

April 15 Nutrients General Permit Advisory Committee Meeting



Log of questions and comments from webinar chat:

With answers provided to the questions

Mindy Roberts: Did any advisory group members need to drop off due to other pulls on their time from COVID?

Answer: No. One AC member is missing today who does plan to participate in the May 13 meeting. Treatment plant operators have expressed concern about having enough time to participate in meetings and review materials.

Corrin Hamburg: What type of opportunities does the general permit offer rather than individual permits for the individual plants? Each plant has unique flushing and mixing properties at their outfalls how will this be addressed equitably by the general permit?

Answer: this is the type of consideration the AC will address in recommending the best concepts for Ecology to pursue in the PSNGP

Valerie Smith: Apologies if this was mentioned earlier. What is the geographical area, all counties and cities in Puget Sound?

Answer: all treatment plants with direct discharges to Puget Sound, plus a handful that discharge to rivers downstream from monitoring locations.

Valerie Smith: we do not have representation from city planning departments? would this be my responsibility to coordinate?

Answer: You are the state agency representative, it is not your responsibility. Ecology requested that the treatment plant constituents be responsible for gathering information from their planning departments. We will invite planners to participate in the meetings where planning is discussed.

Patrick Kongsli: Are these meetings being recorded and are they available to the general public?

Answer: No, they are not being recorded, as is the case with in-person advisory committee meetings, which are neither filmed nor audio recorded. The public may listen in, and all of the meeting materials (including the PowerPoint and summary) will be available to the public.

Mindy Roberts: This all sounds familiar now (and yes, March seems like such a long time ago). Could we have a sheet that goes out with all meeting materials on this recommendation process and agreements on our responsibilities to communicate with constituencies?

Answer: As agreed during the meeting, Ecology's facilitator will provide a summary of roles, responsibilities, and process for AC members with the summary of today's meeting.

Corrin Hamburg: As far as cap calculations go it would be helpful to provide a video tutorial example of each calculated scenario using a single dataset and showing each number produced by each method. Not necessarily at a meeting but possibly as a video to be watched or a handout vs. video format. Thank you for the suggestion. We will devote the May 13 meeting to explaining these calculations; those meeting materials should be helpful for reference.

Question from the group: Does the Chair have a role in setting the agenda?

Answer: Yes. Ecology's permit writer is the lead in setting the agendas. The chair and facilitator work together to develop agendas that provide appropriate sequencing and ample time for discussion.

Phil Williams: My screen only shows a handful of participants. In your meeting summaries can you record all people who participated as members and those who just monitored the meeting so as to have a complete record of everyone who was involved? It would improve the credibility of the process I believe.

Answer: Yes, as mentioned during the meeting, the summary will include a complete list of registrants for today's webinar.

Dave Peeler: to better understand the N concentration methods it would be helpful to show some calculations, or bar charts illustrating the different outcomes. Is there a statistical test to gauge which method is the most accurate?

Answer: Future meetings will have a seeded example to aid in the discussion. There is not a statistical test to gauge which method is most accurate. There are several possible approaches that can all be considered valid. This is part of the inherent difficulty. See answer to Corrin's question above.

Mindy Roberts: can you share materials from the TAPE program that devised the non-parametric approach?

Answer: I will look to see what is available from the TAPE program that discusses the non-parametric approach. We used the TAPE spreadsheet because it is a tool that ran the calculation we needed in an easy format. It was not used because our assumptions are similar to TAPE. "R" was also used to run the same bootstrapping calculation but it is not as user friendly as the Excel Macro.

Judi Gladstone: Unless your technology is improved, we won't be able to have discussion. Ecology recognizes the challenges with virtual technologies and will use a different platform to host future virtual meetings.

Tom Swartout: will the info on boot strapping and other CAP calc methods also be made available to general public?

Answer: all of the materials provided to the AC will be available to the public.

Mindy Roberts: For the optimization work, it would be helpful to know where the various facilities are on their current flows vs. design flows as well - in other words, this will look different for facilities that just upgraded vs. those about to start

Thank you for the suggestion.

Heather Earnheart: I would like to see a specific math workshop on the calculation methods so we can more fully understand how they work.

Comment noted.

Dave Peeler: If possible, the meeting materials should be shared online prior to the meeting to give people more time to consider the issues and questions. Also, sharing some real world examples would be helpful (N loading methods, flow calculations, etc) and resulting load calculations differences.

Comment noted.

Heather Earnheart: You didn't address the earlier question on whether this conversation and process will cover only nitrogen or phosphorus too.

Comment noted.

Mindy Roberts: let's make sure we get public comments next time

Comment noted.