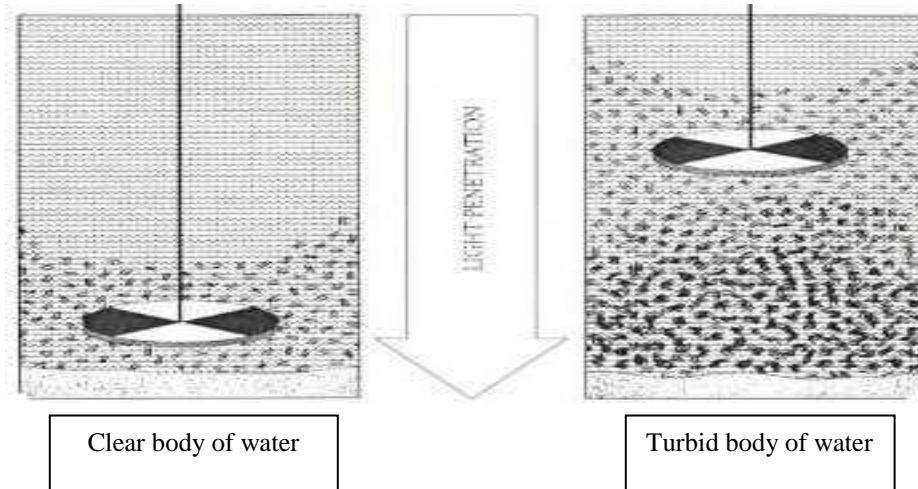


TURBIDITY FACT SHEET

Definition: Cloudiness of the water, caused by suspended materials that can be seen and scatter the light, which passes through the water...(Turbid waters are those in which you can not see your feet in knee deep water).



Background:

Causes of Turbidity:

- Soil Erosion,
- Waste Discharge,
- Urban Runoff,
- Bottom feeders, such as carp, kick up sediment as they search for food on the bottom of the waterway,
- Algal growth.

Soil erosion and urban runoff in a suburb of Pittsburgh. Creek Connections photo.



Consequences of Turbidity:

- As turbidity increases, water loses its ability to support diverse aquatic organisms,
- It warms water by absorbing heat,
- It blocks photosynthesis,
- It irritates and clogs gills of fish,
- It irritates filter feeding insects and mussels,

- It smothers egg masses & nest sites,
- It carries nutrients and pesticides,
- It decreases visibility for predators and prey.

Water Quality:

- The EPA states that drinking water should not exceed 5 JTU for two consecutive days or have a monthly average of 1 JTU.
- Should not reduce photosynthetic activity any more than 10% of normal.