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## ATTAINS: A Gateway to State-Reported Water Quality Information

June 18, 2008, 11:30am-1:30pm EST

Shera Bender, USEPA's Watershed Branch Dwane Young, USEPA's Monitoring Branch Sarah Furtak, USEPA's Watershed Branch

## Introductions

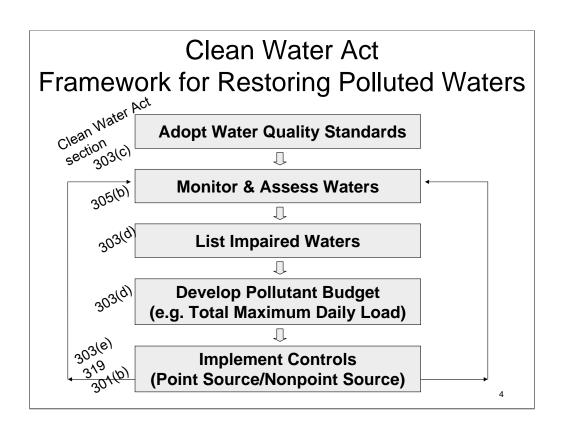
Shera Bender, Environmental Scientist, U.S. EPA Watershed Branch

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## This presentation will cover...

- Overview of water quality reporting under Clean Water Act sections 305(b) and 303(d) programs
- Discussion of Integrated Reporting (IR)
- Introduction to the ATTAINS database and Web site



# Clean Water Act Water Quality Reporting

- Section 305(b)
  - A biennial assessment of the quality of all navigable waters in each state
  - Assessment includes whether waters support their designated uses (e.g. swimming), and causes and sources of impairment in those waters that do not support uses

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Many of you may be familiar with portions of the Clean Water Act. You are probably most familiar with Section 319 through your work with the non-point source and GRTS programs. I am going to focus on a couple of other sections, though.

Section 305(b) requires states to assess the quality of their navigable waters and submit a report on them to EPA every 2 years. EPA is to provide Congress with an analysis of those reports every 2 years.

Section 303(d) requires states to submit a List of Impaired Waters that need a TMDL to be created for them.

## Clean Water Act Reporting (cont'd)

- States report assessment information to EPA
- EPA summarizes state findings in a national report to Congress (section 305(b) report)

# Streamlined 305(b) Report to Congress

- Narrative report provides national summary of sitespecific water quality assessment information provided in state 305(b) reports
- Web site/database provides state summary and waterbody-specific assessment results
- Narrative report and Web site are dual components of Report to Congress
- Reflects transition between traditional 305(b) reporting and 303(d)/305(b) Integrated Reporting

NAD at http://www.epa.gov/waters/305b/index.html -- first time ever electronic, interactive site provides public the ability to view assessments of individual waterbodies.

Because it was a transition year for 305b/IR, states were given extended deadlines to submit reports and many failed to meet even those extensions. Plus, only 5 states provided electronic waterbody specific data using our Assessment Database or compatible format; data from remaining states had to be reformatted.

2002 reports not really integrated – not really expected until 2006.

The 2002 303d list is incomplete in that we're missing mileage (optional) info for 6-7 States:

2002 305(b) impaired river miles - 309,755 miles 2002 303(d) impaired river miles - 141,576 miles

# Clean Water Act Water Quality Reporting (continued)

- Section 303(d)
  - List of waters impaired or threatened by a pollutant, and needing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)
  - Submitted biennially to EPA for approval

#### What is a TMDL?



A calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and an allocation of that amount to the pollutant's sources.

\* The TMDL comes in the form of a technical document or plan.

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A TMDL is "A calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a waterbody can receive and still meet water quality standards, and an allocation of that amount to the pollutant's sources." TMDLs must be developed at a level that meets water quality standards.

The TMDL comes in the form of a technical document or plan that includes the following components:

- •Identification of Waterbody, Pollutant of Concern, Pollutant Sources, and Priority Ranking
- Applicable WQS & Numeric Water Quality Target\*
- Loading Capacity
- Load Allocations and Waste Load Allocations
- Margin of Safety
- Consideration of Seasonal Variation
- Reasonable Assurance for PS/NPS
- Monitoring Plan to Track TMDL Effectiveness
- •Implementation Plan
- Public Participation

<sup>\*</sup> Bold = Statute and Regulations; Normal = guidance

## Regulations (40 CFR 130.7)

Each state shall identify those water quality-limited segments still requiring TMDLs within its boundaries for which:

- Technology-based effluent limitations
- More stringent effluent limitations
- Other pollution control requirements

Are not stringent enough to implement any water quality standards applicable to such waters

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The first part of the 303(d) program – the list of impaired waters – is described in the regulations (40 CFR 130.7) where it states that: "Each State shall identify those water quality-limited segments still requiring TMDLs within its boundaries for which: technology based effluent limitations, more stringent effluent limitations or other pollution control requirements are not stringent enough to implement any water quality standards applicable to such waters."

# Regulatory Requirements

## Regulations (40 CFR 130.7)

#### For waters identified in the 303(d) list:

- "TMDLs shall be established for all *pollutants* preventing or expected to prevent attainment of water quality standards..."
- "TMDLs shall be established at levels necessary to attain and maintain the applicable narrative and numerical WQS..."



No statutory or regulatory timeframe for TMDL development

■ EPA guidance establishes 8-13 year time frame from time of initial listing

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The second part of the 303(d) program is concerned with the development of TMDLs. TMDLs shall be developed for pollutants, which will be discussed further in the next slide, and at a level that will attain and maintain applicable water quality standards.

The regulations do not set a timeline by which TMDLs should be developed for impaired waters identified in the 303(d) list. However, EPA guidance establishes an 8-13 year time frame from time of initial listing.

# Integrated Reporting Under the Clean Water Act

- Integrated Reporting (IR): Beginning with the 2002 reporting cycle, EPA has encouraged states to submit integrated reports that combine reporting under sections 305(b) and 303(d)
- Purpose of integrating reporting requirements: to increase data consistency, merge data from a variety of sources, provide a more informed summary of the quality of state waters

## State Options for Reporting WQ

Minimally Required by Regulations

a TMDL

Integrated Reporting

### Status

Recommended Reporting Format

# Separate 305(b) & 303(d) Integrated Report The state's section 303(d) list is comprised of waters impaired or threatened by a pollutant, and needing A single state-developed reintegrates the reporting recommendation (CWA sections 303(d), 305)

States submit a separate 305(b) report on the conditions of all waters

A single state-developed report that integrates the reporting requirements of CWA sections 303(d), 305(b) and 314 EPA's Integrated Report Guidance (IRG) developed for 2002, 2004, 2006 and 2008 reporting cycles (www.epa.gov/owow/tmdl/)

Both are due to EPA on April 1 of every even year. EPA approves/disapproves 303(d) list, uses 305(b) information to prepare biennial report to Congress

EPA approves/disapproves Category 5 of the Integrated Report, uses information to satisfy requirements of 305(b)

## **Integrated Report Categories**

- 1. Attaining standards
- 2. Attaining some designated uses, and insufficient or no data and information to determine if remaining uses are attained
- 3. Insufficient or no data and information to determine if the standard is attained
- 305 (b) Report
- 4. Impaired or threatened for one or more designated uses but not needing a TMDL
  - a. TMDL has been completed
  - b. Already required to meet standards
  - c. Not impaired by a pollutant
- 5. Impaired or threatened by pollutant(s) for one or more designated uses and requiring a TMDL

} 303(d)

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Traditionally, the 305(b) Report of Assessed Waters contained information on both attaining and un-attaining waters, whereas the 303(d) List contained only impaired or threatened waters. Historically, these documents were submitted separately, and often contained conflicts where a water may be listed as Impaired under one document but not under the other.

