

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

## FACTSHEET

# The Clean Water Rule for: RECREATION



#CleanWaterRules

[www.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule](http://www.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule)

## WHY CLEAN WATER IS IMPORTANT

Millions of Americans enjoy fishing, hunting, and recreation around water, whether it is fishing at a stream, kayaking on a river, or surfing in the ocean. Consider that each year about 33 million Americans go fishing and about 19 million people go paddling in kayaks, canoes, rafts, or standup paddleboards. Pollution in the water can be a threat to our health and the health of our family and friends. America's cherished way of life depends on clean water: healthy ecosystems provide wildlife habitat and places to fish, hunt, paddle, surf, and swim. The water flowing from streams and wetlands ends up in rivers, lakes, and bays. We all live, work, and play downstream and need the water to be clean. Streams and wetlands filter pollution and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. Protecting upstream waters is also critical to protecting national treasures like the Chesapeake Bay, Puget Sound, Great Lakes, and Mississippi River.

## WHAT IS THE CLEAN WATER RULE

Protection for about 60 percent of the nation's streams and millions of acres of wetlands has been confusing and complex after Supreme Court decisions in 2001 and 2006. The Clean Water Rule protects the streams and wetlands that are scientifically shown to have the greatest impact on downstream water quality and form the foundation of our nation's water resources. EPA and the U.S. Army are ensuring that waters protected under the Clean Water Act are more precisely defined, easier for businesses and industry to understand, and consistent with the law and the latest science. The rule **does not** protect any types of waters that have not historically been covered by the Clean Water Act. It also does not interfere with or change private property rights, or address land use.

## FISHING AND HUNTING DEPEND ON CLEAN WATER

About 33 million Americans go fishing each year, spending 554 million days by streams, lakes, and rivers. You can't have healthy fish without clean water. Headwater streams protected by the Clean Water Rule are vital to downstream habitat of fish. These are examples of where protection of seasonal or rain-dependent streams are important to fishing:

- In California, 64% of stream miles in salmon/steelhead range are seasonal or rain dependent.
- In Colorado, 55% of stream miles within native trout historical range are seasonal or rain dependent.
- In Montana, about half of the stream miles within native trout range are seasonal or rain dependent.



According to the fishing community, the list of rivers that have benefited by protection under the Clean Water Act reads like a copy of America's 100 Best Trout Streams: the Potomac; the Shenandoah; the Musconetcong; the Penobscot; the Housatonic; rivers all across the Driftless Area; the Au Sable; the South Fork of the Snake; Falling Spring; the Deschutes; the Catskill rivers; the Feather; the Yuba; the Klamath; all of the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay; and the Blackfoot. Now the Clean Water Rule will strengthen protections for the headwaters of these rivers and clarify the waters covered by the Act.

**Hunters know that streams and wetlands are critical habitat for waterfowl, birds, and other wildlife.** Additionally, the Clean Water Rule protects the prairie potholes of the U.S. Midwest when they provide critical nutrient capture and flood protection for downstream waters. The prairie potholes are vital to hunting in America, as they play host to 18 species of waterfowl. They also support 96 species of songbirds, 36 species of waterbirds, 17 species of raptors and 5 species of upland game birds. The rule also ensures that fields flooded for rice are exempt and can be used for water storage and bird habitat.

### **PADDLING, SURFING, AND SWIMMING DEPEND ON CLEAN WATER**

**Aquatic recreation is central to people's lives and livelihoods**, and clean water is essential for their health and jobs. This includes kayaking, canoeing, rafting, surfing, and swimming. Americans who participate in these sports can't do it safely without clean water. Each year 19 million people go paddling, making 202 million outings on lakes, rivers, bays and other water bodies. Each year 3.3 million people surf in coastal waters, which are impacted by the health of upstream waterways.



### **BUSINESSES DEPEND ON CLEAN WATER**

**Businesses that support fishing, hunting, and aquatic recreation rely on clean water to prosper.** These businesses are economic drivers and provide jobs to millions of Americans.

- As a whole, outdoor recreation generates \$646 billion in consumer spending and supports 6.1 million direct jobs.
- Fishermen, hunters, and wildlife watchers spent \$144.7 billion in 2011 on activities, equal to 1 percent of the Gross Domestic Product.
- Fishing itself is a \$48 billion per year industry that supports nearly a million family wage jobs.
- Paddling gear and trips contribute \$86 billion a year to the American economy.
- Surfing contributes up to \$3 billion to the economy each year.

### **PUBLIC INPUT SHAPED THE RULE**

**We listened closely and carefully to public input.** For over a decade, EPA and the Army have received requests for a rulemaking to provide clarity on protections under the Clean Water Act from members of Congress, state and local officials, industry, agriculture, environmental groups, scientists, and the public. In developing the rule, the Agencies held hundreds of meetings with stakeholders across the country, reviewed over one million public comments, and listened carefully to perspectives from all sides. All of this input shaped and improved the Clean Water Rule.

### **FOUNDATION IN SCIENCE**

**Science shows us the most important waters to protect.** In developing the Clean Water Rule, the agencies utilized the latest science, including a report summarizing more than 1,200 peer-reviewed, published scientific studies which showed that small streams and wetlands play an important role in the health of larger downstream waterways like rivers and lakes.

**MORE INFORMATION: [WWW.EPA.GOV/CLEANWATERRULE](http://WWW.EPA.GOV/CLEANWATERRULE) & [WWW.ARMY.MIL/ASACW](http://WWW.ARMY.MIL/ASACW)**