

Responsiveness Summary to Comments Concerning Arkansas's Draft 2026 List of Impaired Waterbodies (303(d) List)

The Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment, Division of Environmental Quality (Division or DEQ) appreciates all individuals and entities who submitted comments concerning the draft 2026 Impaired Waters List (303(d) list).

DEQ received two comments. The comments with DEQ's response are below:

Comment 1) Dane Schumacher:

"Although Dry Fork Creek (HUC 11010001, Reach Code –043) is not currently listed as impaired, field observations indicate early signs of ecological stress. The current methodology appears largely qualitative, which may overlook streams showing subtle impacts. I recommend that ADEQ adopt numerical thresholds for key indicators—such as nutrient concentrations, dissolved oxygen, and biological index scores—for all small tributaries in Carroll County. Doing so would allow earlier detection of emerging impairments, support timely management actions, and improve the transparency, consistency, and ecological relevance of the 303(d) listings."

Response 1) Arkansas's Water Quality Standards, set forth in 8 CAR pt. 21, contain ecoregion-specific numeric criteria for dissolved oxygen for all streams in the state.

The current assessment methodology uses the appropriate ecoregion water quality standards. The current assessment methodology is applied statewide and includes nutrient concentrations, dissolved oxygen, and quantitative community similarity indices for fish and reference condition comparisons for macroinvertebrates and can be used on any waterbody where sufficient data is collected.

Comment 2) Arkansas Department of Energy and Environment



DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

Sarah Huckabee Sanders
GOVERNOR

Shane E. Khoury
SECRETARY

March 4, 2026

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Please see the following corrections requested for the 2026 303(d) Draft List:

- AR_08040202_909. Copper dissolved (chronic) and lead dissolved (chronic) – Both pollutant pairs were proposed for delisting on the draft 2026 list. The 2026 Assessment Methodology states “if the ambient hardness value is less than 25 mg/L, then a value of 25 mg/L will be used to calculate metals toxicity.” The draft delistings for the aforementioned metals were calculated using hardness values less than 25 mg/L. A recalculation using 25 mg/L as the ambient hardness results in both listings remaining on the 2026 303(d) list. Therefore, the listings should not be removed and should remain on the 2026 303(d) list.
- AR_08040102_011. Critical season dissolved oxygen (short-term continuous) – This pollutant pair was originally placed on the 2024 list, but further analysis shows that quality assurance requirements regarding instrument calibration were not met during this deployment. This pollutant pair should be delisted from the 2026 list since the original basis for listing was incorrect.
- AR_08040204_002 temperature and AR_08040201_803 turbidity (base flow) were proposed for delisting because the aggregation of two sites on each segment resulted in attainment. However, when looking at each monitoring site individually, the downstream site remains impaired for both assessment units. These segments should stay on the list until both monitoring sites attain.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stacie Wassell'.

Digitally signed by Stacie R. Wassell
DN: cn=Stacie R. Wassell, o=Division of
Environmental Quality, ou=Office of Water
Quality,
email=stacie.wassell@adee.state.ar.us, c=US
Date: 2026.03.04 16:17:32 -0600

Stacie R. Wassell
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ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

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Response 2) The Division agrees with all comments and will make applicable revisions. In addition, secondary contact recreation will be added to designated uses for the Bois d’Arc Lake (AR_11140201_4010) and Lake Hogue (AR_08020302_4010) harmful algal bloom listings.