Due to the close relationship between water quality assessments and water quality impairments, the Integrated Report was born. The Integrated Report places waters into 5 main categories, as shown here.

A true Integrated Report consists of a comprehensive state assessment database. It also includes the official 303(d) List of impaired waters. Since 305(b) and 303(d) information is coming from the same source (the state ADBv2 file), the Integrated Report provides consistency between all assessments.

(True Integrated Reporting States submit their 305(b) Assessment information via ADBv2, from which their 303(d) Impaired Waters information can be extracted as a subset.)

## Questions?

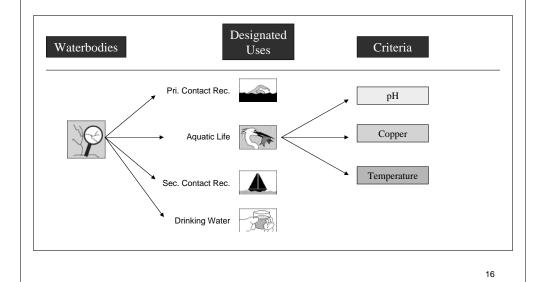


Shera Bender, USEPA's Watershed Branch

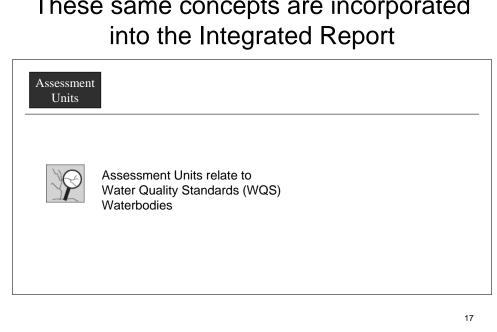
Sarah Furtak, USEPA's Watershed Branch



## Basic concepts from a Water Quality Standards Perspective



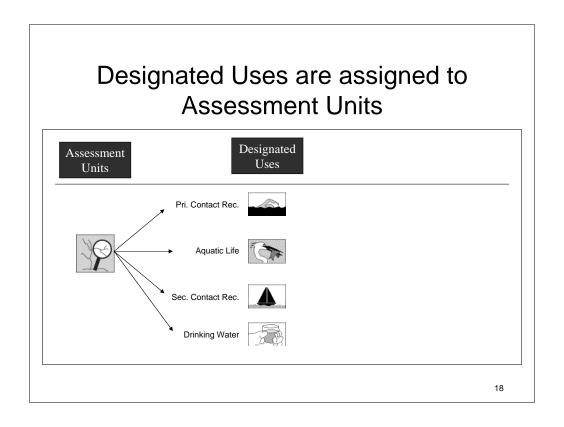
# These same concepts are incorporated



These same concepts are included in the logic of ATTAINS.

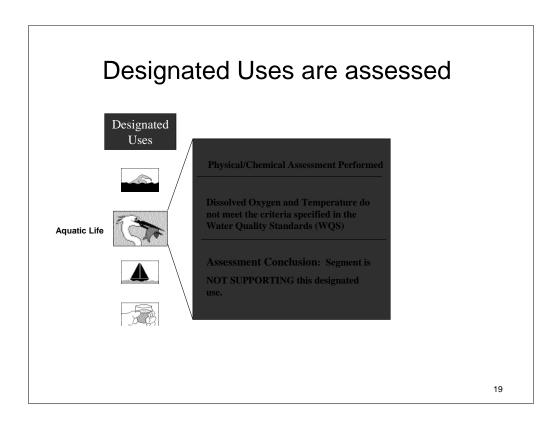
States assess and track their surface waters in artificial units called Assessment Units (AUs), which are similar to Waterbodies in Water Quality Standards.

Assessment Units serve as artificial measurement units within State databases. They are used for assessing water quality and tracking progress. They can vary in size depending upon the needs of the State. Assessment Units can be large watersheds of any size, such as an 8-digit subbasin (HUC). Or they can be very small, such as a small section of a stream.



Just like Waterbodies for Water Quality Standards, Assessment Units have Designated Uses assigned to them.

Multiple Designated Uses can be assigned to each Assessment Unit.

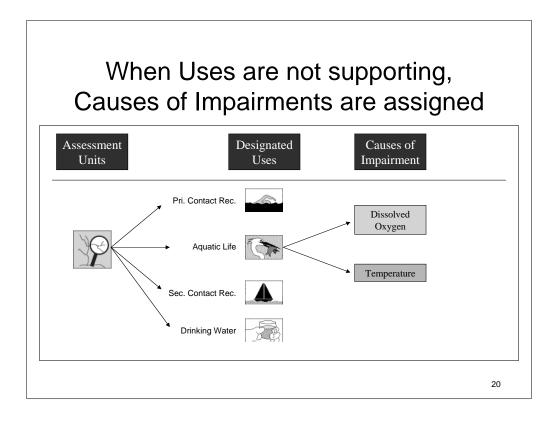


Each Designated Use can be assessed for attainment. The assessments are made by comparing the conditions in the Assessment Unit to the associated Water Quality Standards for the State. There are four types of attainment decisions in ATTAINS: Fully Supporting, Not Supporting, Insufficient Information, and Not Assessed.

- \*ATTAINS allows for different **Assessment Types**, which are required for its metadata.
  - -Pathogen Indicators
  - -Physical/Chemical
  - -Biological
  - -Toxicological

For this example, the Aquatic Life Use was assessed by evaluating Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature. Since those characteristics did not meet the criteria specified in the Water Quality Standard for that State, the conclusion was that this Assessment Unit was NOT SUPPORTING its Aquatic Life Designated Use.

<sup>\*</sup>each use can have its own attainment, and assessment types or even multiple assessment types



If an Assessment Unit is found to be NOT SUPPORTING one of its Designated Uses, then the Causes of Impairment are identified and assigned to that Assessment Unit/Designated Use combination.

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#### **Causes of Impairment**

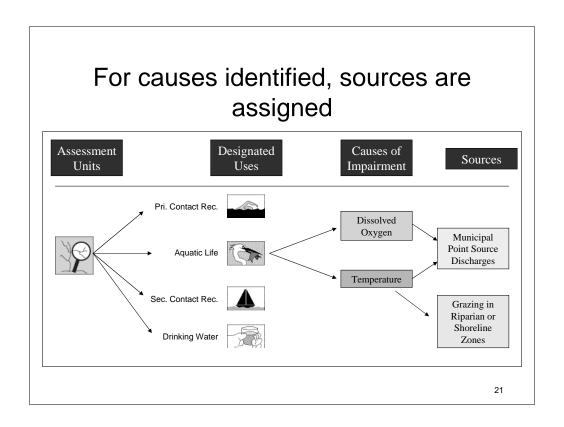
- •Refer to the Reason a waterbody has been listed
- •The Reason why an Assessment Unit is not meeting its associated Water Quality Standard
  - For example: Mercury, habitat indicators, dissolved oxygen

(TMDLs are written for the specific indicators of the cahracteristic.

