

Pend Oreille Lake Nearshore Nutrient TMDL 5-Year Review: An Update

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Pend Oreille Lake is the largest natural lake in Idaho and the 8th largest lake in the US (by volume). It is located in two counties—Bonner County in the north, and Kootenai County in the south. Pend Oreille Lake is a popular destination for locals and non-residents who use the lake for boating, fishing, swimming, wildlife viewing, and aesthetics.

Water quality in the pelagic waters of the lake has not changed since the 1950s; however, concern over water quality in the near-shore waters of the lake has been around for decades. In 1999, DEQ prepared a problem assessment on the lake, which recommended development of a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for nutrients for the near-shore waters of the lake. The TMDL addresses mitigation of increasing eutrophication along the shoreline of Pend Oreille Lake. In 2002, the EPA approved the TMDL for nutrients for the near-shore waters. The five-year review of this TMDL is underway and will try to answer the following questions:

1. What is the trend in water quality parameters in the near-shore waters of Pend Oreille Lake?
2. The TMDL states near-shore water of Pend Oreille Lake shall be free of excess nutrients that produce excess slime. Is this objective being met?
3. How do the water quality targets in the TMDL relate to productivity in the near-shore waters of Lake Pend Oreille?
4. What practices have been implemented to reduce pollutants from entering the lake?

In addition to routine trophic monitoring, in 2014 DEQ conducted modified study based on the studies done by C.M. Falter in 1989-1990 and 2003. This presentation will summarize historic data along with data collected in 2014 in effort to answer the questions posed under the 5-yr review of the TMDL.