58.01.02.350. Additionally, DEQ provides a catalog of storm water best management practices, available at: <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/60184297/stormwater-bmp-catalog.pdf>. This catalog presents a variety of BMPs that can be used to control erosion and sediment during and after construction. Other sources of information are also available and may be used for selecting project appropriate BMPs.

*This condition is necessary meet the following water quality requirements:*

Control of erosion, sediment, and turbidity to maintain beneficial use support and compliance with the following water quality standards:

- General Surface Water Criteria for Sediment (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.08)
- Numeric Turbidity Criteria for Aquatic Life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e)
- Numeric turbidity criteria for protection of domestic water supply (IDAPA 58.01.02.252.01.b)
- Point source wastewater treatment requirements (IDAPA 58.01.02.401.02)

### ***2.2 TMDL Compliance***

If there is an approved or established TMDL, then the permittee must comply with the established loads in the TMDL. Approved TMDLs can be found on DEQ's website (<https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/tmdls/table-of-sbas-tmdls/>) or by contacting the appropriate regional office contact (Table 1).

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*



Ensure projects are consistent with waste load and load allocations established in approved TMDLs (IDAPA 58.01.02.055.04 and .05).

### **2.3 Outstanding Resource Waters**

If waters become designated as ORWs during the term of the NWP, a permittee proposing a project on an ORW must contact the appropriate DEQ regional office and apply for individual certification.

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*

Ensure there is no lowering of water quality in any ORW as required by the Idaho Antidegradation Policy (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03).

### **2.4 Fill Material**

Material subject to suspension, including suspended dredge material, shall be free of easily suspended fine material. The fill material to be placed in waters of the United States shall be clean material only. If dredged material is proposed to be used as fill material and there is a possibility the material may be contaminated, then the permittee must apply the procedures in the *Sediment Evaluation Framework for the Pacific Northwest* (RSET, 2018) to assess and characterize sediment to determine the suitability of dredged material for unconfined-aquatic placement; determine the suitability of post dredge surfaces; and to predict effects on water quality during dredging.

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*

Prevent suspension of fine sediment and turbidity in order to provide beneficial use support and compliance with the following water quality standards:

- General Surface Water Criteria for Sediment (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.08)
- Numeric Turbidity Criteria for Aquatic Life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e)
- Numeric turbidity criteria for protection of domestic water supply (IDAPA 58.01.02.252.01.b)
- Point source wastewater treatment requirements (IDAPA 58.01.02.401.02)

Prevent suspension of hazardous, toxic, or deleterious materials or other pollutants that may be associated with fill material in order to ensure beneficial use support and compliance with the following water quality standards:

- General Surface Water Criteria for hazardous materials (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.01), toxic substances (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.02), deleterious materials (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.03), excess nutrients (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.06), or oxygen demanding materials (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.09)
- Numeric toxics criteria for aquatic life and human health (IDAPA 58.01.02.210)

## 2.5 Turbidity

If no visible sediment plume is present, it is reasonable to assume that there is no potential violation of the water quality criteria for turbidity (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e). Therefore, turbidity monitoring is only required when activities cause a visible sediment plume.

A properly and regularly calibrated turbidimeter is required for measurements analyzed in the field, but grab samples may be collected and taken to a laboratory for analysis. When monitoring is required a sample must be taken at an undisturbed area immediately up-current from in-water disturbance or discharge to establish background turbidity levels. Background turbidity, latitude/longitude, date, and time must be recorded prior to monitoring down-current. Then a sample must be collected immediately down-current from the in-water disturbance or point of discharge and within any visible sediment plume. The turbidity, latitude/longitude, date, and time must be recorded for each sample. The downstream sample must be taken immediately following the upstream sample in order to obtain meaningful and representative results.

Results from the down-current sampling point must be compared to the up-current or background level to determine whether project activities are causing an exceedance of state WQS. If the downstream turbidity is 50 NTUs or more greater than the upstream turbidity, then the project is causing an exceedance of the WQS (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e).

