

NEW FEATURE TO REPORT CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS and LEAN TRAINING SERIES

Have you been working to improve something in your program or division? Let us know!

We've added a new feature on the Process Improvement sub-channel within the DEC Team Site. You can use the [report form](#) below to tell us about your continuous improvement efforts and share that work with DEC via Microsoft Teams. These might be problems (large or small) that you identified and took the opportunity to fix or improve. It will take the information you provide to post a snapshot report to the wider DEC community and serve as an excellent resource to others across the department!

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Teams interface. On the left is a 'Teams' sidebar with 'Your teams' including 'ANR - DEC Team', 'ANR Lean Green Belts', 'Green Belt Network', and 'SOV - Microsoft Teams Champions'. The main area shows the 'Process Improvement' channel with a 'CI Reporting' form. The form has a title 'Continuous Improvement Reporting' and a subtitle 'Even small or everyday Lean improvements are important and worth celebrating. Share them here.' It includes a message: 'Hi John, when you submit this form, the owner will be able to see your name and email address.' There are two required questions: '1. What is the date of your activity?' with a date input field, and '2. What was the challenge?'.

Our Lean Program Manager has developed a series of trainings which were offered to staff over the months of April and May. Please check out these recorded training sessions also on our Teams site under the [Lean Learning Series](#).

The screenshot shows a Microsoft Stream playlist titled 'Lean Learning Series' with 6 videos and 25 followers. The videos are:

- Teams Training and Walkthrough (51:18)
- Bite-Sized Lean (56:21)
- Data Storytelling (46:35)
- Basics of Human Centered Design (48:10)
- More Effective Meetings (57:53)
- Incremental Improvement: Coaching Kata (54:51)

Check out the rest of the quarterly report below and if you have any questions, or need assistance with any process improvement idea, please reach out to john.sears@vermont.gov.

<p>GROUNDWATER RECLASSIFICATION Event Date – July 2015</p> <p>This Lean event was conducted with the goal of improving the process to reclassify contaminated groundwater to class IV. The current reclassification process lacks clarity, takes too long to complete (12 sites in 20 years averaging roughly 15 months each) and often leads to improper submittal of information and materials. Roles and responsibilities of involved parties are not well defined, re-do loops are common, and the process lacks transparency. Finally, there is a concern that once a reclassification does occur, there is inconsistent portrayal, distribution and use of the mapped data.</p>	<p>GOALS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve timeliness of reclassifications. • Increase transparency. • Complete 31 reclassifications by the end of 2018, bringing the total active site reclassifications since 1993 to 43 (up from 12). <p>STATUS</p> <p>The revised Groundwater Protection Rule and Strategy became effective on July 6, 2019, which effectively ended the holding pattern since 2015 for this project. This rule has new regulations for groundwater reclassification, including requirements for reclassifying groundwater from potable (Class III) to non-potable (Class IV), including when groundwater standards are violated for over five years. The new rules also provide new exemptions from reclassification, including defined situations where there is low risk to drinking water wells.</p> <p>An interdivisional team met regularly overusing videoconferencing tools over the past quarter. This team submitted an IT project that was approved and ranked. This allowed ADS to commence work on IT aspects of the project. During this quarter this included creating a mockup new database and interface for linking to two program databases and for allowing data entry for other programs lacking an appropriate database. Work also occurred vetting the field types and plans for edits to the two existing databases. Also, planning with AID occurred to evaluate how to link reclassification information to the Environmental Notice Bulletin for the public notice part of this process. Over the next period, the final fields will need to be finalized and implemented in the databases and then tested.</p> <p>The Sites Management Section has continued inputting site data to a new database tool for tracking and determining which contaminated sites will be subject to reclassification. Entries began at the end of fall. Several glitches with the tool developed and significant time was spent engaging with IT to fix these and eventually significant recoding was needed. This tool now appears to be working effectively and now just final entries are needed by staff. A reporting tool was also created so that management could generate reports on progress. Of the 1,256 active sites, most have complete entries but a couple hundred still need entry or final edits. The latest projection is that approximately 140 sites (a 30-site decrease) will require reclassification if they cannot be cleaned up in a timely manner. Over the next quarter final entries will be made and sites prioritized for both cleanup and funding (where available).</p> <p>A new Groundwater Reclassification Procedure was finalized July 2018 and a new Groundwater Reclassification fact sheet was completed November 2018. Reclassification of groundwater in Bennington in relation to PFAS drove the timing for completing these documents. Both Bennington and the Elizabeth Mine superfund site are currently moving forward with reclassification under the new procedure. This work will be close to final over the next two quarters. These are very large and complex reclassifications and will take more time than most.</p>
--	---

