

Montana TMDL Program Update
Prepared for the Water Policy Interim Committee (WPIC)
by the MT Department of Environmental Quality¹
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TMDL Introduction

- A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can assimilate and still meet water quality standards.
- TMDLs are required for each water body - pollutant combination not meeting a water quality standard.
- The allowable load identified in each TMDL is allocated to different pollutant sources within the watershed. Waste load allocations apply to point sources and must be incorporated into discharge permits; whereas load allocations apply to nonpoint or diffuse sources and are predominately implemented via voluntary land management practices to reduce pollutant loading.

Program Accomplishments

- Since the last update to WPIC in July of 2014, the Department has:
 - Completed 128 TMDLs in 13 different watersheds.
 - Resolved the TMDL development lawsuit that originated in 2000. Over 1,300 TMDLs have now been completed in more than 50 different watersheds. The attached map shows areas with completed TMDL work.

Program Focus and Schedule

- Moving forward, Montana's TMDL development schedule reflects a balance toward completing TMDLs in areas of high interest while providing increased assistance toward implementing TMDLs.
- DEQ's TMDL development schedule identifies priority areas for TMDL completion through 2022.
 - Focus is on completing TMDL work in 11 priority watersheds. This work involves more than 150 individual TMDLs. The attached map shows the priority locations.
 - Selection of priority watersheds incorporates Statewide TMDL Advisory Group (STAG) consultation and application of TMDL priority setting requirements under Montana law.
 - Plan also includes collaboration with EPA and their new Clean Water Act Section 303(d) Vision.
 - TMDL scheduling must be flexible in recognition that a new individual surface water discharge permit can trigger a TMDL development requirement under state law.
- DEQ has significant ongoing TMDL development, water quality monitoring, and/or water quality standards work underway in most of the priority watersheds.
- TMDL priority information and ongoing TMDL project information can be found on DEQ's website. (<http://deq.mt.gov/Water/WQP/B/TMDL/tmdldevelopmentpriorityareas>)

¹ Department contacts are: Eric Urban, Bureau Chief, Water Quality Planning Bureau, 444-2680, EUrban@mt.gov; Dean Yashan, Water Quality Division, 444-4806, dyashan@mt.gov

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Montana DEQ Water Quality Planning / TMDL Priority Areas