• (Ex: If Cause of Imapriment is DO, then TMDL would be written for Phosphorus and Nitrogen).)

#### **Sources** (of Pollution/Impairment)

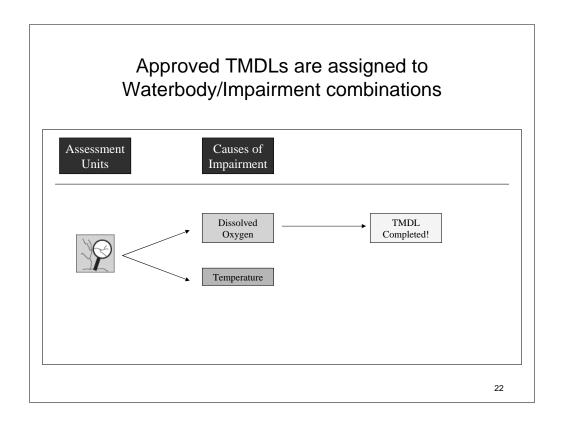
- Where the impairment/pollutant comes from
- •For example: permitted dischargers, abandoned mine
- •The actual entity that is contributing to the impairment.



<sup>\*</sup>we can have different **Sources** for each **Cause of impairment**.

For example, a Municipal Point Source Discharger could discharge waste that increases temperature and decreases Dissolved Oxygen in a water.

Grazing in the same water could decrease cover around the water which could also increase temperature, but the grazing would not affect the Dissolved Oxygen.



Once a Cause of Impairment is identified, a TMDL can be created for an Assessment Unit.

TMDLs are assigned to the waterbody/impairment combination. For purposes of the 303(d) List, the Designated Use of an Assessment Unit no longer matters.

At this point, the Cause of Impairment becomes the important part, because focusing on that Cause can help improve the water quality of the Assessment Unit.

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<sup>\*</sup>Note that uses disappear at this point, you can tell the story about discussions we had with NH about how to implement TMDLs in the system. Talk about how for 303(d) purposes, uses aren't important.

#### **ATTAINS**

- <u>A</u>ssessment <u>T</u>MDL <u>T</u>racking <u>A</u>nd <u>I</u>mplementatio<u>N</u> <u>S</u>ystem
- A national database that integrates the data from
  - the 305(b) program and
  - the 303(d) program
- The current State Assessment Databases (ADB) feed ATTAINS
  - ATTAINS is the backbone of the National Water Quality Inventory Report to Congress

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I've been talking about ATTAINS. But, what is it? It's an acronym that stands for the Assessment TMDL Tracking and Implementation System.

I've already talked about the Integrated Report. ATTAINS is the new national database that will hold the Integrated Reporting data. In other words, it will hold the assessment data from the 305(b) program and the impairment data from the 303(d) program.

This is a new effort that we've been undergoing in the past year. The database structure takes the data elements from two previously separate databases and integrates them into one national database.

Currently the database structure is in place, but the web reports are not yet online. They are scheduled to be released on the public website on December 1 of this year.

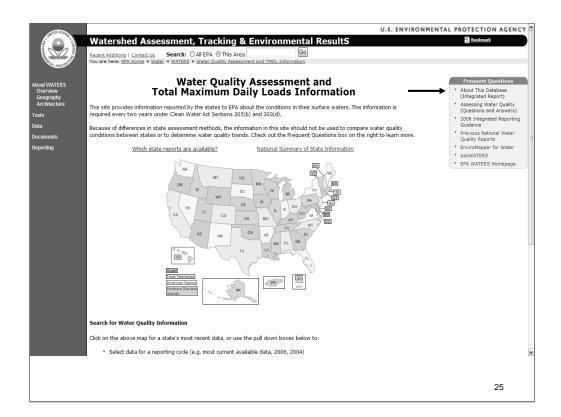
You may notice that the name includes the word Implementation. That implementation tracking capability is not yet in place, but is something we plan to work on during the next year.

How does all this apply back to your work? The Nonpoint Source program and GRTS database track implementation of on-the-ground implementation activities. So, this implementation tracking may provide opportunities to more closely link ATTAINS with your data in GRTS.

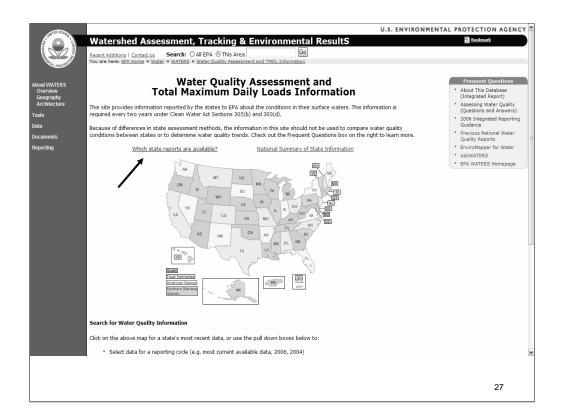
The current state Assessment Database (ADB) will feed into ATTAINS.

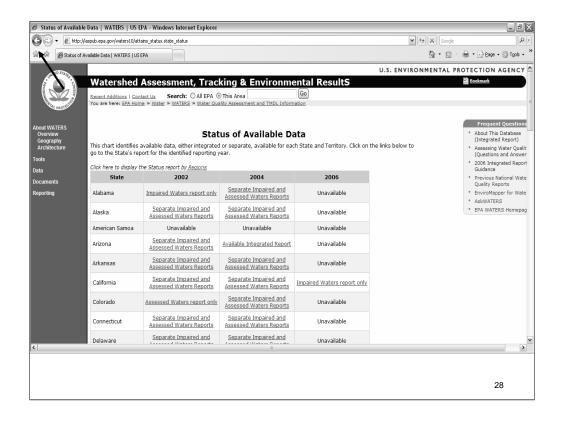
## **ATTAINS Provides:**

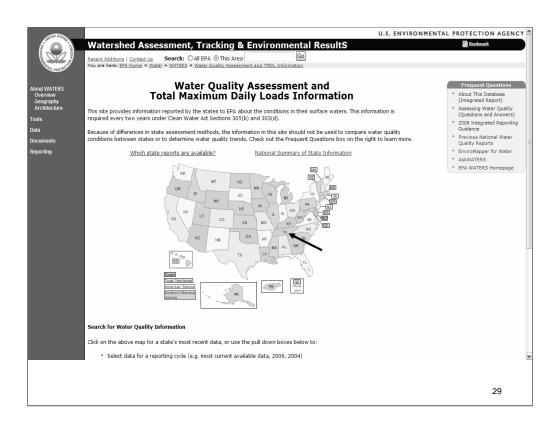
- national summary information
- regional summary information
- state summary information
- watershed information
- waterbody specific information

