



Groundwater monitoring wells (yellow pipes) are located across the state.

Water quality is essential to public health, our natural environment and economic development in North Dakota.

The programs found in the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Water Quality work to protect and improve water quality for all uses. Enforcement of state and federal environmental laws is accomplished through permitting, inspection, sampling, analytical services and monitoring activities.

The Division of Water Quality employs nearly 40 staff members in its five programs.

- ◆ Watershed Management
- ◆ Groundwater Protection
- ◆ North Dakota Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NDPDES) Permits
- ◆ Spill Investigation
- ◆ Special Projects

By the Numbers

Watershed Management

- 56,800 miles of rivers and streams
- 330 lakes covering 750,000 acres
- 3,206,820 acres of wetlands
- 24 ambient water quality sites monitored
- 65 waterbodies monitored for Harmful Algal Blooms annually

Groundwater Protection

- 70 groundwater aquifers monitored
- 275 wells monitored annually
- 200 public drinking water systems participate in Source Water Protection Program
- 8 permitted Class I injection wells
- 900 Class V injection wells

NDPDES Discharge Permits

- 400+ facilities permitted to discharge wastewater
- 600+ facilities permitted to discharge stormwater
- 2,000 facilities permitted to discharge construction stormwater

Spill Investigations

- 1,300 spills reported on an annual average - response and technical assistance provided

Special Projects

- 3-year review - North Dakota's water quality standards updated
- 10 to 15 projects reviewed every year to address water quality concerns

"We can't all live upstream."



About the Division of Water Quality

The primary responsibility of the division is safeguarding water quality.

This DOES include:

- Protecting groundwater, streams, rivers, wetlands and lakes.
- Permitting wastewater discharges
- Enforcing Clean Water Act regulations
- Investigating spills and providing technical assistance on remediation

This DOES NOT include:

- Regulating private wells
- Requiring or issuing permits for every activity that impacts waters of the state

Fish and macroinvertebrate populations are assessed to help determine the water quality of a river.



Watershed Management Program

The Watershed Management Program is primarily responsible for monitoring and assessing water quality in streams, rivers, lakes and wetlands across North Dakota. This is done in cooperation with many local, state and federal partners. The program's 10 members address water quality concerns by developing Total Maximum Daily Loads, maintaining an ambient monitoring network, conducting lake water quality assessments, conducting biological monitoring and providing technical assistance for watershed projects. Additionally, staff members implement initiatives such as the Nutrient Reduction Strategy, the Basin Water Quality Management Framework and information/education programs.

Groundwater Protection Program

The Groundwater Protection Program protects and monitors groundwater quality and works towards restoration of groundwater that has been impacted by contaminants. The six-member staff administers the following subprograms: Source Water Protection, Underground Injection Control, and the Western Ambient and Agricultural Ambient Groundwater Monitoring. The program has continuously monitored groundwater across the state since 1992.

NDPDES Discharge Permits Program

The North Dakota Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NDPDES) Program, commonly called the Permits Program, was developed in response to the legislation of the 1972 Clean Water Act (CWA). The program's 12 members administer municipal/industrial wastewater, stormwater, pretreatment, concentrated animal feeding operations and septic pumper regulations.

Spill Investigation Program

The Spill Response Program was first started in 2015 to more actively document and monitor oilfield and general contamination incidents of soil and water. Currently, the program's six members address issues such as waste management, groundwater and surface water protection, and public relations. Program members work in a variety of divisions including Water Quality, Waste Management and Air Quality.

Special Projects Program

Special projects are diverse in scope. They entail the development of water quality standards that protect the beneficial uses of water in North Dakota. Water quality certification ensures that federally permitted activities comply with water quality standards. Some major issues such as the Devils Lake outlet, Missouri River management and others require a multi-disciplinary approach to achieve solutions. Participation of the Special Projects Program in this process is essential for the protection of water quality and enhancement of aquatic ecological health.

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