



**FOR RELEASE:** July 8, 2011  
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## **Ohio EPA Seeks Comments Concerning Upper Mahoning River Watershed Report**

Ohio EPA has issued a [draft report](#) concerning water quality problems and recommended improvements in the upper Mahoning River watershed. The Agency is seeking public comments on the draft report before a final document is submitted to U.S. EPA.

The draft total maximum daily load (TMDL) report identifies adverse impacts and outlines the steps necessary to restore and maintain watershed health. Once finalized, the TMDL will guide Ohio EPA's issuance of discharge permits and the implementation of local storm water programs.

The upper Mahoning River watershed — comprising 541 square miles — flows through Columbiana, Mahoning, Portage, Stark and Trumbull counties. The watershed is home to an estimated 155,000 people. Alliance, Ravenna, Newton Falls, Sebring, Garrettsville and Hiram are some of the larger communities located within the project area.

Of the 73 sites surveyed in the watershed, 62 percent had some degree of aquatic life use impairment. Primary causes of this impairment are excessive amounts of fine sediment in bed material, nutrient rich conditions, poor habitat quality, and alternations to normal stream flow conditions. Nearly all of the sites assessed for recreation use attainment failed to meet the standards. Poorly functioning home septic systems are believed to be the primary source of high bacteria levels in the basin. Recommended fixes include locating and correcting failing home septic systems, implementing row crop conservation practices, and developing and preserving streamside buffers, wetlands and strategically placed filter strips in crop fields.

The federal Clean Water Act requires comprehensive TMDL reports for all impaired water bodies. The TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can receive and still meet water quality standards.

The draft TMDL report and supporting documents are available [online](#). Comments concerning the report may be mailed to: Bill Zawiski, Ohio EPA's Northeast District Office, 2110 East Aurora Road, Twinsburg, OH, 44087. They also can be emailed to: [bill.zawiski@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:bill.zawiski@epa.ohio.gov). The public comment period ends July 18, 2011.