

Draft Washington Trading Framework Definitions

Best management practices (BMPs): Physical, structural, and/or operational practices that, when used singularly or in combination, prevent or reduce pollutant discharges.

CE-QUAL-W2 – Hydrologic model used to develop Dissolved Oxygen TMDL. This same model will be used by Ecology, dischargers, and Avista to determine trading ratios, the effectiveness of proposed trading or offset actions, and success in meeting water quality standards in the TMDL.

Credit – A unit of pollution usually measured in pollutant quantity per unit of time at a point of compliance.

Discharge monitoring report (DMR): Report prepared by dischargers that provides monitoring data on parameters required under that facilities NPDES permit.

Load allocation (LA): The portion of a receiving water’s loading capacity attributed to one or more of its existing or future sources of nonpoint pollution or to natural background sources.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES): National program for issuing, modifying, revoking and reissuing, terminating, monitoring and enforcing permits, and imposing and enforcing pretreatment requirements under the Clean Water Act. The NPDES program regulates discharges from wastewater treatment plants, large factories, and other facilities that use, process, and discharge water back into lakes, streams, rivers, bays, and oceans. Wastewater discharge permits are issued by Ecology in Washington State and by EPA in Idaho.

Nonpoint source (NPS): Pollution that enters any waters of the state from any dispersed land-based or water-based activities, including but not limited to atmospheric deposition, surface water runoff from agricultural lands, urban areas, or forest lands, subsurface or underground sources, or discharges from boats or marine vessels not otherwise regulated under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Program. Generally, any unconfined and diffuse source of contamination. Legally, any source of water pollution that does not meet the legal definition of “point source” in section 502(14) of the Clean Water Act.

Offset Something that balances, compensates, or counteracts, in the case of water pollution, pollutant trading will “offset” the pollution discharged at one point by equivalent reductions of the same pollutant at another point in the watershed. Examples include water conservation, using phosphorus free fertilizers, or reducing other pollutants with an equivalent impact on reservoir dissolved oxygen. This term was included in the concept of “delta management” used in the TMDL.

Point source: Sources of pollution that discharge at a specific location from pipes, outfalls, and conveyance channels to a surface water. Examples of point source discharges include municipal wastewater treatment plants, municipal stormwater systems, industrial waste treatment facilities, and construction sites that clear more than five acres of land.

Ratio: A discount factor (percentage) applied to an expected pollutant reduction amount to account for distance from compliance point, risk, temporal variability, and other uncertainties.

Technology based limits – NPDES permit limits that must be met through technology improvements. Typically higher than water quality based effluent limits.

Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL): A distribution of a substance in a water body designed to protect it from exceeding water quality standards. A TMDL is equal to the sum of all of the following: (1) individual wasteload allocations for point sources, (2) the load allocations for nonpoint sources, (3) the contribution of natural sources, and (4) a Margin of Safety to allow for uncertainty in the wasteload determination. A reserve for future growth is also generally provided.

Trading – Any action taken by a discharger to reduce phosphorus pollution outside of its jurisdiction after installing advanced wastewater treatment technology (over controlling) to meet a water quality based effluent limit. Trading can include agreements with farmers or other dischargers to reduce a source of phosphorus discharge in addition to the dischargers effluent. Trades must have binding legal instruments between the buyer and seller. This term was included in the concept of “delta management” used in the TMDL.

Wasteload allocation (WLA): The portion of a receiving water’s loading capacity allocated to existing or future point sources of pollution. Wasteload allocations constitute one type of water quality-based effluent limitation.

Water quality based limits – NPDES permit limits that must be met to meet water quality standards, often established by a TMDL and typically lower than technology based limits.