**Act 250 and Section 248
Response Coordination
Event Date – February 2017**

The review of Section 248 and Act 250 permit applications requires input from various programs throughout the Agency. The existing process for soliciting comments on current applications involves a weekly email to over 200 staff. The process often does not receive prompt responses to these requests and requires Office of Planning and Policy (OPP) staff to manually solicit comments for certain projects, leading to additional time spent to ensure completeness. The current minimum timeframe for this process is a 21-day turnaround but can be longer depending on the type of application.

GOALS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

- % of applications deemed complete upon submittal
- % of time that technical comments are sufficient for filing on first submittal

STATUS

- OPP user tested Arleane for a weekly 248/250 agenda with a group of 5 programs.
- OPP met with IT to discuss long term build out of Arleane and options for achieving core functions identified in original LEAN process. IT is going to develop an estimate for the number of hours it will take for buildout of certain functions and future phases.
- OPP relayed results of test and needed fixes to IT. Testing will start up again once fixes are complete.
- Next steps:
- As we continue to refine the system, we will set up another round of user group testing with additional Programs and continue roll out of the system. A final round of edits based on user testing will be sent to IT. OPP also needs to design the home page and welcome screens.
- OPP will need to meet with IT again to determine how to move forward with the system to achieve implementation of original identified core functions.

Welcome to the Section 248 and Act 250 Agenda SharePoint page from the Office of Planning! On this site we collect and organize your comments by Section 248 or Act 250 development project.

Coming Soon: Links to the ANR Docket Page, ePUC, Act 250 Database

Project File Review

ODIE Name Date Filed Date Notice Issued Lead Name Status [OPP Staff User Guide](#)
[Technical Staff User Guide](#)

▾ County : (3)

▾ County : Franklin (2)

	Yankee Corporation and James Bryce Commercial Facility, Georgia	Jennifer Mojo	Not Started
	Yankee Corporation and James Bryce Commercial Facility, Georgia	Jennifer Mojo	Not Started

▾ County : Washington (16)

<p>Federal Grants-In Process Improvement Event Date – March 2019</p> <p>There are currently five people helping to manage incoming federal grants for the Department. These grant managers work with project managers across the Department to facilitate the process of applying for Federal funds from a variety of Agencies. In the past this process was held by one person allowing for a standard practice due to only one person carrying it out. Now that five people are involved, a standard practice needs to be developed to in order to maintain an organized process and consistency within the Department.</p>	<p>GOALS</p> <p>The overarching goals include promoting greater consistency and transparency in the process. We also would like to develop a process to ensure adequate time for proper budget and proposal development, as well as ensure all costs are included as part of the budgeting.</p> <p>STATUS</p> <p>During the last quarter the Team has worked with IT to implement the new Grants-In SharePoint site based on the FPR template site. We met several times to discuss the key metadata fields and how to best develop the site. After IT created the new site for us, the Team received training on how to develop views in SharePoint to create different grouping of the metadata. This metadata manipulation will allow us to enter the data once into SharePoint and then export that information into other existing tracking spreadsheets, saving duplicated efforts and reducing errors. All Federal grants managers were trained on the new site by IT and next steps are to work on the transition plan to migrate the current Y drive data to SharePoint.</p> <p>The team is planning to restart work with our Lean Program Manager to make more improvements to the budget template now that the new version has been used over the past six months of grant applications. BTI is helping us make the spreadsheet simpler to use and less error prone. The Grants-In SOP outline has been developed, but due to the focus on year end tasks and disruptions due to COVID we haven't made process on completing all the components. Over the next quarter, we anticipate using some of the momentum we have on year-end processes to help get this document completed in conjunction with the new SharePoint site rollout.</p>
<p>Permit Performance Standards Event Date – July 2016</p> <p>In 1987, the Legislature mandated that the Agency of Natural Resources establish time limits for the processing of permits as well as procedures and time periods within which to notify applicants whether an application is complete. Annually, ANR (specifically DEC) is required to submit a report to the legislature assessing its performance in meeting the time limits. Given that these time limits have not been updated since 2005, that the procedure for calculating them is from 1996, and that the knowledge and use of the time limits and procedure is inconsistent across the Department, now seemed like a good time to look at the process to find ways to improve it</p>	<p>GOALS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % of programs evaluated on how they implement the permit application review procedure and track process performance • % of programs actively using performance data to manage permit processes <p>STATUS</p> <p>Permit Performance Tracking Database – Program integration has expanded, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking Water • Solid Waste • STRALT Database • SHORE Database • WETLND Database

