

# **MONTANA (REGION 8)**

## *A Snapshot of Montana's TMDL Program (November 2008)*

### ***The Basics***

Key Agency/Department & website

Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Permitting & Compliance Division  
<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/wqinfo/TMDL/index.asp>

TMDL Program Structure/Placement

Housed in Water Protection Bureau, Watershed Management  
Section

### ***By the Numbers***

Number of Impaired Waters

836

Number of Causes of Impairment

1861 (pollutants);  
3193 (pollutants &  
pollution)

Top Five Causes of Impairment

1. Metals (other than mercury)
2. Habitat Alterations
3. Nutrients
4. Sedimentation
5. Flow Alterations

Approximate Number of TMDLs Developed Annually

100+

Total Number of TMDLs Approved (1995 to present, incl. any est'd by EPA)

455

Total Number of TMDLs Approved in 2005/2006/2007

39/120/30

2008 303d/Integrated Report Submission Status (Date)

12/15/2008

Approximate Number of FTEs Working on TMDL Issues

(approx)  
11 (includes  
TMDL  
Development and  
Implementation)

### ***TMDLs***

EPA Under Consent Decree to Develop TMDLs?

Y

Broad-Scale? (e.g., watershed, multi-jurisdictional, etc.)

TMDL projects are  
pursued at a  
watershed scale;  
watershed size  
often consistent  
with HUC 4 size

### ***Non-TMDL Options***

Use of Non-TMDL Options to Address Impaired Waters?

limited; some 4B  
analysis underway  
on one stream

### ***Funding***

Approximate Annual Budget for TMDL Program

unknown

Primary Source(s) of TMDL Program Funding

Mix of state  
funding and

Federal 319 staff  
funding

### ***TMDL Implementation***

TMDL Implementation Required?

generally no;  
although State Law  
requires that  
WLAs are  
incorporated into  
MPDES permits

### ***Innovations***

Example(s) of Any Innovative Approach(es) Employed

--TMDL planning improvements; more integration of project management concepts and creation of tools to facilitate this.

--Developed improved data management and data mining tools to effectively capture and organize STORET, USGS, and other data sources for technical evaluations and to facilitate GIS mapping.

--Developed consistent assessment methods to evaluate sediment conditions in cold water streams for target development and bank erosion quantification.

--Significant QA improvements for sampling and field work; template sampling plans, template contract work scopes, etc.

--Major improvements in contract process and oversight; breaking TMDL development into basic work tasks for internal and external (consultant) support to take advantage of specific expertise and to be able to appropriately adapt to information as it is generated.

--Retooling models, both complex and simple ones, to effectively deal with pollutant generation and delivery; goal is to allow for effective BMP-driven modeling scenarios for nonpoint sources of pollution; existing models often address pollutant generation but not delivery in a way that facilitates BMP scenarios often linked to riparian health improvement.

--Staff pollutant teams (e.g. metals, sediment, nutrients) to coordinate and apply innovative ideas, process and technical improvements, and improve overall internal communication.

--Developing database for TMDL tracking by assigning identification to each 303(d) water body – cause combination and providing a “cradle to grave” tracking for work load planning and overall TMDL development requirements and TMDL implementation tracking.

--Striving for a complete watershed-scale TMDL planning, TMDL assessment, and TMDL implementation approach. This concept is not incorporated all that well into many environmentally-related programs (Federal, State and Local), and TMDLs are an opportunity to integrate a watershed approach into many programs.

--Improvements under way to final document organization, presentation, and appeal to wider audience.

#### TMDLs that Represent a particular Achievement

--St. Regis TMDL document

--Prospect Creek TMDL document

--Grave Creek Sediment TMDL

--Ruby River TMDL document

--Flathead Lake Nutrient TMDL (Phase 1)

Links to MT TMDLs:

<http://www.deq.state.mt.us/wqinfo/TMDL/index.asp>

#### ***Barriers***

##### Top Three Barriers to TMDL Development

1. balancing quantity, quality, and stakeholder involvement
2. changing and evolving direction from EPA (external) and State of Montana (internal)
3. lack of Lack of decent source assessment methods for models and other tools to apply in many MT landscapes; have to develop them to adequately define conditions in a way that the desired BMP scenarios can be incorporated

##### Top Three Barriers to TMDL Implementation

1. inadequate funding
2. lack of landowner willingness/commitment
3. lack of local watershed group and/or “capacity”