

EPA proposes stricter rules on water pollution

By Juliet Eilperin, Washington Post

The Obama administration announced Wednesday that it will impose stricter pollution controls on millions of acres of wetlands and tens of thousands of miles of streams.

The new guidelines from the Environmental Protection Agency, which will be codified in a federal regulation later this year, could prevent the dumping of mining waste and the discharge of industrial pollutants to waters that feed swimming holes and drinking water supplies. The specific restriction will depend on the waterway.



Glass bottles strewn on the bank of the Upper Truckee River in summer 2010. Photo/LTN file

The question of which isolated streams and wetlands qualify for protection under the Clean Water Act has been in dispute for a decade. The Supreme Court has issued two decisions, and the George W. Bush administration issued guidance in 2003 and 2008 limiting the scope of the act.

EPA Administrator Lisa P. Jackson said in a telephone news conference with reporters that although the new rules will expand the waterways enjoying federal protection, “this is not some massive increase, as far as we can tell.”

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