LaRosa Program
Event Date - July 2019

Revisit the purpose of the LaRosa Program in order to refine program elements, especially as they pertain to administration (staffing), logistics (and coordination with the VAEL), capacity (services provided, budget), and strategic monitoring (for targeting surface waters with partners). Desired outcome: more strategic monitoring/sampling designs, less programmatic oversight, enhanced coordination with partners that does not exceed programmatic capacity. More straight forward administration (perhaps in coordination with other WSMD programs, especially Lakes and Ponds).

GOALS

Near and long term outcomes that will determine efficiencies in program administration, logistical coordination, future capacity, and strategic approaches to monitoring (in coordination with partners).

STATUS

- 2019 LaRosa Operational Support Grants (LOSAs) will be reimbursed for invoiced and approved activities through April 3, 2020. WID sent email to LOSG applicants letting them know that activities after that should cease due to COVID-19 budget woes.
- 2017 data: This took longer than Jim expected. New deadline is June 1.
- 2018 data: Kat working on QC queries. Once Tim sends back, final review be forwarded to JK for final review. New deadline is June 1.
- 2019 data: Received responses form 2/3 of LPP groups. Following up with remaining 1/3. Data will be uploaded by July 2020.
- 2020 data management: Partners know they will need to use VT site id, QA sample id. JK spoke with TPricer but needs more work to formalize format and receive flow data.
- Request For Proposals: Significant changes finalized to RFP including:
 - Refine eligibility criteria and scoring matrix for proposals
 - Standardized format for application
 - Adding a table showing costs of analytical services requested
 - Added clear scoring criteria for project acceptance
- LPP proposal review committee used scoring criteria to rate proposals

Results of change:

- LaRosa analytical service will now be within \$100,000 budget established for the program
- LaRosa will be closer to being within staff capacity to administer project
- Partners will be clear on selection criteria and scoring of projects

Next steps:

- 2020 LASG proposals are on hold due to COVID-19 budget woes.
- If LASG gets funded, Review committee will need to meet to make final decisions on which projects will be funded to what degree based on viability and funds available.
- If LASG gets funded and if LASG monitoring takes place, finalize coding for sample location and QA type.
- If LASG monitoring does not occur, turn focus to reviewing and uploading historical data.
- 2020 LASG are being examined to see which projects are still viable with a later start date.
- 2019 LOSG recipients are sending in their invoices for work already performed. Invoices are being reviewed and approved for payment for final payment by WID GMS. Due to a GMS FMLA, it is uncertain who this is.



<p>DEC Passthrough Event Date - September 2019</p> <p>Grants are no longer expected to be administered and handled by a WID or AID Grants Management Specialist for their entire lifetime. The timeline from RFP posting to Agreement Execution is being isolated to better expedite the process which can often take too long to complete, and the number of tasks the GMS is asked to complete outraces their job duties.</p>	<p>GOALS Generate a future state process for the notice of RFP to agreement process which is which can be applied within 30 Days. Defining roles and responsibility for the new process for all DEC grants. Increased process transparency and customer service generated by having a single process. Define the Grants Management Specialist role.</p> <p>STATUS Grants Out: Progress has been on hold due to the implementation of an online grants and contracts invoicing process. A large outcome of this Lean event was to clearly document and define the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved with pass-thru projects; since the invoicing portion is a large piece of this effort and the process is changing, this documentation has temporarily been put on hold. Once the online grants and contracts invoicing has passed the first two roll-out phases, this documentation will be completed. Much of the other documentation of processes and generation of templates has been successfully completed.</p> <p>Invoicing: The ANR Online form has been completed and tested several times, and we implemented a soft internal roll-out of the process in June 1. GMS staff are acting on behalf of vendors to submit invoices and TPM's and Invoice Processors will go through the new process in full on ANR Online. The GCMS database has been successfully modified to incorporate the ANR Online form, and the data transfer between the two sources has been tested as well. The plan is still on target for a July 1, 2020 full roll-out to grants and contracts invoicing.</p>
---	---

