

Cherry Creek Basin

Program Description:

Cherry Creek Basin, Colorado

The Cherry Creek Reservoir Watershed Phosphorus Trading Program in Denver is another innovative point/nonpoint source trading program. The goal of this program is to allow point source discharges to increase within a TMDL cap. Point and nonpoint controls have been implemented to reduce phosphorus loadings in the watershed. Municipal facilities must optimize controls and comply with permit limits, and BMP for urban runoff must be implemented before a trade is approved (Paulson, 1997). Credits generated from nonpoint source pollutant reduction facilities can be used to offset growth upon a showing of need. Development and credit use are required to be consistent with a basin plan established by the Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority, which was established by the state legislature. Permits issued by the state must also be consistent with the basin plan and use of credits approved by the Authority.

The TMDL requires urban nonpoint sources to reduce loadings by implementing BMP's. Only those reductions beyond the required BMP reductions can qualify for trading. Trading was not expected to occur until growth caused point source loading limits to be exceeded and the nonpoint source 50% baseline reductions are achieved (Apogee Research, Inc., 1992). The Apogee report concluded that when the basinwide phosphorous limit is reached, point source limits would depend on the nonpoint source reductions to accommodate further growth. Alternatively, point source limits could be reduced to compensate for nonpoint source loadings if the 50% threshold has not been achieved.

One point source discharger has requested phosphorus from the trade pool for a plant expansion, which is currently under construction. The Authority has approved the trade credits but must complete the trade program details before the transfer of trade credits is final (Personal Communication from Ms. Rhonda Sandquist of McKenna & Cuneo, September 28, 1998).

The Cherry Creek program is currently being revised to reflect baseline allocations under an updated TMDL.

[CO Citizen's Guide to Water Quality Protection](#)

[Phosphorus Credit Trading in the Cherry Creek Basin: An Innovative Approach, Water Environment Research Foundation report](#)

[Water Quality Authority Trading Program](#)