

1.1 Introduction/History of the Permitting Program

Applicability:

This summarizes the history of the Permits Manual.

Content:

The original Permit Manual was developed as a compilation of existing policies and procedures collected together as a special project. It was developed prior to the department's widespread use of computers and, therefore, was originally created as a paper (as opposed to an electronic) document. As such, communicating changes required the preparation and distribution of paper copies to the multiple manual holders in the central and regional offices when new or revised pages were written. Often, the new pages were not fully distributed, were lost or were not inserted in the manuals, making it difficult to thoroughly communicate new permitting procedures.

In an attempt to make permitting processes more efficient, the Water Pollution Control Program decided to pursue the development of a new manual with a format that improved its use and accessibility by staff. At the same time, the program wanted to take the opportunity to update the various sections of the manual that had become outdated.

A committee was formed to design the electronic processes for creating and maintaining a manual that would reside on the Intranet. The process began in the spring of 2002. Following the completion of the design, staff was assigned to write the narratives (i.e. the topics) describing the various procedures for writing a permit. Initially, acceptable progress was made and about 20% of the topics were completed by late 2003 and early 2004. The topics completed the various review steps and received approval in June and July of 2004. However, key retirements and shifts of work priorities slowed manual development. Only a few new topics were drafted after the first months of 2004 and none were reviewed and approved.

A part time position was created to focus on the Permits Manual project. This position was filled in January 2005. During 2005, the initial design (table of contents) of the manual was reviewed and reduced from about 350 to about 280 topics. The topics were not deleted but were "reserved" for future possible development. Some were determined to be unneeded such as those dealing with agricultural Letters of Approval (LOAs) that are no longer issued by the department. Other topics were combined together so that the resulting narrative has broader focus and content. By the end of 2005, an additional 150 topics were written, reviewed and approved bringing the number completed to 207, about 74% of the redesigned manual.

In June 2005, it was decided that the Permits Manual would be posted on the Department of Natural Resources Internet site available to regulated facilities, consultants, association representatives and the general public. Departmental Internet standards require that the topics, originally written for an "internal audience" of permit writers and other staff involved in water pollution control, be reviewed and edited for the new, general audience. The editing process was begun in November 2005 when a sufficient number of topics was available for review, editing and posting to the Internet site.

The new topic drafting, review and approval process continued through most of 2006. Several major updates of the manual occurred during the year with the last being in November 2006. The last update included the addition of 25 new topics, bringing the Permits Manual to the ninety-nine percent completion point.

See Section 1.2 Characteristics of the Manual for related information.

Legal References:

Other Links:

[1.2 Characteristics of the Manual](#)

Key Words:

history

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