Wisconsin Total Maximum Daily Loads

TMDLs

WHAT IS A TMDL?

A TMDL is an analysis used to calculate a pollutant budget: sources of the pollutants are identified and then reductions are given to the various sources (municipalities, industries, agriculture) in order to meet water quality standards. Everyone living and working in TMDL watersheds can come together to implement the water quality goals outlined in the TMDL report. The end results are better habitat for fish and aquatic life and increased usage of our waters for swimming and boating.

TMDLs can be expressed through a formula:

WLA + LA + MOS = TMDL

- WLA or Wasteload Allocation refers to the pollutant load from point sources: industrial and municipal treatment plants, municipal stormwater, CAFOs, etc.
- LA or Load Allocation refers to nonpoint sources such as: runoff from residential yards, parking lots, agricultural fields and barnyards.
- MOS or Margin of Safety refers to the level of uncertainty in the analysis.

Cleaner rivers, streams and lakes ensure quality of life benefits, which lead to the desirability to work and live in Wisconsin. Tourists and visitors are attracted to the number of and health of our wonderful water resources.

Putting the TMDL Concept into Perspective

The science behind a TMDL can be mind boggling! For comparison, imagine a TMDL like a budget plan for your family, where you currently spend $2500 on monthly expenses, but are trying to save money for vacation and have to reduce this amount by $500.

WISCONSIN DEPT. OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Total Maximum Daily Loads FAQ

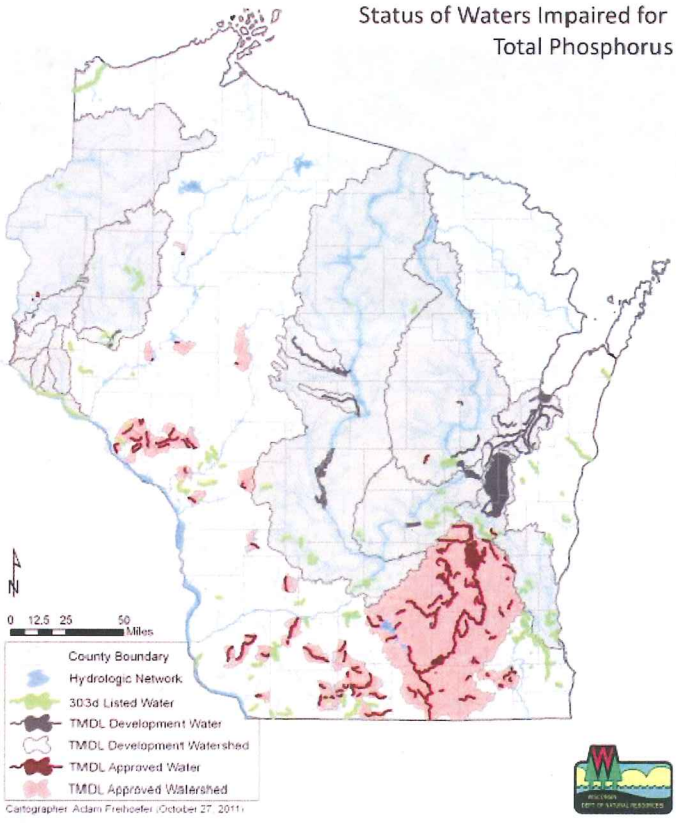
Why do we need to create TMDLs?
Wisconsin is required by the Clean Water Act to develop TMDLs for all waters on our Impaired Waters List. EPA oversees the federal TMDL program, while Wisconsin is currently granted authority to implement our own program.

What is an "impaired" water?
Every 2 years, Wisconsin drafts the Integrated Report which includes the Impaired Waters List. This list (a.k.a. the 303(d) list) includes, rivers, streams and lakes that are not meeting water quality standards or designated uses and submits the list to U.S. EPA for approval.

How many TMDL analyses are supposed to be completed in a year in Wisconsin?
Wisconsin has an agreement with EPA to develop 80 TMDLs per year. EPA develops our pace or the number of TMDL "beans" based on the number of waters on our list, divided on average by 8-13 years. One TMDL is equivalent to one water segment matched with the pollutant of concern (for example, a lake impaired by phosphorus would count for 1 TMDL). Wisconsin developed it's first TMDL in 2000, but has been behind in achieving our goal of 80 because WDNR lacks the proper monitoring data needed to develop TMDLs, especially on more complex watersheds.

Public input is both required and highly recommended. Engaging partners early in the process is essential to move the project forward. Stakeholder involvement during TMDL development and implementation is the key to the success in meeting our water quality goals.

Where are TMDLs currently being developed? (see map)



Do TMDLs create new rules or regulations?
TMDLs do not create new water quality standards or any rules. WDNR uses the current rules in our existing programs to implement TMDLs (NR 217, NR 216, NR 151, etc.).

Are implementation plans a required component of TMDLs?
Implementation plans are not required for TMDLs to be approved by EPA, but they do require a section entitled "reasonable assurance" which provides the public with the understanding that DNR has existing programs that can

For more information visit the WDNR website: http://dnr.wi.gov and search topic "TMDL".