



2011 Annual Quality Assurance Report

Northwest District Office

December 2011

Executive Summary

The Northwest District office was involved in numerous aspects of Quality Assurance (QA) during the 2011 calendar year. One of the most important projects was the completion of the Northwest District's Quality Assurance Plan. This plan included revisions/updates from District organizational units including the Water Facilities Program (Drinking Water, Industrial Wastewater, and Domestic Wastewater), the Waste Management Program (Solid Waste, Petroleum Storage Systems, Hazardous Waste, and Waste Cleanup), and the Submerged Lands Environmental Resources Program (Permitting, Enforcement/Compliance, Watershed Management Program, and Ecosystem Restoration Section).

Additional QA activities included district staff attending QA training presented and conducted by the Standards and Assessment Section, District QA Officer attending the QA Coordinator's Quarterly Teleconferences, review of the proposed revisions to the QA Rule 62-160, F.A.C., review of the proposed revisions to the Department's Standard Operating Procedures which included sampling, field testing, and selected biological procedures. Other issues included a data records audit of a Dissolved Oxygen Study at Williford Springs, a field sampling performance audit with local volunteer water sampling group (Bream Fishermen's Association), responded to the Standards and Assessment Section's audit findings from a surface water sampling event conducted by District Watershed staff, implemented corrective actions including linking water quality meters to Water Quality Report Forms, Field Records, and Calibration/Verification Logs, and provided technical assistance on a variety of QA topics/issues to district staff.

Quality Assurance Activities and Issues

- Training Activities
 - A. Approximately 30 staff members from the Pensacola Office, Panama City Branch Office, and the Tallahassee Branch Office attended quality assurance training conducted by the Standards and Assessment Section. Training involved classroom and hands-on and the topics included;
 1. How to perform field sampling performance audits using checklists.
 2. How to perform audits of lab data using checklists.
 3. How to evaluate lab data reporting, including QC concepts (e.g., data qualifier codes, MDLs, PQLs, precision, accuracy, blanks).
 4. DEP contracts and grants QA requirements and management.
 5. Selection of approved methods for labs.
 6. How regulatory methods are published and promulgated.
 7. QA plans for specific projects and contracts: when are they required, what should be in them, how to review them?
 8. Organization of your work group quality system and what should be in your quality plan.
 9. Sampling training for DEP SOPs (concepts and hands-on), including program-specific training (e.g., springs sampling).
 10. Training for wastewater inspectors performing PAIs.
 11. Training for Quality Assurance Officers.
 12. Understanding and applying QA concepts to research projects, biology and other activities that are not standard procedures and not related to routine water quality monitoring, permitting or enforcement.
 13. Where to find published QA information.
 - B. District staff attended on-site Performance Audit Inspection (PAI) training, conducted by the Standards and Assessment Section, at two local facilities.
 - C. District staff from the Waste Management Program, Waste Cleanup Section, attended a lab QA training presentation via the internet (gotomeeting.com).
 - D. Staff from the District's Watershed Management Program attended a statewide Biocriteria meeting held in Sarasota. Topics included discussion of various QA topics for the bioassessment SOPs.
 - E. Staff from the District's Domestic Wastewater Section conducted sampling techniques training for the wastewater inspectors of the Panama City and Tallahassee Branch Offices.
- Audit Activities
 - A. Conducted a field sampling performance audit, at five separate sampling sites, with the volunteer monitoring group the Bream Fishermen Association. This included the observation of the samplers during the collection of surface water samples. Also, observed the member's use of a water quality meter to collect field parameters. Audit also included data records review of the calibration and verification logs and project field sheets.

- B. Answered the audit findings from Watershed staff surface water sample audit conducted at Jones Creek. Corrective actions summary, to the audit findings, were forwarded to the Standards and Assessment Section.
- C. Conducted an audit of data used during a Dissolved Oxygen Study performed at Williford Springs.
- D. Automated data review, using ADAPT software, performed by Waste Management Program staff on data received for compliance and permitting requirements.
- Issues
 - A. One of the significant issues found during this year was the absence (linking) of the water quality meter number(s) on Water Quality Report Forms, Field Records, and Calibration/Verification Logs. This was found during field sampling and data record audits. This is needed to link the water quality meter to the Water Quality Report Forms, Field Records, and Calibration/Verification Logs. Corrective actions were taken.
 - B. Included revised QA language into the Bream Fishermen Association's (BFA) new Water Quality Monitoring contract. This included the BFA samplers attending Department annual training on sampling objectives and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). And to provide a sampling manual that outlines how the BFA collects water samples and adheres to the Department's SOPs.
- Correction Actions
 - A. Submerge sample bottles into ice not placed on top of ice.
 - B. Note (link) water quality meter ID number(s) on Water Quality Report Forms, field records, and Calibration/Verification Logs.
 - C. Note the use of an intermediate device on Water Quality Report Forms.
 - D. Exercise care not to disturb bottom sediments when sampling.
 - E. Submerge sample containers neck first, inverted into on coming flow direction filling slowly leaving headspace, return to surface.
 - F. When required use new gloves during sampling.
 - G. Pre-rinse filters and filtration equipment.
- Additional Items
 - A. Reviewed the proposed revisions to the Department's SOPs and the Quality Assurance Rule 62-160, F.A.C.
 - B. Supplied Submerged Lands Environmental Resource Program Compliance and Enforcement Section copies of new Calibration/Verification Logs, Field Measurement Log, Instrument Maintenance Log, and Acceptance Criteria Sheet for the turbidity meters used by Submerged Lands Environmental Resource Program Compliance and Enforcement Section.

- C. Discussed and made recommendations to staff of the Waste Management Cleanup Section for internal QA of reports received by the Waste Management Section.
- D. District QA Officer attended the QA Coordinator's Quarterly Teleconferences.
- E. One of the primary focuses of the District's Water Facilities Program, for the year, was to insure that the chemical data they receive from drinking water systems meets QA/QC standards. They also tried to meet or exceed the standards for the limited field sampling that they perform.
- F. District Staff from the Waste Management Program, Cleanup Section, observed groundwater sampling QA/QC procedures with a field sampling contractor at a Santa Rosa County Solid Waste Facility.
- G. The District's Domestic Wastewater Section assembled a wastewater compliance manual that includes a section on meter calibration, sampling, and filling out chain of custody forms, etc.