



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Leading Iowans in Caring For Our Natural Resources

Iowa's Triennial Review Process

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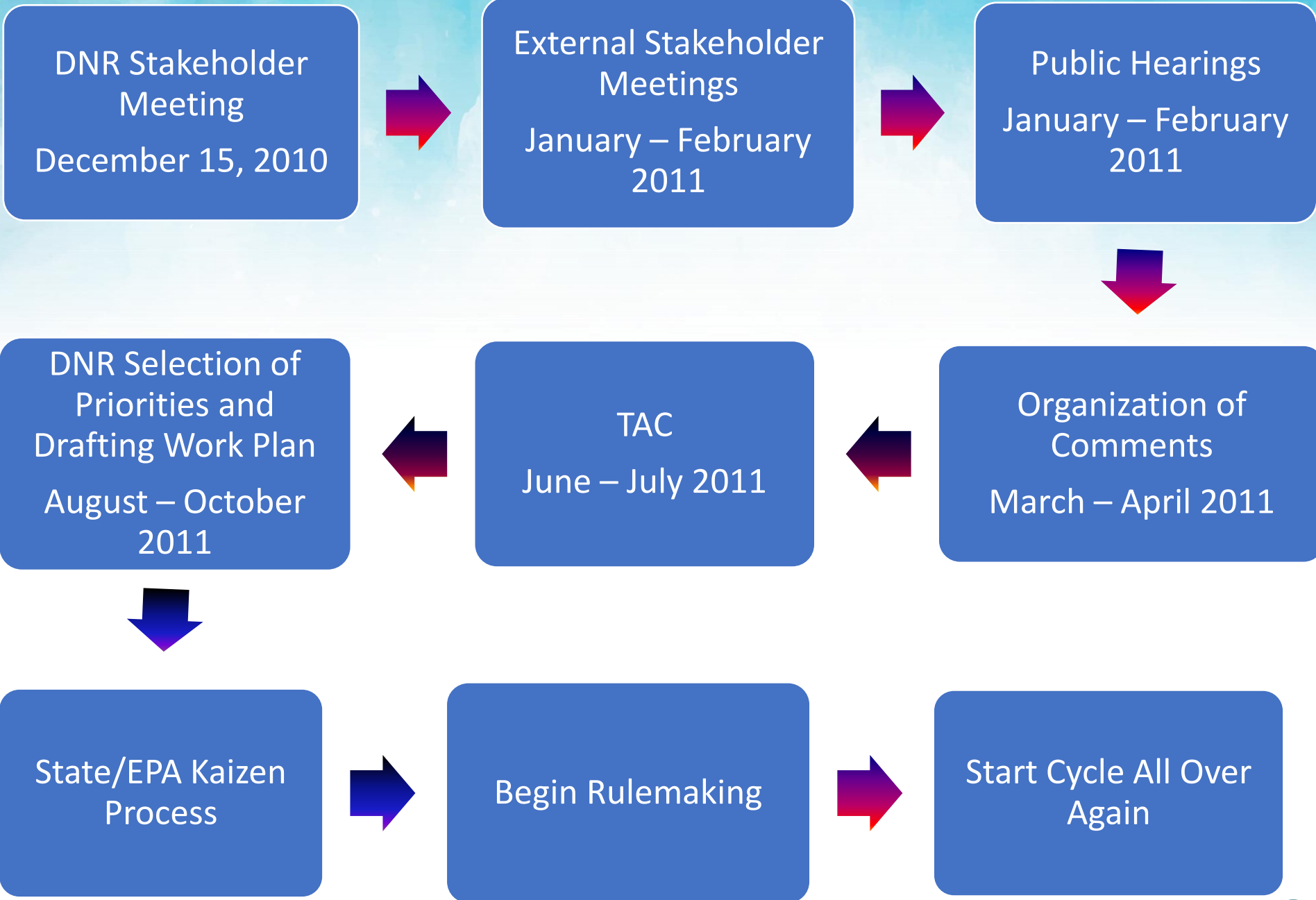
40 CFR 131.20 – State Review and Revision of Water Quality Standards

- Hold public hearings at least once every three years for the purpose of reviewing WQS.
- Re-examine segments with non-101(a)(2) uses
- Provide an explanation for not adopting 304(a) criteria recommendations
- Submit results to EPA

Historical Triennial Reviews



- 2011-2019 had a good system.
- Standards were consistently being updated.