Any exceedance of the turbidity standard must be reported to the appropriate DEQ regional office (Table 1) within 24 hours.

The following steps should be followed to ensure compliance with the turbidity standard:

1. If a visible plume is observed, collect turbidity measurements at 1) an upstream location; and, 2) from within the plume, and compare the results to Idaho's instantaneous numeric turbidity criterion (50 NTU over background).
2. If turbidity in the plume is less than 50 NTU instantaneously over the background turbidity continue monitoring as long as the plume is visible. If turbidity exceeds background turbidity by more than 50 NTU instantaneously then stop all earth disturbing construction activities immediately and proceed to Step 3. If turbidity exceeds background turbidity by more than 25 NTU, or if a visible plume is observed for more than 10 consecutive days, then stop all earth disturbing construction activities and proceed to Step 3.
3. Notify the appropriate DEQ regional office within 24 hours of any turbidity criteria exceedance. Take action to address the cause of the exceedance. That may include inspecting the condition of project BMPs. If the BMPs are functioning to their fullest capability, then the permittee must modify project activities and/or BMPs to correct the exceedance.
4. Earth disturbing activities may continue once turbidity readings return to within 50 NTU over background instantaneously; or, if turbidity has exceeded 25 NTU over background for more than ten consecutive days, once turbidity readings have no longer exceeded 25 NTU over background for at least 24 consecutive hours.

Copies of daily logs for turbidity monitoring must be available to DEQ upon request. The report must describe all exceedances and subsequent actions taken, including the effectiveness of the action.

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*

Ensure that activities do not impair beneficial uses, and ensure and document compliance with the following water quality standards:

- General Surface Water Criteria for Sediment (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.08)
- Numeric Turbidity Criteria for Aquatic Life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e)
- Numeric turbidity criteria for protection of domestic water supply (IDAPA 58.01.02.252.01.b)

## **2.6 Mixing Zones**

No mixing zones are authorized through this certification. If a mixing zone, or alternatively, a point of compliance, is desired, the permittee must apply for an individual certification and must contact the appropriate DEQ regional office (Table 1) to request authorization for a mixing zone.

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*

Ensure any mixing zone is properly authorized in accordance with the Idaho Mixing Zone Policy (IDAPA 58.01.02.060).

## **2.7 Culverts**

To prevent road surface and culvert bedding material from entering a stream, culvert crossings must include best management practices to retain road base and culvert bedding material. For perennial waters, the permittee should consider the Idaho Stream Channel Alterations rules (IDAPA 37.03.07). Another source of BMPs for culvert installation can be found in the Idaho Forest Practices Act (IDAPA 20.20.01). Examples of best management practices include, but are not limited to: parapets, wing walls, inlet and outlet rock armoring, compaction, suitable bedding material, anti-seep barriers such as bentonite clay, or other acceptable roadway retention systems.

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*

Control of erosion, sediment, and turbidity to provide beneficial use support and compliance with the following water quality standards:

- General Surface Water Criteria for Sediment (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.08)
- Numeric Turbidity Criteria for Aquatic Life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250.02.e)
- Numeric turbidity criteria for protection of domestic water supply (IDAPA 58.01.02.252.01.b)

## **2.8 Wood Preservatives**

DEQ's *Guidance for the Use of Wood Preservatives and Preserved Wood Products In or Around Aquatic Environments* must be considered when using treated wood materials in the aquatic environment. Within this guidance document DEQ references the *Best Management Practices*

*for the Use of Treated Wood in Aquatic and Wetland Environments*<sup>3</sup>. This document provides recommended guidelines for the production and installation of treated wood products destined for use in sensitive environments.