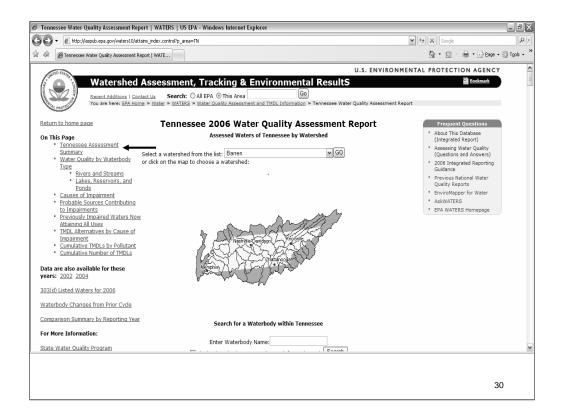


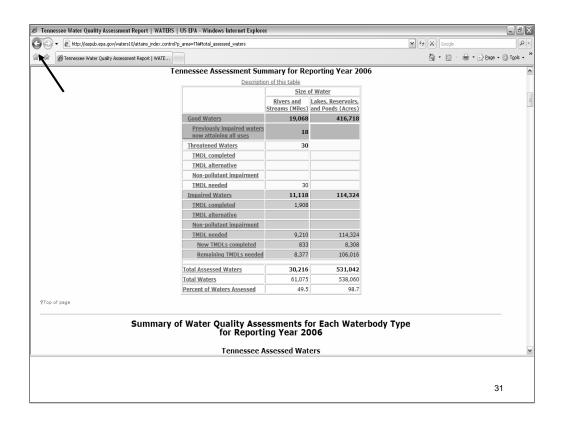


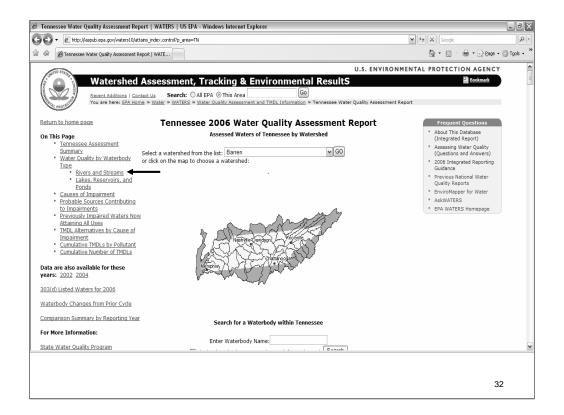


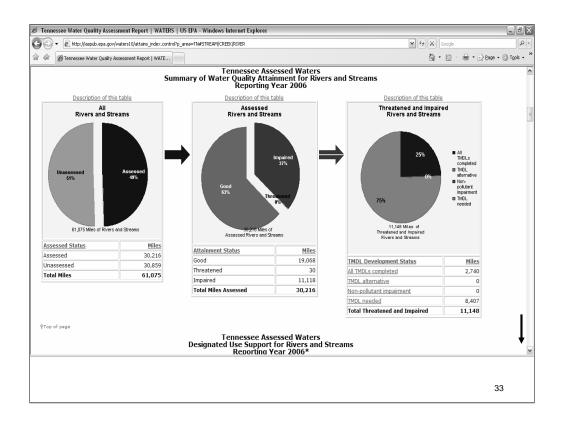


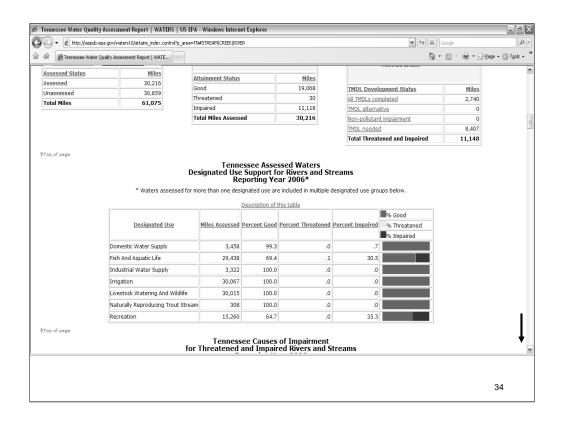


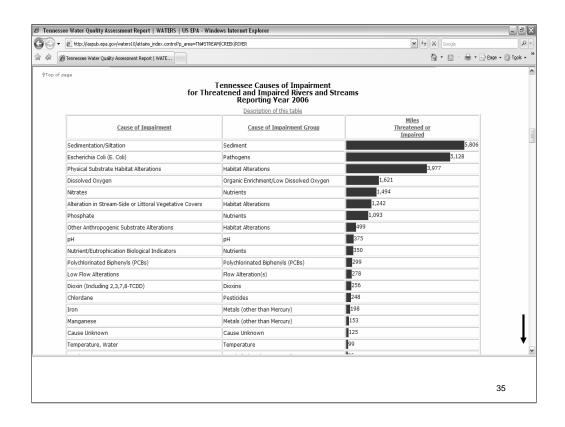


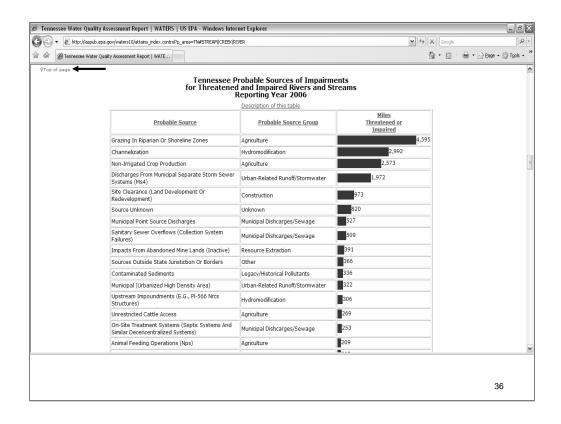


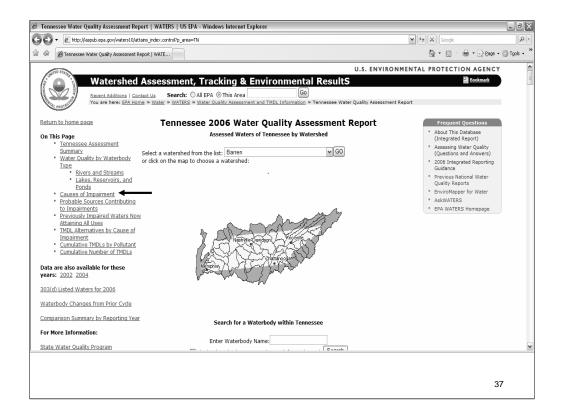


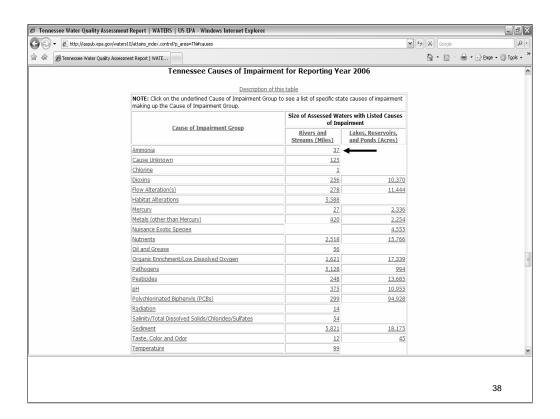


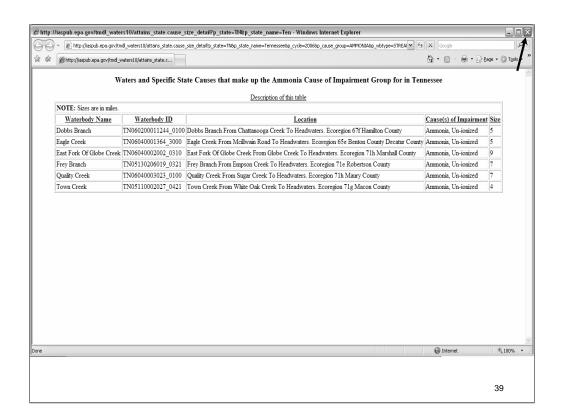


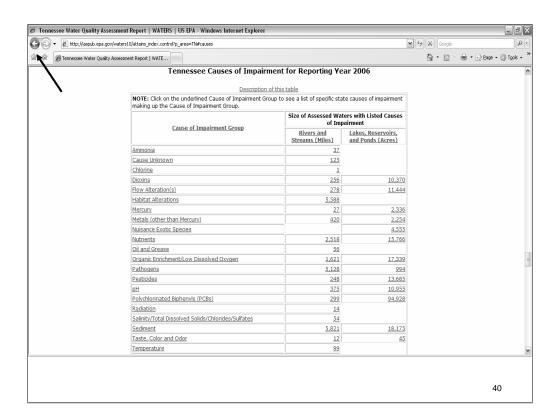


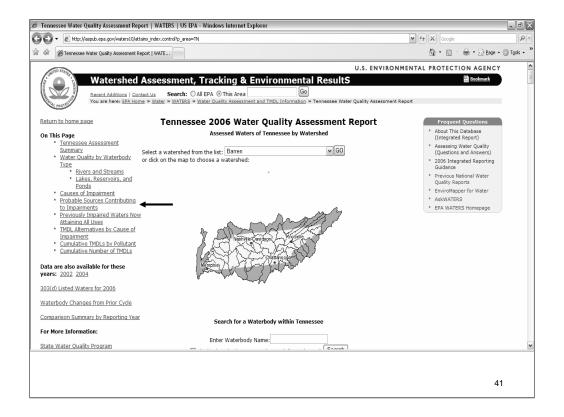


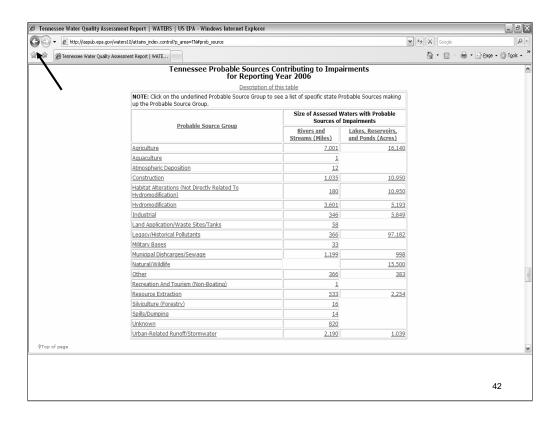


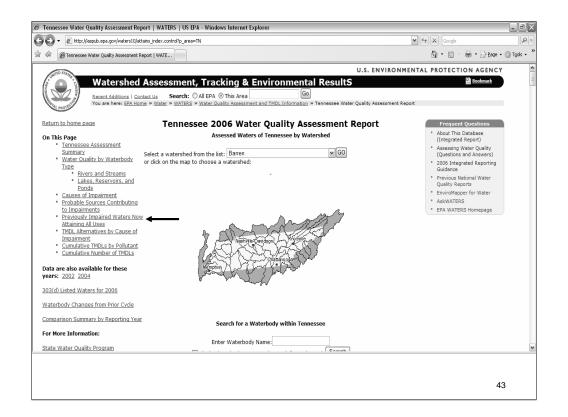




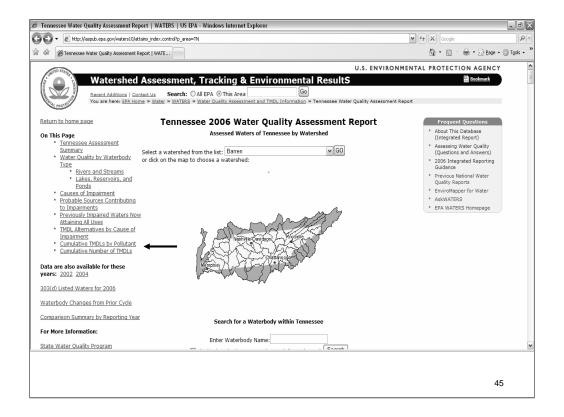


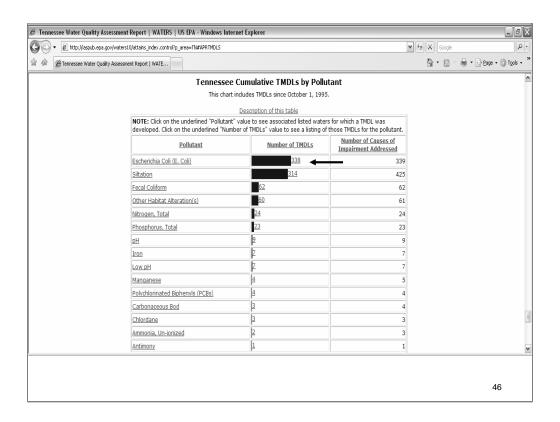


