

A. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In order to execute the components of the FDEP QA Directive, the Office of Watershed Services (OWS) STORET Section has developed the [Quality Plan for the Office of Watershed Services STORET Section](#), the purpose of which is to ensure the implementation of a quality system. This document describes the steps OWS STORET takes to ensure the scientific and legal defensibility of environmental data we manage. It describes the process of training, assessment and corrective action we undertake to ensure that environmental data meet our established quality criteria. One aspect of our program is to ensure that Department QA activities are carried out according to commitments made to the Environmental Protection Agency as enumerated in the [FDEP Quality Management Plan \(QAMP\) Revision 6/24/09](#).

The OWS STORET Section resides within the Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration (DEAR). The organization of the STORET Section consists of one Environmental Administrator, four STORET Coordinators, one WQX Coordinator, and one Quality Assurance Officer. A comprehensive description of OWSSTORET organization and personnel responsibilities can be found in [Section 4](#) of the Quality Plan for the OWS STORET Section. All personnel undergo extensive training to ensure proficiency and accountability within their duties. Supervisors annually assess whether OWS STORET staff performance conforms with the policies and procedures of our Section. A summary of OWS STORET staff training procedures can be found in [Section 5](#) of the Quality Plan for the OWS STORET Section.

The OWS STORET implements Florida statutory requirements, Department rule requirements and U.S. EPA requirements for management of environmental (non-regulatory) data for the state through Florida STORET in accordance with [Section 4](#) of the Quality Plan for the OWS STORET Section. OWSSTORET manages data from both internal data providers (e.g., FDEP District Offices through FDEP STORET) and external data providers (e.g., Water Management Districts, Counties, and local governments through Florida STORET). All data are made available for access through the Florida STORET data warehouse and through the publicly available [STORET Public Access \(SPA\) Website](#).

OWS STORET is committed to the implementation of the quality assurance requirements in the QAMP and as authorized by [Chapter 403.0623 Florida Statutes \(F.S.\)](#) and [Chapter 62-160 Florida Administrative Code \(F.A.C.\)](#) (the FDEP QA Rule for Water, Waste and Resource Management), specifically [Chapter 62-160.670](#), Data Validation by the Department. Data Quality Objectives (DQO) and Data Quality Indicators (DQI), listed in [Table 1](#) of the Quality Plan for the OWS STORET Section, are used and/or modified as necessary to meet the requirements and objectives for the FDEP Programs and Projects for which we manage data and to meet federal reporting requirements.

OWS STORET staff understand the need to manage and evaluate the quality and usefulness of environmental data to be used in environmental assessments. We conduct data management procedures relative to the collection, evaluation, storage and reporting of the data in Florida STORET. Management of the data in Florida STORET includes developing and maintaining databases

and other software applications to assist data providers in loading data to STORET, training data providers (e.g., on data maintenance, quality assurance and migration), and monitoring data quality. Staff evaluate data using the OWS STORET DQOs and DQIs and implement corrective actions as directed by the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO). OWS STORET also uploads the data to the U.S. EPA Water Quality Exchange (WQX) per federal requirements. It is the intent of FDEP and OWS STORET to carry out these obligations and requirements as described in the Department's [QA Directive 972, September 2009](#). A detailed flow of work is provided in [Sections 6 and 7](#) of the Quality Plan for the OWS STORET Section.

A. DATA GENERATION AND ACQUISITION

The OWS STORET Section does not generate data, but acquires data from internal and external data providers throughout the state of Florida. OWS STORET staff review and evaluate incoming data regularly in accordance with [Section 6](#) of the Quality Plan for OWS STORET Section, and ensure quality control during data migration to Florida STORET and upload to the U.S. EPA WQX. Documentation of work flow and quality assurance activities, including data back-up, are kept in accordance with [Section 7](#) of the Quality Plan for OWS STORET Section.

The Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration (DEAR) and OWS STORET ensure that the FDEP contracts administered for data acquisition are properly developed and managed to assure appropriate data quality. FDEP ensures that contract development includes appropriate provisions of the [FDEP Office of Technology and Information Services](#) (OTIS) and, if applicable to the contract, provisions of the [FDEP QA Rule \(Chapter 62-160\)](#) and contract QA guidelines contained in [DEP-QA-002/02](#). OWS contracts are reviewed by the FDEP Office of Technology and Information Services (OTIS), and, if applicable, by FDEP QA staff within the Standards and Assessment Section prior to execution of the contract. Contract managers assure that the work is properly planned and executed, is consistent with Department Information Technology (IT) standards and requirements, and, as relevant, is consistent with FDEP QA Rules.

B. ASSESSMENT AND OVERSIGHT

The OWS STORET Section conducts data assessments serving the purpose of audits throughout the data management process resulting in data verifications, reporting, and/or data corrections as described in [Section 6](#) of the Quality Plan for OWS STORET Section. OWS STORET staff work together in a team environment providing feedback, trouble-shooting, and confirmation throughout the data management process. Deficiencies identified within the data management process are corrected based on OWS STORET Data Quality Objectives (DQOs) and Data Quality Indicators (DQIs) and implement as directed by the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO). The results of this integral data assessment are captured in weekly, monthly and annual data quality reporting in Florida STORET.

Since accurate documentation is an important factor for determining the success of QA activities, OWS STORET conducts record-keeping procedures for data acquisition, review and archiving in accordance with [Section 7](#) of the Quality Plan for OWS STORET Section. Each Staff member provides a weekly report of data management activities to the Quality Assurance Officer (QAO). These reports are compiled into an OWS STORET report that is distributed to upper management and other interested members within the Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration (DEAR), and are archived locally by the QAO. A weekly spreadsheet is also distributed to upper management and other interested members within DEAR that details data provider communications and data uploads. This spreadsheet is archived on a FDEP network drive that is backed-up nightly. In addition, data QA activities are documented monthly in a spreadsheet located on a FDEP Network drive that is backed up nightly.

To provide the Secretary with information regarding FDEP's ongoing QA efforts, OWS STORET will prepare an OWS STORET-specific QA report in accordance with [Section 10](#) of the Quality Plan for Watershed Data Services Section STORET Section. This report describes and compiles the results of all appropriate QA activities, and will provide the report to the FDEP QA Coordinator for inclusion in the Department-wide annual QA Report to the Secretary.

C. DATA VALIDATION AND USABILITY

The OWS STORET Section staff understand the need to manage and evaluate the quality and usefulness of environmental data to be used in environmental assessments. The OWS STORET staff regularly conduct data management procedures relative to the collection, evaluation, storage, and reporting of the data in Florida STORET in accordance with established Data Quality Objectives and Data Quality Indicators referenced in [Table 1](#) of the Quality Plan for OWS STORET Section.

The OWS STORET staff ensure quality control during data migration to Florida STORET and data upload to U.S. EPA WQX in accordance with [Section 6](#) of the Quality Plan for OWS STORET Section. OWS STORET staff develop databases and software applications that assist Data Providers in formatting and providing quality data. During the formatting process, all FDEP required fields for the identification of impaired surface waters (referenced in Data Quality Assessment Elements for Identification of Impaired Surface Waters; [DEP EAS 01-01](#)) and U.S. EPA WQX requirements are implemented into the Data Provider's formatting software and STORET import configuration.