

Comments on Revised Proposed Basin Plan Amendment
re:
West Squaw Creek
submitted by Kathleen Goforth, Water Quality Standards Coordinator
EPA Region 9
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The use designation part of the revised proposal is an improvement over that presented in the draft Staff Report to the extent that it recognizes the existing aquatic life use. Some refinement or further documentation of the extent of the acid/metals-limited portion of the Creek may be needed, given the age and one-time nature of the bioassessment data, and the fact that no fish sampling was conducted in the most downstream segment. Also, it is not clear whether potential further improvements in water quality, resulting from recent and planned remedial actions, have been factored in to the use designation. Another critical issue is the need to demonstrate that the designated/existing uses will be protected by appropriate criteria/objectives, as required by 40 CFR 131.11. If the site-specific objectives in Table III-1 of the Basin Plan are removed from applicability to West Squaw Creek, then it appears that the CTR criteria become effective for the Creek. Will those criteria be adequate to protect the existing/designated uses in the Creek and downstream, and to ensure no degradation? The Staff Report should be revised to address these questions.