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*

Ensure that toxic chemicals are not introduced into waters and to ensure compliance with the following water quality standards:

- General Surface Water Criteria for hazardous materials (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.01), toxic substances (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.02), and deleterious materials (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.03)
- Numeric toxics criteria for aquatic life and human health (IDAPA 58.01.02.210)

## **2.9 Reporting of Discharges Containing Hazardous Materials or Deleterious Materials**

All spills of hazardous material, deleterious material or petroleum products which may impact waters (ground and surface) of the state shall be immediately reported. Call 911 if immediate assistance is required to control, contain or clean up the spill. If no assistance is needed in cleaning up the spill, contact the appropriate DEQ regional office in Table 2 during normal working hours or Idaho State Communications Center after normal working hours. If the spilled volume is above federal reportable quantities, contact the National Response Center.

For immediate assistance: Call 911

National Response Center: (800) 424-8802

Idaho State Communications Center: (800) 632-8000

**Table 2. Idaho DEQ regional contacts for reporting discharge or spill of hazardous or deleterious materials.**

<i>Regional Office</i>	<i>Toll Free Phone Number</i>	<i>Phone Number</i>
Boise	888-800-3480	208-373-0550
Coeur d'Alene	877-370-0017	208-769-1422
Idaho Falls	800-232-4635	208-528-2650
Lewiston	877-541-3304	208-799-4370
Pocatello	888-655-6160	208-236-6160
Twin Falls	800-270-1663	208-736-2190

<sup>3</sup> Western Wood Preservers Institute, Wood Preservation Canada, Southern Pressure Treaters' Association, and Southern Forest Products Association. 2011. "Best Management Practices: For the Use of Treated Wood in Aquatic and Wetland Environments" Vancouver, WA: Western Wood Preservers Institute.

*This condition is necessary to meet the following water quality requirements:*

Ensure compliance with the following water quality standards:

- Hazardous Material Spills (IDAPA 58.01.02.850)
- Petroleum release reporting, investigation, and confirmation (IDAPA 58.01.02.851)
- Petroleum release response and corrective action (IDAPA 58.01.02.852)

## **2.10 Other Conditions**

This certification is conditioned upon the requirement that if there are material modifications of the NWP or the permitted activities—including without limitation, significant changes from the draft NWP to final NWP, or significant changes to the draft Regional Conditions, then DEQ must re-evaluate the certification to determine compliance with Idaho WQS and to provide additional certification pursuant to Section 401.

This condition is necessary to ensure that DEQ can evaluate any material modification to ensure it meets water quality requirements and complies with the Idaho antidegradation policy (IDAPA 58.01.02.051) and its implementation (IDAPA 58.01.02.052), general surface water quality criteria (200), numeric toxics criteria for aquatic life and human health (IDAPA 58.01.02.210), numeric criteria for aquatic life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250), recreation (IDAPA 58.01.02.251), and water supply uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.252).

## **3 Projects for Which Certification Is Denied**

DEQ cannot certify that the following activities will comply with water quality requirements, including State WQS and other appropriate requirements of state law, and is therefore denying certification for the activities listed below.

For activities for which certification has been denied, the applicant will be required to request an individual certification before the activity can be conducted. Individual certification requests will provide DEQ with the opportunity to review project details and determine if additional conditions are necessary to ensure that water quality requirements will be met.

Upon review and evaluation of individual certification requests, DEQ may 1) certify without condition, 2) provide individual certification with conditions necessary to ensure water quality requirements will be met, or 3) deny certification for projects that will not meet water quality requirements.

### **3.1 NWP denied**

DEQ denies certification for all activities proposed to occur on waters designated as ORWs during the term of the permit. This denial is necessary to ensure compliance with the water quality requirements of Idaho's antidegradation policy (IDAPA 58.01.02.051.03) and implementation procedures (IDAPA 58.01.02.052.09.g).

In addition, the following NWP's are denied certification for all Idaho waters. Projects seeking coverage under these NWP's must request individual certification from DEQ.