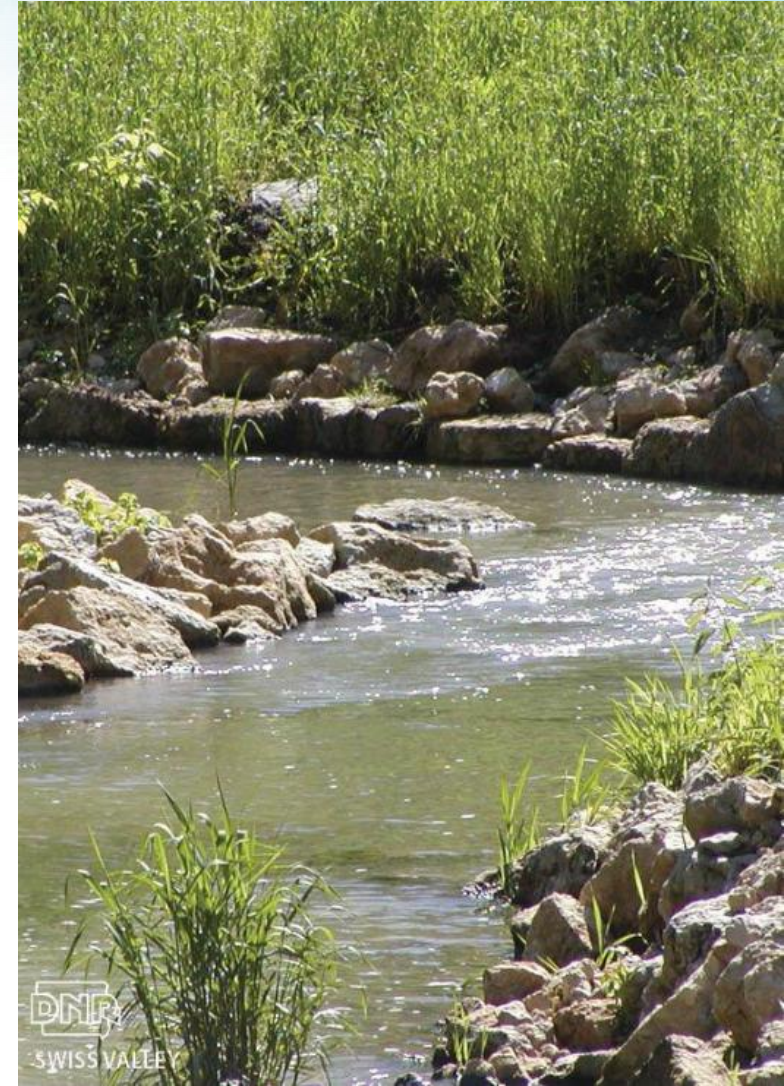


Modern Triennial Reviews

- Had to develop a new process.
 - Staff turnover
 - Administrative hold on rulemaking (EO10)
- Trying things and learning what works best for us as we go.
- Current process:
 - Two virtual hearings
 - Get public input on a list of potential topics
 - Public comment period
 - Rulemaking not tied to triennial review

Current Triennial Review

- Held two hearings Fall 2025.
- Working on final details of the responsiveness summary.
- Starting a rulemaking for UAAs/Surface Water Classification document cleanup.
- Still working on other topics
 - Antidegradation
 - Human health criteria



Challenges

- Summer 2025 – nitrate issues
- Exemption from EO10



Stakeholder Feedback

- Comments on a wide array of topics:
 - Human health criteria
 - Numeric nutrient criteria
 - Antidegradation
 - E. coli/beach closures
 - PFAS
 - Nitrates
 - Harmful Algal Blooms/Cyanobacteria
 - Waters of the United States
- Including things that aren't related to WQS:
 - IR
 - TMDLs
 - Drinking water
- Many NPDES facilities haven't received their permit yet. Some have been waiting 20 years.

Topic Prioritization

- UAAs are always first.
- Combination of what we think we can accomplish with staff time and what the stakeholders are advocating for.
- Costly topics would require both a strong need and significant stakeholder backing.



Summary

- Updating Iowa's triennial review process
- Challenges
- Lots of stakeholder feedback
- Priority is always UAAs first

Thank you!

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<https://www.iowadnr.gov/environmental-protection/water-quality/water-quality-standards>