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## Illinois River Watershed Total Phosphorus Criterion Revision: Oklahoma Water Resources Board Announces Stakeholder Webinars

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The State of Oklahoma Water Resources Board ("OWRB") issued an August 18th notice announcing stakeholder webinars for the Illinois river Watershed Total Phosphorous Criterion Revision.

The notice was transmitted from Mr. Bill Cauthron who is the Division Chief of the Water Quality Division for the OWRB.

OWRB states that the webinar series is designed to inform stakeholders and interested parties:

... about the ongoing work by OWRB staff to revise the total phosphorous criterion for the protection of the aesthetics beneficial use in the Illinois River Watershed.

Section 303 of the Clean Water Act requires that each state develop water quality standards ("WQS") for jurisdictional waters of the United States within their borders. They establish the water quality goals for a specific waterbody and also serve as a regulatory basis for the development of water-quality based effluent limits and strategies for individual point source discharges. Each state must adopt uses consistent with Clean Water Act objectives and water quality criteria ("WQC") sufficient to protect the chosen uses. However, the United States Environmental Protection Agency is required to ensure that state WQS, along with any changes, meet the minimum requirements of the Clean Water Act.

WQC are ambient water quality conditions deemed protective for the uses established for a waterbody. States are required to adopt WQC to protect the designated uses pursuant to Section 303 of the Clean Water Act. The WQC must specify maximum concentrations of pollutants that may be present in the water without impairing its suitability for certain uses. They represent a judgment as to what levels, concentrations, or conditions can support the desired use for the waterbody.

The Illinois River Watershed has been described as a trans-boundary watershed situated in the Arkansas plateaus. Its headwaters originate in Northwest Arkansas and the watershed includes three of the designated Oklahoma Scenic Rivers, which are:

- Illinois River
- Flint Creek
- Barren Creek

The Illinois River Watershed was most recently the subject of the November 14, 2018 execution of a document titled Memorandum of Agreement by and Between the Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and

Environment, Oklahoma Secretary of Agriculture, Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, Arkansas Natural Resources Commission or Successor Agencies ("MOA").

The focus of the MOA was addressing phosphorus concentrations in the watershed.

The webinars will be held:

**When:** Tuesday September 8, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday September 22, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday October 6, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

**Where:** Webinar links will be sent via GovDelivery and posted on OWRB Webpage a few days prior to each webinar.

Contact Rebecca Veiga Nascimento at 405-530-8800 or [Rebecca.veiga@owrb.ok.gov](mailto:Rebecca.veiga@owrb.ok.gov) for further information.