*NWP 16 - Return Water from Upland Contained Disposal Areas*

Basis for denial:

Return water from upland disposal areas has the potential to contribute turbidity, sediment, and other toxic and non-toxic pollutants to receiving waters.

To ensure that discharge from upland contained disposal areas meets water quality requirements, DEQ must evaluate the quality of the return water and evaluate the potential pollutants associated with return water on a case-by-case basis to determine compliance with general surface water quality criteria (IDAPA 58.01.02.200); numeric toxics criteria for aquatic life and human health (IDAPA 58.01.02.210); and use specific criteria for aquatic life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250), recreation (IDAPA 58.01.02.251), and water supply uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.252).

*NWP 23 - Approved Categorical Exclusions*

Basis for denial:

DEQ is unable to determine that meeting the requirements for categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act will meet state water quality requirements.

DEQ will evaluate categorically excluded activities on a case-by-case basis to determine compliance with general surface water quality criteria (IDAPA 58.01.02.200); numeric toxics criteria for aquatic life and human health (IDAPA 58.01.02.210); and use specific criteria for aquatic life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250), recreation (IDAPA 58.01.02.251), and water supply uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.252).

*NWP 53 - Removal of Low-Head Dams*

Basis for denial:

Material released from the removal of low head dams has the potential to contribute turbidity, sediment, and other toxic and non-toxic pollutants to receiving waters.

In order to ensure that release of materials from the removal of low head dams meets water quality requirements, DEQ must evaluate the potential pollutants associated with this release on a case-by-case basis to determine compliance with general surface water quality criteria (IDAPA 58.01.02.200); numeric toxics criteria for aquatic life and human health (IDAPA 58.01.02.210); and use specific criteria for aquatic life (IDAPA 58.01.02.250), recreation (IDAPA 58.01.02.251), and water supply uses (IDAPA 58.01.02.252).

### **3.2 NWP's partially denied**

The following activities have the potential to disturb significant areas and could disturb a significant fraction of entire Assessment Units, causing permanent and significant impairment of designated and existing beneficial uses. The conditions associated with the NWP, regional conditions, and the conditions associated with this certification are not sufficient to provide DEQ with assurance that projects of this magnitude would not result in impairment of existing or

designated beneficial uses in all waters, and potentially increase degradation in high quality (Tier II) waters.

In order to meet the requirements of Idaho's antidegradation implementation procedures (IDAPA 58.01.02.052), ensure that beneficial uses are not impaired, and ensure compliance with general surface water quality criteria for sediment (IDAPA 58.01.02.200.08), DEQ must evaluate these projects on a case-by-case basis and provide individual certification where applicable.

### **3.2.1 NWP 3, 13, and 14**

The 2020 NWPs 3, 13, and 14 require preconstruction notification (PCN) for certain activities when it is necessary for the district engineer to review activities to ensure only minimal adverse environmental effects.

While the additional district engineer review is intended to ensure that activities will cause only minimal adverse environmental effects, it is not reasonable to expect that the district engineer review will consider the requirements of Idaho's antidegradation implementation procedures (IDAPA 58.01.02.052) when making their determination. Consequently, DEQ cannot certify that activities requiring PCN under these NWPs would not cause degradation of water quality, and therefore cannot certify that these activities would meet Idaho's antidegradation implementation procedures (IDAPA 58.01.02.052).

Therefore, DEQ is denying certification for the following activities that require PCN under the proposed 2020 NWPs:

#### *NWP 3 – Maintenance*

##### Activities Denied Certification

- Activities authorized by paragraph (b) of NWP 3

#### *NWP 13 – Bank Stabilization*

##### Activities Denied Certification:

- activities involving discharge into special aquatic sites;
- activities in excess of 500 linear feet;
- activities that involve discharge of greater than one cubic yard per running foot measured along the length of the treated bank below the plane of the ordinary high water mark

#### *NWP 14 – Linear Transportation Projects*

##### Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in the loss of waters of the United States in excess of 1/10 acre;
- discharge in a special aquatic site, including wetlands

### **3.2.2 NWPs 12, C, and D**

The 2017 NWP 12 included activities proposed to be permitted under the 2020 NWPs C and D.

