


State of Oregon
Department of Environmental Quality

Memorandum

Date: Sept. 6, 2017

To: Environmental Quality Commission

From: Richard Whitman, Director 

Subject: Agenda item C, Informational item: Water Quality Permitting Program updates
Sept. 13-14, 2017, EQC meeting

Why this is important Staff will present updates on the timeline and development processes to-date for the Water Quality Permitting Program. The commission last heard about the program at its July meeting.

Recent activity Since the July EQC meeting, program staff have completed the following activities:

- The Data Bridging project (phase 1) concluded with a report out to the Permit Improvement Program steering group. The Data Bridging project is focusing on data needs for effective permit reviews, and how to meet those needs pending the longer-term work on the agency's Environmental Data Management System (EDMS). The steering group has approved chartering an implementation project to follow through on recommendations from the project team.
- The permit readiness review continues, and there are now less than 50 permit files to be completed, of the original 255.
- Phase 1 of the Technical Assistance definition project is in flight; an internal survey regarding technical assistance activities wrapped up on September 5, and the project team is assessing the data collected.
- Future state process mapping has begun, and will incorporate the work that the data bridging group is developing.

Next steps for the project include:

- Stand up the data bridging implementation team, with emphasis on near term efforts for data availability initially, and planning for future structural and systemic plans on implementation.
- Complete the initial reviews, with analysis of the information becoming more detailed once this phase of the project is complete.
- Complete analysis of the initial survey data to inform phase 2 of the project, beginning a stakeholder conversation on their perspectives around technical assistance
- Ongoing coordination between the future state process mapping project,

the data bridging implementation effort, and the EDMS project.

- Development of a one-year permit issuance plan, using information from the readiness review project.
- Development of a tentative permit issuance plan for years 2-5, along with work plans for the Standards and TMDL water quality sub-programs.
- Development of potential resource needs for DEQ's 2019-2021 Agency Request Budget, required to reach permitting performance goals.

**EQC
involvement**

There is no commission action associated with this item. DEQ will provide regular updates on the project's status and other information at each commission meeting.

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