

PROJECT NAME

Point Source Program – Wastewater Permitting

PERFORMANCE MEASURE BASELINE

In April 2003, the program only issued 9.42% of its permits within 180 days.

THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEM

The MPCA was unable to issue water quality permits fast enough to keep up with new, modified and expiring permit applications.

VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER

- » Survey mailed to permittee's consultants, MPCA staff, citizens, other governmental units, environmental groups, funding agencies, DNR, EPA, and legislators.
- » Survey results confirmed the backlog of permits was nearing 50% and the Agency's credibility as a whole was decreasing.
- » To further flesh out what steps were important to the people who directly used the permits, phone interviews were conducted with permittee's, consultants, and MPCA staff.
- » From these interviews the primary, secondary, and tertiary needs were identified. Timeliness was identified as a primary need from all three areas.

RESULTS

- » At the midpoint of the project, the number of permits issued in less or equal to 180 days jumped to 54% with the 90% goal being achieved in 2005.
- » Several process changes resulted from this project. They include but are not limited to:
 - » permit assignments determined prior to application receipt
 - » early effluent limit review
 - » updated permit manual
 - » standardize permitting for noncompliance
 - » changes in permit language and format
 - » all permit writers are required to issue 1.5 permits per month or 18 permits per year
- » Have maintained a 81-94% success rate through continual minor process improvements since.
- » Creating a cross-media permitting staff team to evaluate the current permit application review process and explore opportunities to improve communication, consistency, and efficiency.

