

Virginia DEQ to Enhance Compliance Program

As introduced during the Virginia Association of Wetland Professionals (VAWP) 2006 Annual Meeting and Regulatory Update Workshop, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) will be enhancing their permit compliance program under a three (3) year Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grant. As part of this effort, DEQ has set the following goals and initiatives that will affect the permitting and compliance review of projects in Virginia.

Goals

- Improve tracking of issued permits;
- Provide more efficient mitigation for impacts to jurisdictional areas to ensure “no net loss” of aquatic functions and values;
- Regular and more accurate reporting of status and trends of wetlands and streams in Virginia;
- Identify and regulate more un-permitted activities through enforcement actions; and
- Gather data to improve Virginia Water Protection (VWP) permitting process.

Initiatives

- Additional staff and training for compliance inspections;
- Developing a compliance database to track projects;
- Report auditing;
- Public education through meetings, manuals and guidance;
- Aerial and/or Geographic Information System (GIS) surveillance of permitted and un-permitted activities; and
- More frequent and scheduled site inspections and reporting to evaluate permitted and avoided wetlands and streams, onsite buffers, and indirect fill in state waters.

DEQ intends to take a **more active role** in permit compliance through increased inspections and attention to permit conditions. They anticipate

reporting more projects for enforcement action, revising the penalty policy and issuing substantially **higher penalties**. Furthermore, action will be taken to ensure that temporary disturbances are restored as required.

It has become increasingly important to make sure that your project is in compliance with permit conditions. In the past few months, we at Williamsburg Environmental Group, Inc. (WEG) have noticed an increase in compliance inspections and a more active role from DEQ staff in ensuring that construction monitoring reports are complete and submitted. WEG’s Construction Administration team actively coordinates permit conditions with site managers and contactors to make sure projects are continually reviewed for permit compliance. The implementation of this grant initiative makes this increasingly important.

Provided below are a few general permit conditions of a DEQ VWP permit, which if completed, will assist in ensuring compliance with your permit:

- Flagging of non-impacted wetlands and streams within 50 feet of construction activities;
- Submitting a construction commencement notification within 10 days prior to construction activities;
- Purchasing wetland/stream credits and/or recording deed restrictions for preservation areas prior to taking of any permitted impacts;
- Completing and submitting the required construction monitoring reports during construction activities within permitted impact areas; and
- Submitting a notification of completion of construction activities within permitted impact areas within 30 days of completion.

Please contact your project manager at Williamsburg Environmental Group, Inc. if you have any questions concerning compliance issues with current projects or to learn how we can assist in ensuring compliance with your permit.

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