

Report for July, 2014 EQC – TMDL development progress and schedule

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Introduction – What is a TMDL?

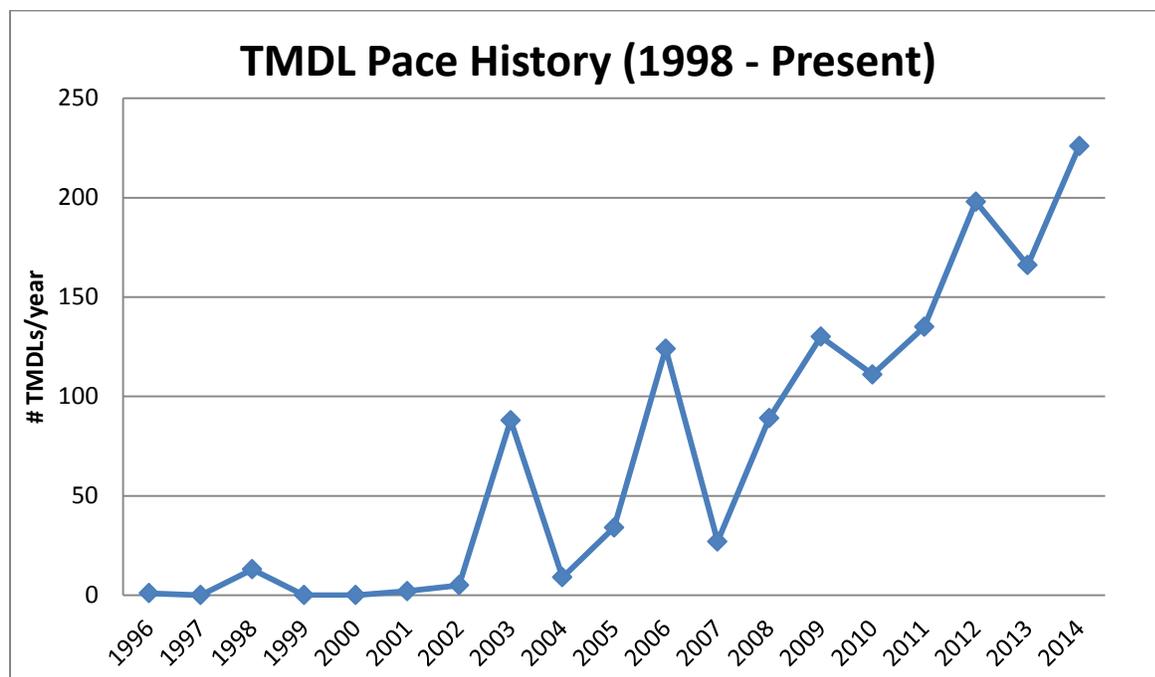
A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is a pollution budget that describes the maximum amount of a pollutant that a water body can assimilate and still meet water quality standards. TMDLs are developed for waters not meeting standards and are the “math and path” plan to attain those standards. A TMDL is comprised of Waste load Allocations (WLA) to describe the portion of that pollutant load that can be attributed to regulated (point source) discharges, Load Allocations (LA) describing the load of the pollutant attributed to unregulated (non-point source) sources plus the natural load and safety margin.

Reporting Requirement

Amendments to 75-5-702(3) MCA enacted in the 62nd Legislature include a provision for the Department to, “establish a schedule that provides a reasonable timeframe for TMDL development for impaired and threatened water bodies that are on the most recent list prepared pursuant to 75-5-702.” The amendments also require that the department report to EQC, “the progress in completing TMDLs and the current schedule for completion of TMDLs for the water bodies that remain on the list.”

Current Progress

The current TMDL development pace is influenced by the second amended judgment in *Friends of the Wild Swan* (CV 97-35-M-DWM). In this judgment, a subset of 664 pollutants are to be addressed by a TMDL by December 31, 2014. This goal will be met. The department has drawn upon resources from other programs such as monitoring, modeling, and quality assurance to work on TMDL documents. Specifics of current projects may be accessed via the Department’s TMDL development webpage at http://deq.mt.gov/wqinfo/TMDL/tmdl_inprogress.mcp



Looking Forward

At the February 24th, 2014 meeting of the State TMDL Advisory Group (STAG) [75-5-702(9) MCA] the statutory criteria for prioritizing water bodies for TMDL development was discussed. Once the judgment is satisfied, the department, in consultation with STAG, will have all prioritization options at its disposal, not just a court order.

The main focus of TMDL development for 2015 will be completion of work in progress in the Madison, Tongue, Flathead, and Ruby watersheds, which were not included in the court judgment. New TMDL projects will begin in the Musselshell watershed and potentially the Beaverhead and Red Rock watersheds.

The STAG also recommended that the department retain the ability to begin TMDL development in a watershed where, in accordance with 75-5-702(7)(h) MCA "...immediate programmatic needs, such as waste load allocations for new permits or permit renewals..." become a priority. The large river segments of the Yellowstone and Clark Fork River (Revision) are likely candidates for use of this program capacity in the 2014-2015 timeframe.

Summary statistics

Total EPA approved TMDLs (1998 to Present) = 1227

Number of pollutant listings remaining as of January 1, 2014 = 1172¹

Estimated number of pollutant listings remaining at January 1, 2015 = 928

Annual pace beyond 2015 = 75 - 100/year

¹ Montana 2014, Final Water Quality Integrated Report, Appendix B <http://cwaic.mt.gov/>