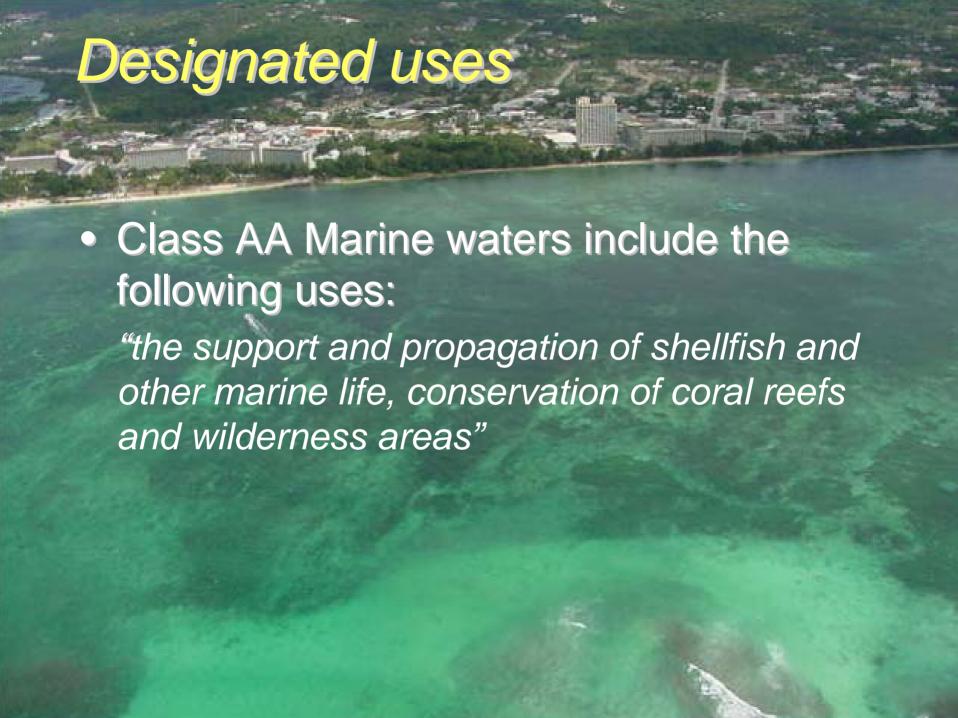




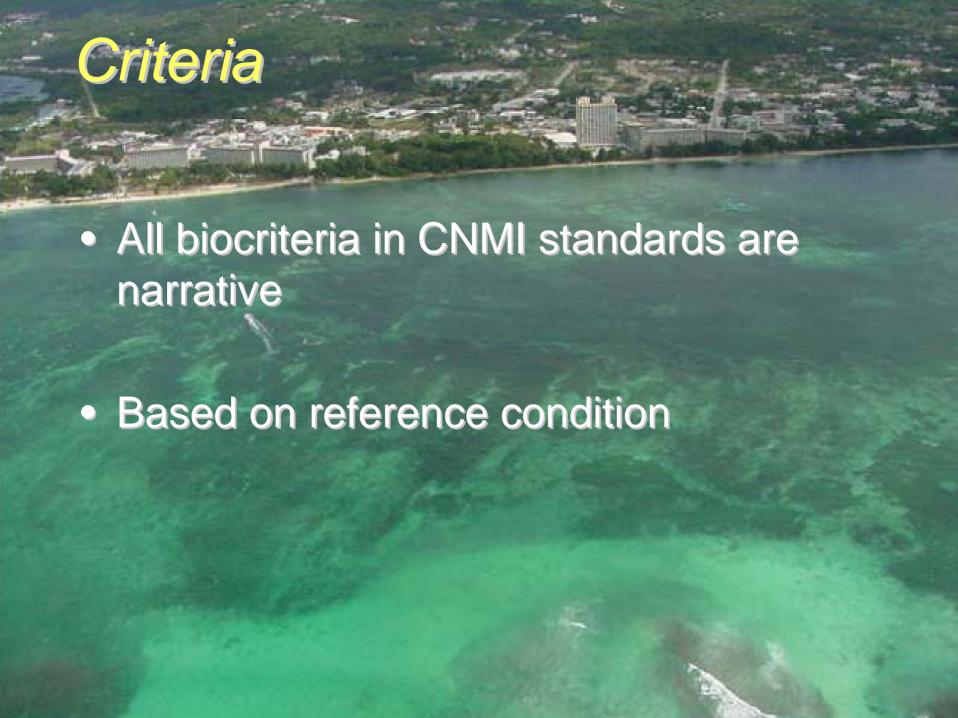
CNMI Division of Environmental Quality

"DEQ is to establish water quality standards not manage and conserve fish and wildlife"

- Public comment received during 2004 triennial review









"The health and life history characteristics of aquatic organisms in waters affected by controllable water quality factors shall not differ significantly from those for the same waters in areas unaffected by controllable water quality factors. Also, controllable water quality factors shall not cause a detrimental increase in concentrations of toxic pollutants found in bottom sediments or aquatic life."

Dredging

- Adopted mixing zone requirements
 - Coral monitoring before & during project
 - Work stoppage during coral spawning
- Language clearly ties requirements to protection of corals and seagrass



- Standard methods for coral surveys
- Action levels, triggers
 - When do you stop a project?
- Biocriteria for nutrients
 - To complement / modify numeric criteria
- Flexibility needs to be retained in the system



Biocriteria components of the standards in general:

Comment:

"Nowhere does the Water Quality Standards Regulations authorize the DEQ to implement specific management measures directed at marine life."

"DEQ should not invade the province of other regulatory agencies that have more expertise in the management and protection of our marine life."

 Regarding the prohibition of dredging during the coral spawn:

Comment:

"DEQ is plainly exceeding its regulatory authority and is now attempting to delve into the management of marine life"

 Regarding requirement to stop dredging during the coral spawn:

Comment:

"if there are acceptable levels of fecal chloroform [sic] at our beaches for human recreation, are there not acceptable levels of turbidity for natural materials for coral reproduction?"

Regarding turbidity criteria:

Comment:

"The turbidity standard for Class AA marine waters (0.5 NTU above ambient) is more strict than our drinking water standard! This is a problem that needs to be addressed."

Regarding all aspects of standards concerning wetlands:

Comment:

"leave wetland regulations to existing programs under [coastal zone program] and USCOE... DEQ is suppose to regulate only water quality issues"

 On the use of the 404(b)(1) guidelines for determining consistency with the antidegradation policy for discharges of fill:

Comment:

...the CWA 404(b)(1) Regulations have absolutely nothing to do with water quality issues...