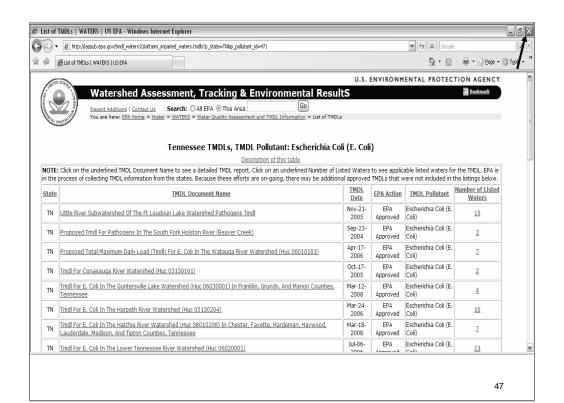


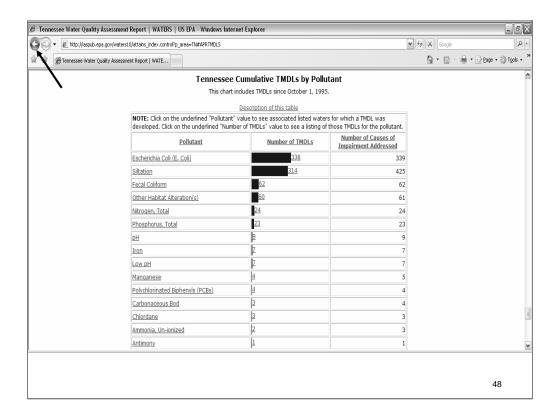


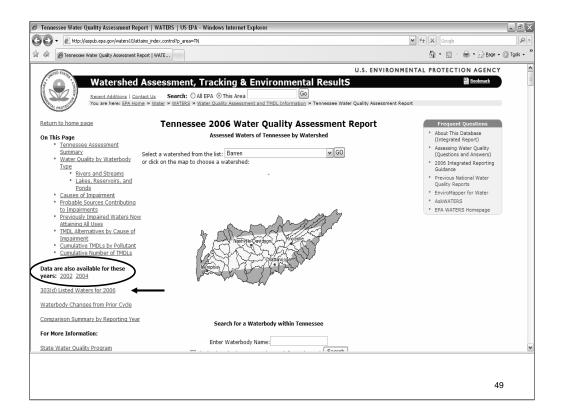
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Cause of Impairment	Group Name	Numbe	er of Causes of Impairment Rep	ported	
Habitat Alterations			417		
Sediment			411		
<u>Pathogens</u>			297		
Nutrients		268	3		
Organic Enrichment/Low Dissolved Oxygen		124			
Metals (other than Mercury)		78			
Flow Alteration(s)		52			
<u>pH</u>		42			
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)		29			
Temperature		<u>17</u>			
Pesticides		15			
Cause Unknown		<u>15</u>			
<u>Dioxins</u>		13			
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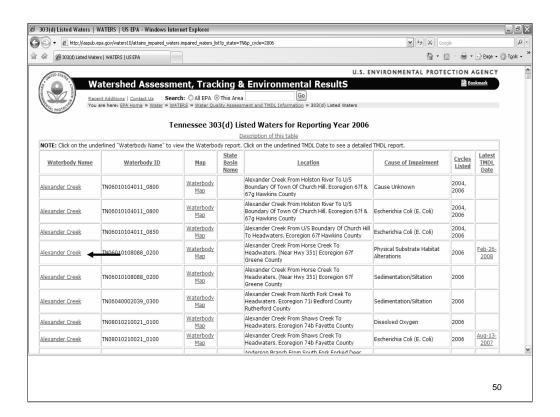