<p>Air Quality Point Source Registration Program Event Date – Feb 2020</p> <p>The annual registration process is overly burdensome in terms of staff time and the lack of transparency in the process makes tracking various phases of the system’s status difficult and prone to error. Mid-late December letters go out, Data due Feb. 1. Emissions fees estimated and invoices sent as data are received, January-May. Payments are due May 15. Various extensions requested.</p> <p>The process is reliant on email system. Difficulty tracking contacts /emails for 200~ Total Systems with several categories of billing. Staff do not know if payment has been completed.</p>	<p>GOALS AND KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Hours/Yr Changed • Process Hours/Yr Changed • Loopbacks Eliminated • Standardized Work or Process Made Electronic • Identify and Eliminate unnecessary Forms/Documents • # of Process Steps Eliminated • Errors Types Corrected <p>STATUS</p> <p>The three-day lean event for the AQCD Registration Program was held February 2020. This is the first quarterly update covering status through April 2020.</p> <p>Much was accomplished in the first quarter of 2020, especially considering that the Lean event was held in mid-February and by mid-March everyone had transitioned to working from home due to the coronavirus. There were a number of quick solutions to stand up in order to continue effectively in the remote work environment, such as a general intake form on ANR Online which enabled electronic payments and form submittals as needed for some facilities. Otherwise, progress continued much as it would have if we had been working in the office. Below is a list of tasks accomplished during that quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stopped tracking email “read receipts” because the data were determined to have very limited use for compliance purposes – no value add. • Staff prepared a new and updated fee transmittal spreadsheet and trained admin staff on use to enter check information during our current and ongoing registration cycle for CY 2019. • An IT request for merging duplicative facility tables in the SQL database was submitted. • Staff completed the matching exercise between facility tables in AQCD program databases. • An IT request was submitted to develop a fee nForm for online use in the ANR Online platform. • Staff utilized the email merge functionality to send invoices to <5 tpy facilities, by source category. <p>Tasks to be done in the second quarter:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with legal and AQCD Permitting Section Chief on flat fee multiplication for sources at single location. • Test program database with new facility table. • Update SOP for following up with delinquent facilities that did not submit data and/or payment. • Work towards moving the tracking process to the SQL database. • Work on business/entity variables in database to process multiple facilities under common ownership more effectively.
---	--

Indirect Discharge Compliance Reporting

Event Date – Dec. 2018

Indirect Discharge systems permitted with individual permits are required to submit monthly or quarterly compliance data to the Indirect Discharge Program, located in the Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division in DEC. Reports are received primarily via email and are processed twice: once for administrative presence/absence and once for compliance with permit conditions. The program historically had multiple permit compliance staff and greater administrative support; currently, the program consists of one compliance staff person and one administrative staff person whose time is shared between multiple programs.

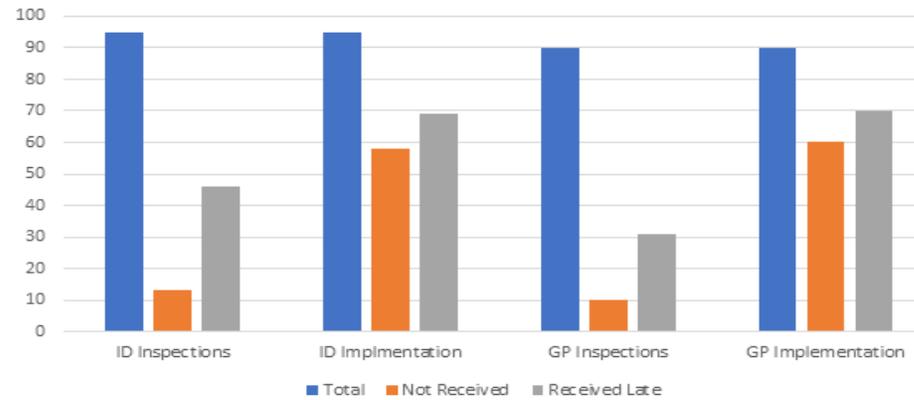
GOALS

- Streamline the format of data received to conform to compliance information required
- Enable ability to track outstanding reports efficiently
- Create capability to quickly extract compliance data and whether standards are being met
- Combine data into one efficient data base with efficient dash board and report capabilities