The 2017 NWP 12 required PCN for activities that, among other thresholds, involved mechanized clearing in forested wetlands, exceeded 500 linear feet, or that resulted in loss of greater than 1/10 acre of waters of the United States. The 2020 NWP proposes removal of these thresholds for PCN, and does not require additional review from the ACOE district engineer to ensure only minimal adverse environmental effects.

Without the requirement for PCN and additional review from the district engineer, DEQ cannot certify that these activities will not result in degradation. Therefore, DEQ is denying certification for the following activities:

*NWP 12 – Oil or Natural Gas Pipeline Activities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities that involve mechanized clearing of a wooded wetland;
- oil or natural gas pipelines in waters of the United States that exceed 500 linear feet or that run adjacent to a water body for greater than 500 linear feet;
- activities where discharge will result in loss of greater than 1/10-acre, as determined by ACOE, of waters of the United States

*NWP C – Electric Utility Line and Telecommunications Activities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities that involve mechanized clearing of a wooded wetland;
- electric utility line and telecommunications activities in waters of the United States that exceed 500 linear feet;
- activities where discharge will result in loss of greater than 1/10-acre, as determined by ACOE, of waters of the United States

*NWP D – Utility Line Activities for Water and Other Substances*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities that involve mechanized clearing of a wooded wetland;
- utility line activities in waters of the United States that exceed 500 linear feet;
- activities where discharge will result in loss of greater than 1/10-acre, as determined by ACOE, of waters of the United States

### **3.2.3 NWPs 21, 29, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 50, 51, 52, and E**

The 2017 NWPs for the following activities had a 300 linear foot limit for losses of stream bed. The 2020 NWP proposes removal of the 300 linear foot limit for losses of stream bed and instead rely solely on the ½ acre limit.

The median bankfull width measured from 48 wadeable streams monitored in 2010 as part of DEQ's Beneficial Use reconnaissance Program (BURP) was 19.7 feet. A loss of ½ acre at this stream width would correspond to 1,105 linear feet of loss, or the equivalent of 0.2 miles of stream. DEQ cannot certify that losses of this magnitude of stream bed, or that losses of stream



bed based solely on the ½ acre limit, would not result in permanent degradation. Therefore, DEQ is denying certification for the following activities that exceed the 300 linear foot limit previously imposed by the 2017 NWP:

*NWP 21 – Surface Coal Mining Activities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 29 – Residential Developments*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 39 – Commercial and Institutional Developments*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 40 – Agricultural Activities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 42 – Recreational Facilities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 43 – Stormwater Management Facilities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 44 – Mining Activities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 50 – Underground Coal Mining Activities*

Activities Denied Certification:

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 51 – Land Based Renewable Energy Generation Facilities*

**Activities Denied Certification:**

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP 52 – Water-Based Renewable Energy Generation Pilot Projects***Activities Denied Certification:**

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

*NWP E – Water Reclamation and Reuse Facilities***Activities Denied Certification:**

- activities resulting in loss in excess of 300 linear feet of streambed
- activities resulting in loss in excess of ½ acre of jurisdictional wetlands

## 4 Right to Appeal Final Certification

The final Section 401 Water Quality Certification may be appealed by submitting a petition to initiate a contested case, pursuant to Idaho Code § 39-107(5) and the “Rules of Administrative Procedure before the Board of Environmental Quality” (IDAPA 58.01.23), within 35 days of the date of the final certification.

Questions or comments regarding the actions taken in this certification should be directed to Jason Pappani, State Office IDEQ, at (208) 373-0515 or via email at [jason.pappani@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:jason.pappani@deq.idaho.gov).



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Mary Anne Nelson, PhD

Surface and Wastewater Division  
Administrator