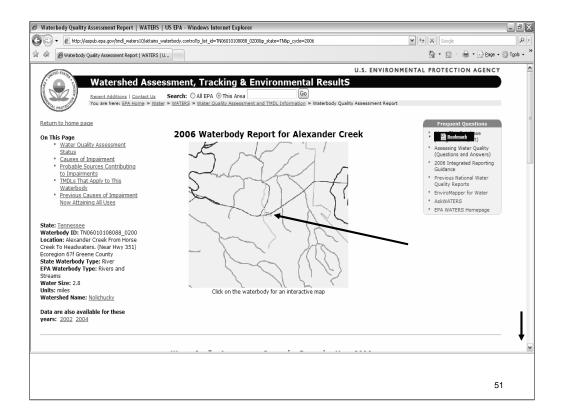


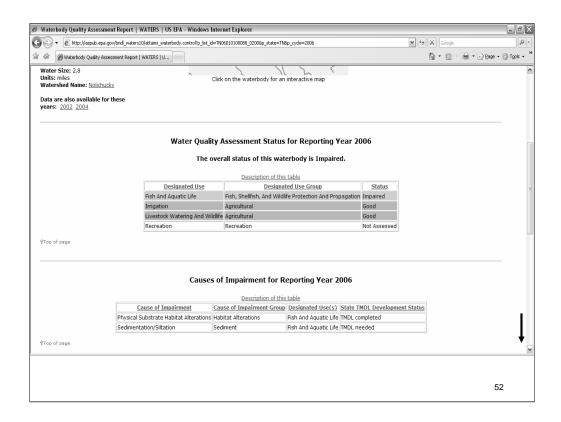


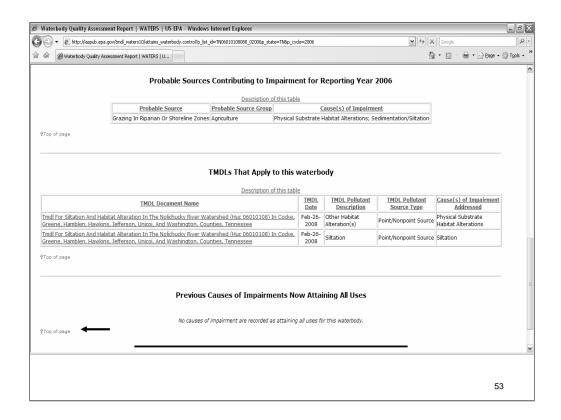


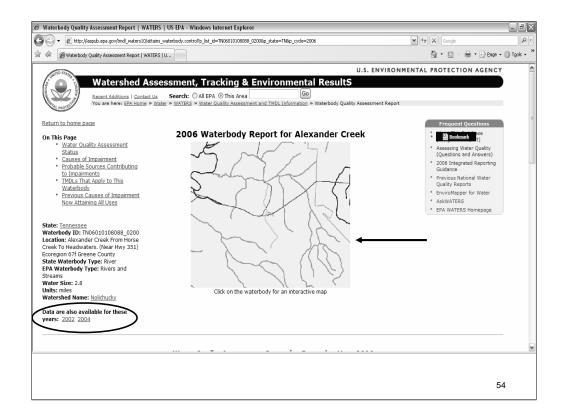


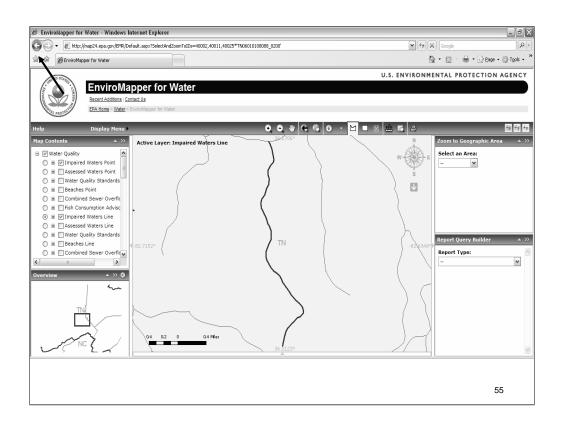


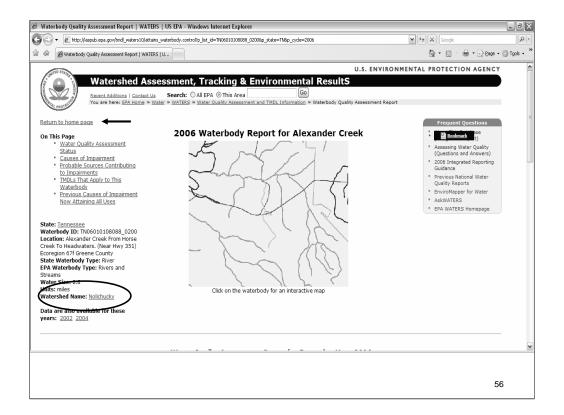












# Questions?

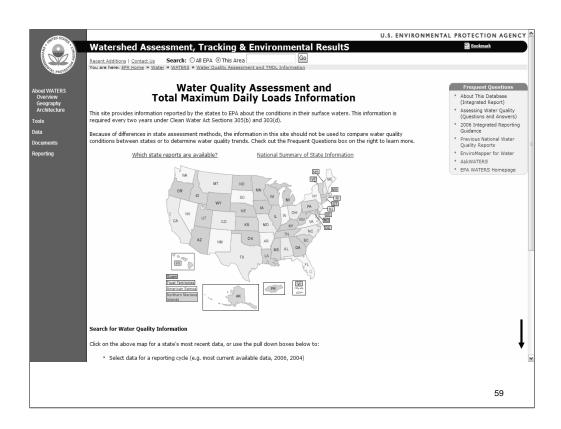


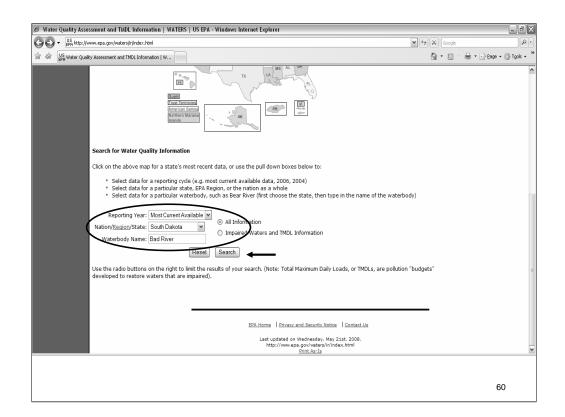
Dwane Young, USEPA's Monitoring Branch

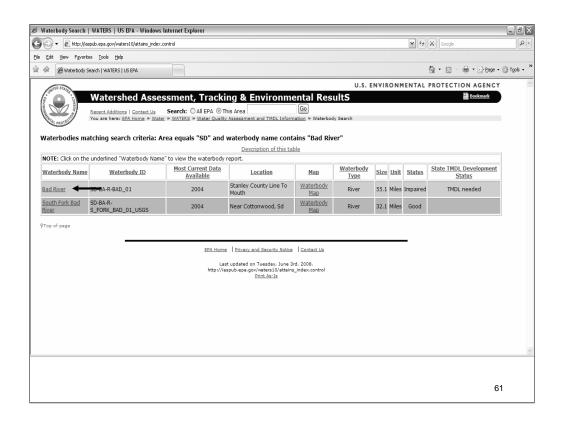
# Join Us on July 16th for:

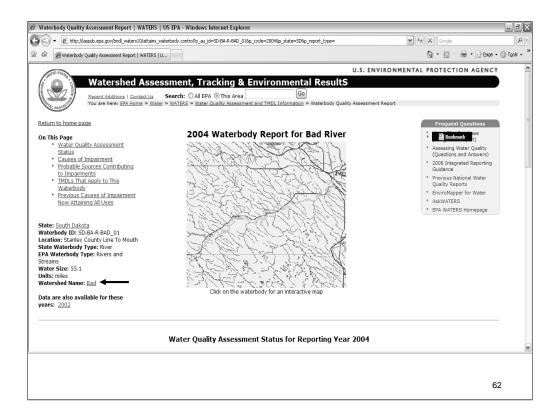
A Watershed Academy Webcast on: Clean Water Act State Revolving Fund