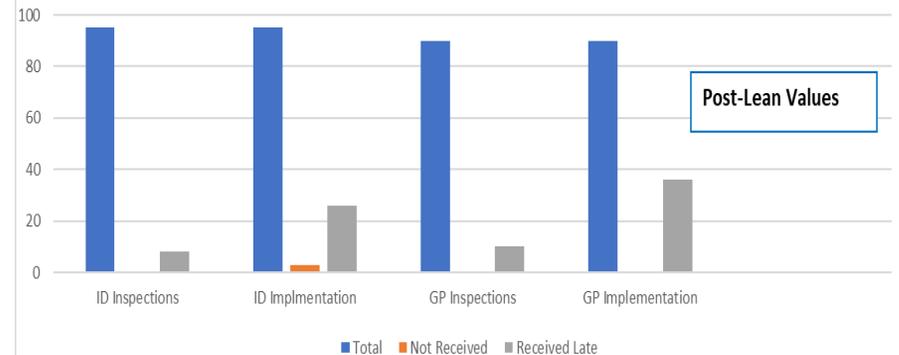
STATUS

See project closeout report below

Inspection Data



Inspection Data



Post-Lean Values

Other Notable Projects Started/Supported this Quarter

- ANR Municipal Day Reboot Brainstorming
- Lean Learning Series:
- FPR Fire Warden Hiring Process

Projects Closed Last Quarter

- WMPD Petroleum Cleanup Fund (PCF) Reimbursement
- Act 76 Project Closeout Project

Lean Project Closeout Report

DWGW - Indirect Discharge Compliance Reporting May 29, 2020

Background

Most Indirect Discharge Individual Permits are required to submit monthly or quarterly compliance data. Reports were received primarily via email and processed twice: administrative review and compliance with permit conditions. The Lean project focused on streamlining the format of data received to fit the information required; created ability to track outstanding reports efficiently and extract stored data to review for compliance standards; and combined data into one data base with dashboard and report capabilities.

Key Changes Made

- Created Cover Sheet to accompany submittals as a prequel to the nForm online form process
- Sent informational Newsletter
- Updated Indirect and Underground Injection Control (UIC) web pages and added resources
- Revised invoice format providing tear-off sheet for contact updates
- Updated WW Inventory permit information and Rolodex
- Created SOP for WW Inventory and Compliance Procedure
- WW Inventory was updated to house all lab data
- Created invoicing in WW Inventory to track accounts receivable
- Five years of back data was entered into the WW Inventory for 108 reporting facilities
- Queries have been created to retrieve stored data

Key Indicators

KPI	Final Estimate	Met or Exceeded
Staff Hours/Yr Changed	520	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Process Hours/Yr Changed	520	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Standardized Work or Process Made Electronic	2	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Unnecessary Forms/Documents Elim.	1	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
# of Process Steps Eliminated	4	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Errors Types Corrected	3	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Inspection Report Submittal Compliance	Up 40%	
Implementation Report Submittal Compliance	Up 45%	

Results

Just prior to the Lean event, we held a Fishbone (diagram?) event on the Annual Inspection/Implementation schedules. Prior to the event we calculated nearly 50% of our inspections were received late and over 70% of our implementation schedules were late. This year, we were much



Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation

Business Transformation Initiative Quarterly Report (January 2020 – March 2020)



more aggressive in reaching out and following up with permittees and received all but 4 implementation schedules in a timely manner without an immense amount of effort.

The cover sheet is used by many of the permittees and is extremely helpful in quickly identifying permit number, etc. With all the contact information updated in the WW Inventory, we can easily find email, mailing address and other contact information for facilities. The information can be retrieved via query when needed.

With the bulk of the lab data entered in the WW Inventory, it is a quick process to pull a query for a permit and range of time for permit renewal or compliance review.

After the Lean event (and out of the scope of our event, but noteworthy nonetheless), AID's John Sears and DWGW's Sharon Bissel met to Lean the process of the Indirect Discharge/UIC accounts receivable and aging reports. The original process had multiple redundant data entry points and the result is one EXCEL spreadsheet instead of two with data being entered once rather than 4 times.

Next Steps

Training for all Indirect/UIC staff is needed so that everyone can have the hands-on abilities to retrieve data if needed. The dashboard training will be ongoing. Future state will be to create an nForm in ANR Online for electronic submittal of monthly reports directly from the Permittee.