



## GLOSSARY

# Glossary of Terms Used in Case Studies and Folder

**Antidegradation policy** — policy required by EPA's water quality standards regulation that states and authorized Indian tribes must adopt to conserve, maintain, and protect water quality that is better than that necessary to protect designated uses.

**Biological assessments** — evaluation of the biological condition of a waterbody using biological surveys and other direct measurements of resident biota in surface waters.

**Biological community** — all the groups of organisms living together in the same area, usually interacting or depending on each other for existence.

**Biological criteria** — narrative or numeric expressions that describe the desired biological condition of aquatic communities inhabiting particular types of waterbodies.

**Biological integrity** — the condition of the aquatic community inhabiting unimpaired waterbodies of a specific habitat as measured by community structure and function.

**Biological survey** — collecting, processing, and analyzing a representative portion of the resident aquatic community to determine its structural and/or functional characteristics.

**Designated use** — the use defined in water quality standards as the goal for each waterbody or waterbody segment whether or not that use is being met.

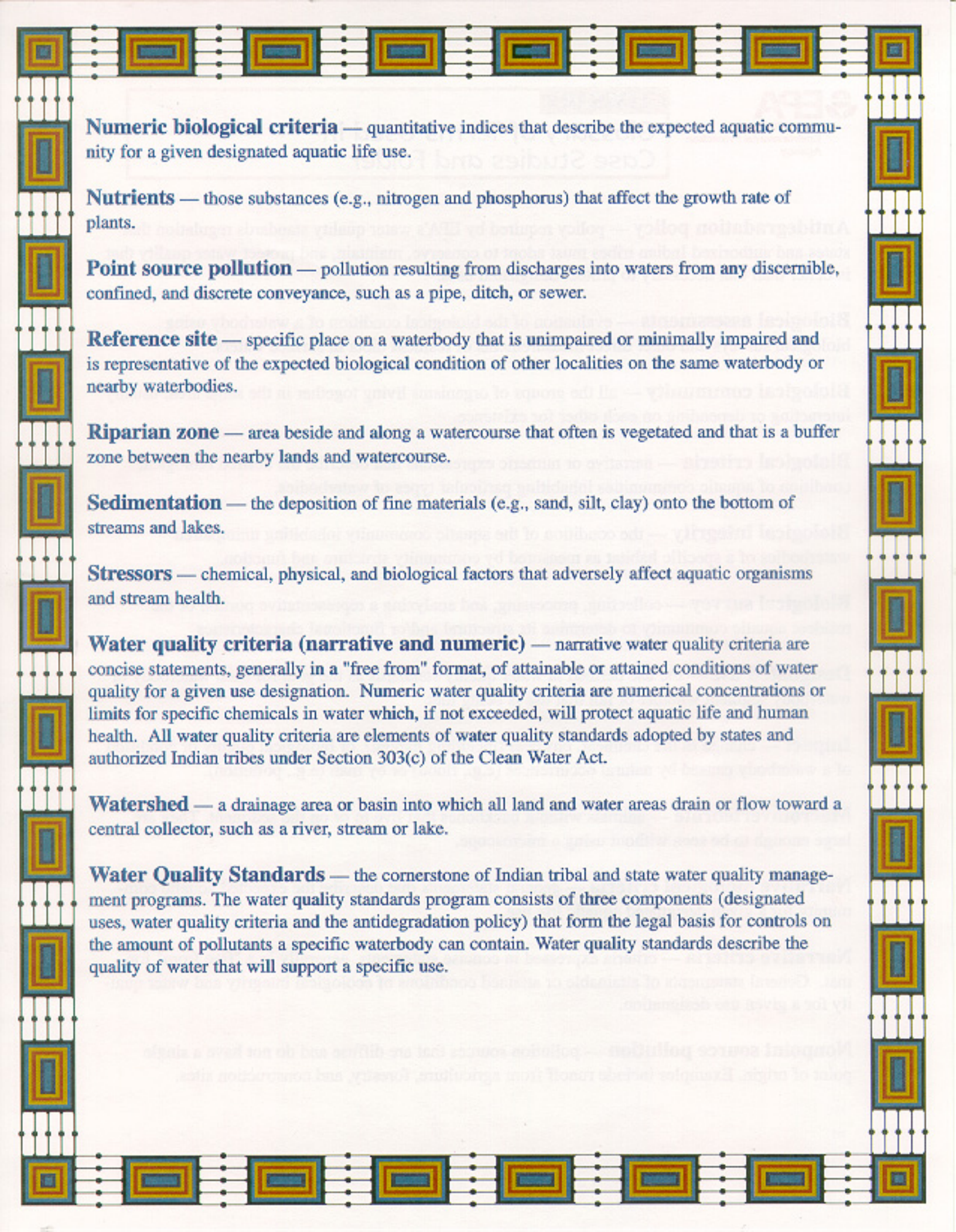
**Impact** — change in the chemical, physical (including habitat), or biological quality or condition of a waterbody caused by natural occurrences (e.g., flood) or by man (e.g., pollution).

**Macroinvertebrate** — animals without backbones that live in or on the sediment. They are large enough to be seen without using a microscope.

**Narrative biological criteria** — general statements that describe the expected aquatic community for a given designated aquatic life use.

**Narrative criteria** — criteria expressed in concise statements, generally in a "free from" format. General statements of attainable or attained conditions of ecological integrity and water quality for a given use designation.

**Nonpoint source pollution** — pollution sources that are diffuse and do not have a single point of origin. Examples include runoff from agriculture, forestry, and construction sites.



**Numeric biological criteria** — quantitative indices that describe the expected aquatic community for a given designated aquatic life use.

**Nutrients** — those substances (e.g., nitrogen and phosphorus) that affect the growth rate of plants.

**Point source pollution** — pollution resulting from discharges into waters from any discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, such as a pipe, ditch, or sewer.

**Reference site** — specific place on a waterbody that is unimpaired or minimally impaired and is representative of the expected biological condition of other localities on the same waterbody or nearby waterbodies.

**Riparian zone** — area beside and along a watercourse that often is vegetated and that is a buffer zone between the nearby lands and watercourse.

**Sedimentation** — the deposition of fine materials (e.g., sand, silt, clay) onto the bottom of streams and lakes.

**Stressors** — chemical, physical, and biological factors that adversely affect aquatic organisms and stream health.

**Water quality criteria (narrative and numeric)** — narrative water quality criteria are concise statements, generally in a "free from" format, of attainable or attained conditions of water quality for a given use designation. Numeric water quality criteria are numerical concentrations or limits for specific chemicals in water which, if not exceeded, will protect aquatic life and human health. All water quality criteria are elements of water quality standards adopted by states and authorized Indian tribes under Section 303(c) of the Clean Water Act.

**Watershed** — a drainage area or basin into which all land and water areas drain or flow toward a central collector, such as a river, stream or lake.

**Water Quality Standards** — the cornerstone of Indian tribal and state water quality management programs. The water quality standards program consists of three components (designated uses, water quality criteria and the antidegradation policy) that form the legal basis for controls on the amount of pollutants a specific waterbody can contain. Water quality standards describe the quality of water that will support a specific use.