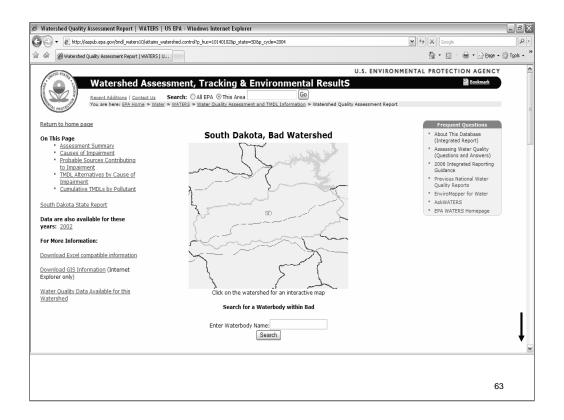
Visit: epa.gov/watershedwebcasts

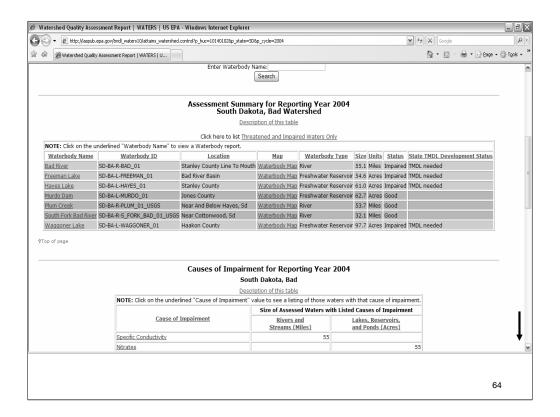


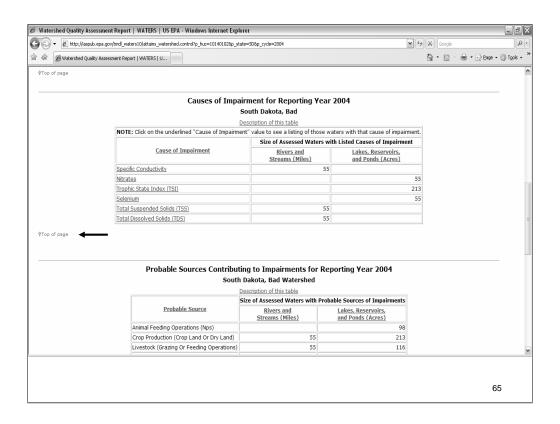


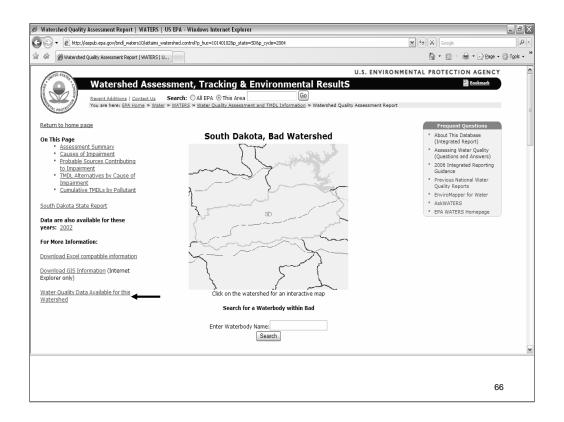




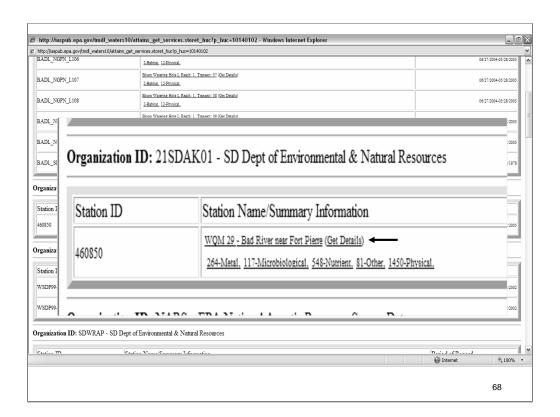


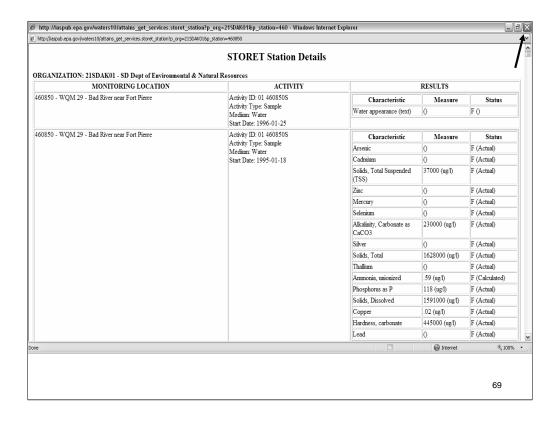


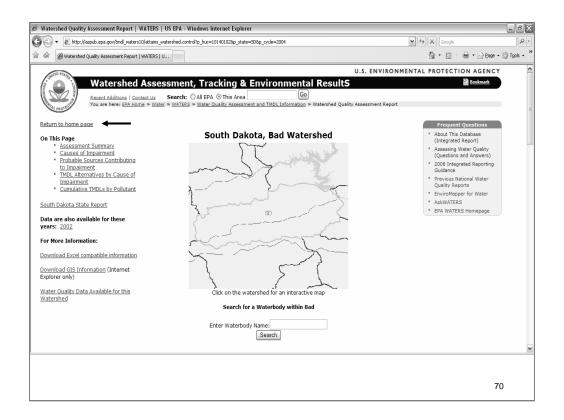


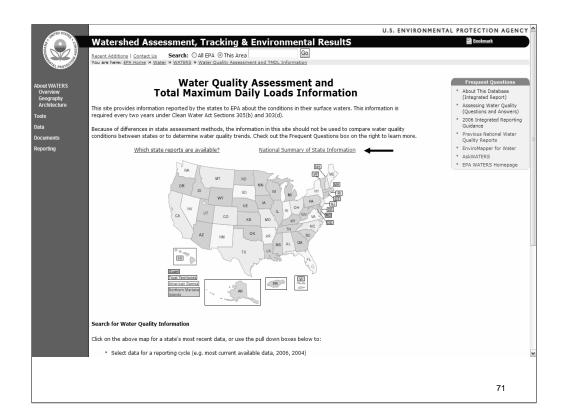


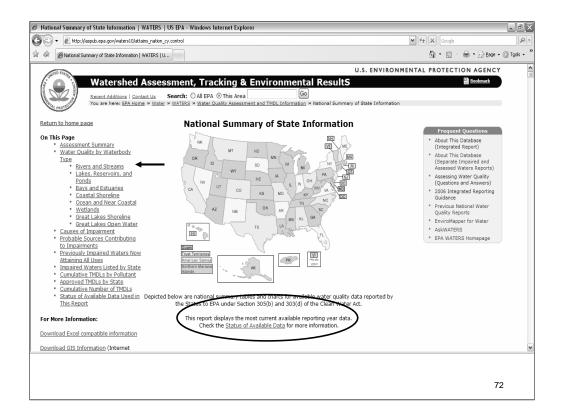
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BADL_NGPN_L106	Bison Watering Hole L. Rasch: 1. Transact: (& (Get Denilis) 2-Habring, 12-Physical,	06/27/2004-05/28/20		
BADL_NGPN_L107	Bison Watering Hole L. Rasch: 1. Transact: 07 (Get Denilis) 2-Habrin: 12-Physical.	06/27/2004-05/28/20		
BADL_NGPN_L108	Bison Watering Hole L. Rasch: 1. Transact: 08 (Get Denilis) 2-Habins. 12-Physical.	0627/2004-05/28/20		
BADL_NGPN_L109	Bison Watering Hole L. Reach: 1. Transect: 05 (Get Denilis) 2-Habrin; 12-Pevelcal.	0627/2004-05/28/20		
