# Applying Mussels Absent Ammonia Criteria: Missouri Department of Natural Resources Public Notices Draft Procedure

**Walter Wright, Jr.**
wwright@mwlaw.com
(501) 688.8839

04/07/2025

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources ("MDNR") is holding on April 10th a Water Quality Standards ("WQS") Workgroup meeting to consider (among other things):

Draft Procedure for applying mussels absent ammonia criteria in Missouri surface waters ("Draft Procedure").

The meeting is being held as a component of the State of Missouri's Clean Water Act Triennial Review to discuss WQS for the 2013 recommended criteria for mollusk ammonia.

Section 303 of the Clean Water Act requires that each state develop WQS for jurisdictional Waters of the United States within their borders.

A WQS consists of three parts:

1. The designated uses of a waterbody.
2. The Water Quality Criteria ("WQC") that are necessary to protect existing uses and to attain the beneficial uses designated by the state.
3. An antidegradation statement or policy to protect uses and high-quality water.

WQC are ambient water quality conditions deemed protective for the uses of a waterbody. States are required by the Clean Water Act to adopt WQC protective of the designated uses. They represent a judgment as to what levels, concentrations, or conditions can support a desired use.

States can develop their own WQC if justified by technical data. However, EPA also undertakes this task pursuant to Section 304(d) of the Clean Water Act.

MDNR states that the purpose of the Draft Procedure is to:

…describe the performance-based approach the Missouri Department of Natural Resources will use to determine the application of mussels absent criteria (defined below) in Missouri surface waters (excluding the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers).

The approach is stated to be designed to protect aquatic life use in receiving and downstream waters. It details the process, minimum data requirements, and decision-making framework.

Components of the Draft Procedure include:

- Introduction.
- Criteria.
- Mussel presence and absence.
- Overview of performance-based approach to apply mussels absent criteria.
- Methods for performance-based approach to applying mussels absent criteria.
- References.

A copy of the Draft Procedure can be downloaded here.