
INSTREAM FLOW

Goal

INSTREAM FLOW

Maintain water quantity and quality sufficient to protect the human, fish, and wildlife resources and uses of the region.

Management Guidelines

A. STREAM USES TO CONSIDER FOR INSTREAM FLOW RESERVATIONS

Streams and other waterbodies should be considered for instream flow reservations when there is an identified threat to the water supply needed to support significant public uses, when there is significant public use, or when the resource values of the stream are exceptional. Additional streams and other waterbodies may be identified for consideration.

Under DNR's statutes, reservation of instream flow is possible for four types of uses:

1. Protection of fish and wildlife habitat, migration, and propagation. Instream flow reservations to protect habitat may be made for streams that have significant anadromous or resident fish populations; flow into wetlands that support significant waterfowl, fur bearer, or other wildlife populations; or provide the water supply needed for other habitat types that support significant wildlife populations.
2. Recreation and park uses.
3. Navigation and transportation uses.
4. Sanitary and water quality uses.

Other uses of water, such as hydropower which is a diversion of water, are covered by the water rights statutes and regulations.

B. PRIORITIES

Competition for use of surface water resources has not been identified as a significant issue in the plan. Further study or major new developments requiring substantial water use may result in the need to study additional streams.

C. PROCESS FOR DETERMINING RESERVATIONS

The process for determining instream flow reservations should include the following steps for each stream or other waterbody.

1. Identify the management objectives.
2. Estimate the quantity of water seasonally available by direct measurement (hydrograph), predictive methods (regional hydrographic models), or other appropriate methods.
3. Determine the quantities of water already appropriated.
4. In consultation with appropriate agencies and landowners, use site-specific studies or other information to determine the instream flow requirements for the resources and uses to be protected. For habitat resources this will require cooperative work and consultation with the Department of Fish and Game to identify necessary conditions for rearing, staging, reproduction, spawning, over wintering, and migration of valuable fish and wildlife resources.

D. OTHER GUIDELINES AFFECTING INSTREAM FLOW

Several other guidelines will affect instream flow. See in particular the following sections of this chapter:

- Coordination and Public Notice
- Fish and Wildlife Habitat and Harvest Areas
- Forestry
- Materials
- Public and Private Access
- Recreation, Tourism, and Scenic Resources
- Settlement
- Subsurface Resources
- Transportation and utilities