BADL_NGPN_L110	Bison Watering Hole L. Reach: 1. Transact: 10 (Get Dentit) 2-Habitat. 1-Microbiological, 4-Nutrient, 4-Other, 20-Physical,	0627/2004-05/28/20		
BADL_SDSM_1	SPRING VIW OF BADLANDS NP HEADQUARTERS (Get Details)  6-Metal, 1-Nutrient, 5-Other, 6-Physical,	06/20/1978-06/20/19		

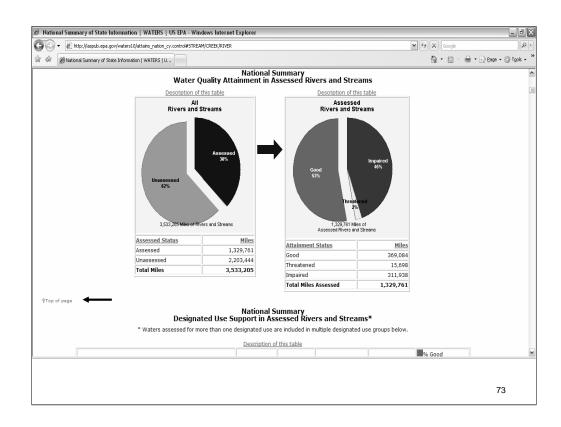


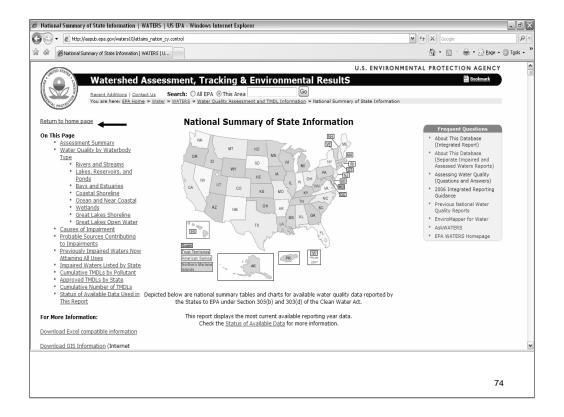












### Questions?



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# Want to find out more? Check out our list of Additional Resources!

http://www.cluin.org/conf/tio/owATTAINS/resource.cfm

Tell us what you thought of the Webcast! Fill out our Evaluation Form!

http://www.cluin.org/conf/tio/owATTAINS/feedback.cfm

#### Resources

- ATTAINS Web site: epa.gov/waters/ir
- 305(b) National Report web site: epa.gov/305b
- 303(d) Web site: epa.gov/owow/tmdl
- 2006 Integrated Reporting Guidance: epa.gov/owow/tmdl/2006IRG/#documents?