

Photo credit: CinemaLions and Soap Lake Conservancy



Outstanding Resource Waters

Surface Water Quality Standards – Chapter 173-201A WAC

April 5, 2023

Agenda

- 1** What is an outstanding resource water?
- 2** Outstanding Resource Waters policy
- 3** The Soap Lake nomination
- 4** Rulemaking schedule
- 5** Questions

What is an outstanding resource water?





Outstanding resource waters are protected from degradation

Applies to new or expanded point source discharges or nonpoint sources of pollution after we adopt an ORW designation.

Some activities are still allowed

- Temporary activities
- To protect public health or property in an emergency

This rule does not apply to sources of pollution from the air

Eligible outstanding resource waters

- Pristine condition and in protected area
- Unique value or habitat types
- High water quality and unique recreational value
- Statewide ecological significance
- Cold water to protect aquatic life



**Protecting
outstanding
resource waters
is a federal
requirement**

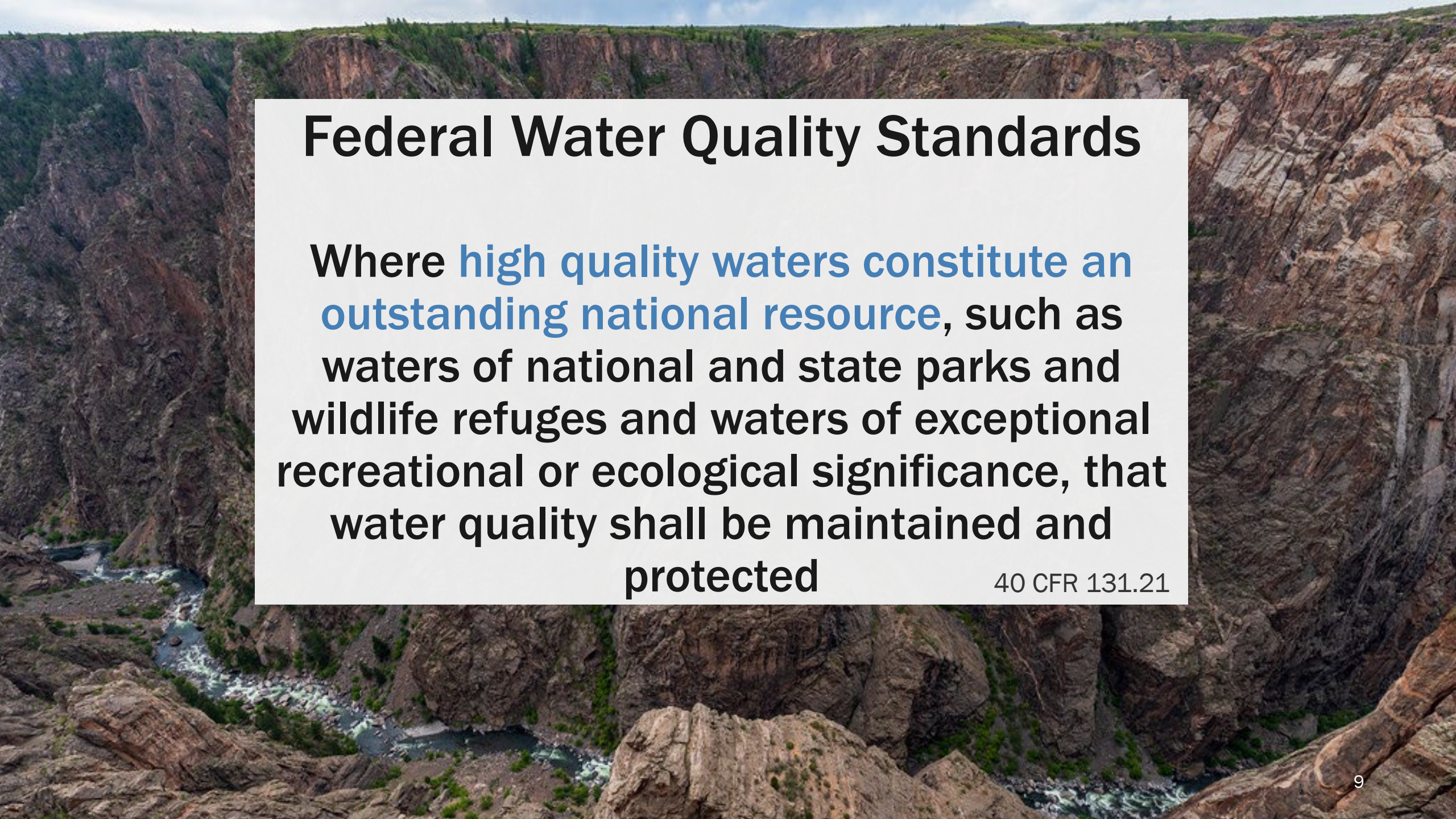




Clean Water Act

The objective of this chapter is to restore and **maintain** the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters

33 § 1251(a)

An aerial photograph of a deep, rugged canyon. The canyon walls are composed of dark, layered rock formations. A river flows through the bottom of the canyon, creating white rapids. The sky is overcast.

Federal Water Quality Standards

Where **high quality waters constitute an outstanding national resource**, such as waters of national and state parks and wildlife refuges and waters of exceptional recreational or ecological significance, that water quality shall be maintained and **protected**

40 CFR 131.21



Water Quality Standards protect our water from pollution

ORW requirements are listed in
WAC 173-201A-330

Outstanding resource waters nominations



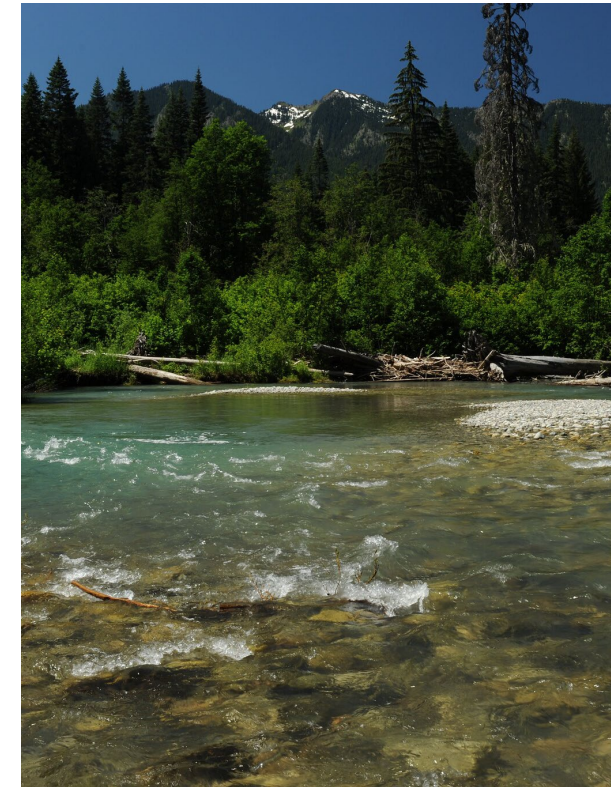
Soap Lake



Green River



Cascade River



Napeequa River

Soap Lake

Nominated in 2021 by:

- Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation
- Soap Lake Conservancy



What makes Soap Lake eligible as an ORW?

- Unique habitat that is regionally rare example of its kind
- Exceptional statewide ecological significance
- Regionally unique recreational value



Photo credit: Saya Moriyasu and Soap Lake Conservancy

Rulemaking Timeline

Public comment period begins this summer



Where are in the process

- Gather more information about each waterbody
- Talk to tribes and stakeholders
- Gather informal feedback





Thank You

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