

Basis for Classifying a surface water as an Outstanding Iowa Water (OIW) (based on the Sept. 2009 Revised Antidegradation Implementation Procedure)

Using a weight of evidence approach, the department may classify a surface water as an OIW based on a combination of the following criteria:

- Location of the surface water (e.g. on federal or state lands such as national parks or national wildlife refuges);
- The surface water has exceptional water quality as demonstrated by credible chemical data, the documented maintenance of pollutant intolerant species, or other data available to the department;
- The surface water is of exceptional ecological significance because of its unique attributes as demonstrated through detailed aquatic community assessments, population surveys, or other data available to the department;
- The surface water is of exceptional recreational significance because of its unique attributes as demonstrated by detailed information highlighting economic benefits, number of users relative to other similar waters, and exceptional water quality demonstrated by credible water quality data, or other data available to the department;
- The surface water supports threatened or endangered species or provides critical habitat for a state or federally threatened or endangered fish, mussel, or aquatic invertebrate species; and/or
- The surface water is highly aesthetic; has archeological, cultural, or scientific importance; or provides a special educational opportunity.

If the department determines that the classification of a surface water as an OIW may be appropriate based upon the criteria described above, the department will then consider the following factors when making a decision whether to classify a nominated surface water as OIW:

- Whether there is the ability to effectively manage the OIW or ONRW and its watershed to maintain and protect existing water quality;
- The social and economic impact that will result from Tier 2 ½ antidegradation protection;
- Public comments in support or opposition to the OIW classification;
- The timing of the OIW nomination relative to the triennial review of surface water quality standards;
- The consistency of an OIW classification with applicable water quality management plans;
- Whether the nominated surface water is located within a national or state park, national monument, national recreation area, wilderness area, riparian conservation area, wildlife management area, area of critical environmental concern, or has another special use; and
- Any other factors the department considers relevant when making a decision whether to classify a nominated surface water as OIW.

If the department concurs with the nomination of an OIW, the department shall hold at least one public meeting in the local area of a nominated OIW or ONRW to solicit public comment. The nomination and all other information or input collected during the nomination and consideration process will be made part of the public record. Any changes to the list of OIW waters (addition or deletion of waters) need to proceed through the rule making process as prescribed in the Administrative Procedures Act.