

ADEM UPDATE

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“Dashboards” Help Track Program Performance

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management utilizes a variety of tools, or metrics, to ensure its environmental programs are supportive of the Department’s overall mission. A new tool is now being used to illustrate inspection, compliance, and enforcement data for facilities operating under air, land, and water permits.

Accessible on the ADEM website and viewable by all citizens, this interactive tool utilizes “Dashboards” to display charts and graphs that highlight inspection, compliance, and enforcement trends for all states, including Alabama. The Dashboards illustrate how trends in Alabama compare to other states and how activity levels in Alabama compare to national goals established by EPA.

Although each state is unique in the way it implements environmental programs, which results in some difficulties comparing state-to-state data, these Dashboards allow ADEM staff and interested stakeholders to use visual metrics to document inspection, compliance, and enforcement activities. At the August 16 Alabama Environmental Management Commission meeting, ADEM Director Lance LeFleur presented information on the Dashboards system, and reported that ADEM is a leader in electronic, or “E” programs.

“Several other states now use many of our e-systems,” said LeFleur. “ADEM is a leader in this arena. These e-programs have also paid financial dividends that allow the Department to become an exceptionally low-cost provider of high-quality environmental regulation.”

With this information being easily accessible by the public, the Dashboards are yet another step to ensure transparency in the implementation of environmental programs and the decision-making processes at ADEM.



Dashboards highlight inspection, compliance, and other trends

Public Information Officers Discuss Hurricane Preparedness



Public Information Officers attend meeting at ADEM

In June, ADEM hosted another meeting of Public Information Officers representing numerous state agencies. This marked the second consecutive time that ADEM has hosted the event where the PIO’s discuss ideas, media issues, and programs. More than 20 representatives from various state agencies attended, with most making presentations regarding activities being implemented within their departments in regards to media events, publications, and new initiatives.

This meeting was specifically scheduled to discuss hurricane preparedness and the hazards associated with hurricanes. Discussions revolved around evacuation routes, traffic flow, and maintaining open lines of communication. Many state agencies including Emergency Management, Public Safety, and ADEM respond to hurricanes and tropical storms. Their ability to coordinate and communicate regarding watches, warnings, and evacuations is essential. ADEM also has the responsibility to ensure drinking water systems and wastewater treatment facilities are operational in the wake of hurricanes and that debris disposal is conducted in accordance with applicable environmental regulations.

Coosa River Watershed Conference Held in Pell City

In August, ADEM staff participated in a watershed conference sponsored by the Alabama Clean Water Partnership. The conference took place at the Pell City Civic Center, with various organizations, groups, and state agencies taking part in the event. The conference provided 97 participants with an opportunity to hear and present strategies to promote healthy watersheds and improve water quality in Alabama.

The event was designed to help the collaboration efforts between diverse groups with specific water quality goals for industry, recreation, and transportation. Open discussions were held on how to provide better projects through effective partnerships and how to identify worthwhile future activities to enhance long-term water resource management in the Coosa River Watershed.

Highlights of the meeting included an update on Alabama's surface water monitoring plan by ADEM's Lynn Sisk, a review of Alabama Power's "Renew our Rivers" program, a presentation describing Honda Manufacturing's "Green" program, and the latest on activities in the Coosa watershed involving threatened and endangered species.

The conference brought together representatives from watershed groups, municipalities, industry, and resource agencies to share information, express particular interests, and plan more effectively for the future. The Alabama Clean Water Partnership provides a neutral forum for a diverse and inclusive coalition of public and private sector individuals to work together to protect and preserve water resources in Alabama.



Close to 100 people attended the Coosa River Watershed Conference in Pell City.

Rain Barrel Workshop Held at ADEM



ADEM's Lynn Sisk and Will Bacon construct their rain barrels during the workshop

ADEM supports a wide range of projects that are designed to protect Alabama's air, land, and water resources. Many of these projects allow citizens to play an active role in protecting the state's natural resources. In July, a number of ADEM employees took advantage of an opportunity to build their own rain barrels as ADEM hosted a Rain Barrel Workshop.

The workshop was sponsored by the Alabama Clean Water Partnership and those attending the workshop were able to build their own rain barrel, complete with screening, hoses, and faucets. Participants were also able to learn more about water conservation, protecting waterways, and preventing nonpoint source pollution in a short presentation that was held prior to the construction of the rain barrels. Attendees paid \$30 to cover the cost of materials and each participant was able to leave with a 55-gallon rain barrel.

Rain water harvesting is important because it decreases the demand for domestic water in which residential irrigation can account for up to 40 percent of consumption. Rain barrels are typically used to capture rain water for later use and to reduce tap water usage for economic or environmental reasons. Some of the best uses for stored rain water are for watering gardens, landscaping applications, and for pets or bird baths.

ADEM's Roy Collins Named Water Conservationist of the Year

Based on his tireless efforts to protect Alabama's coastal waters, ADEM's Roy Collins has been named the 2013 Water Conservationist of the Year by the Alabama Wildlife Federation.

In April 2010, the Deepwater Horizon Oil Rig exploded, sank, and discharged oil into the Gulf of Mexico creating the largest environmental disaster in U.S. history. ADEM had the responsibility to lead Alabama's disaster relief response, which required coordinating the activities of 12 different state agencies. Over the past three years, the work to deal with the impacts to Alabama's coastal environment has consumed more than 60,000 work hours at ADEM.

Roy Collins, the Alabama State On-Scene Coordinator to the Gulf Coast Incident Management Team, is a shining example of the intense dedication and commitment that was required by people involved with the oil spill response. As he coordinated the vast array of cleanup and restoration activities, 12-hour days and 7-day work weeks became the norm, with no additional compensation.

Under his oversight, thousands of tons of oil and tar have been removed from Alabama's coastal waters and shoreline, reducing incalculable damage to key estuaries that are essential to the state's oyster, crab, shrimp, and fishing industries. By demanding the highest levels of cleanup efforts, Alabama's beaches have returned to their sugar-white color and the tourism industry is recovering.

"Dedicated, tireless, diligent, exemplary, constant, and consistent," are just a few of the terms the Alabama Wildlife Federation used to describe Collins and the job he has done. In addition, ADEM Director Lance LeFleur recognized Collins' achievement at the Alabama Environmental Management Commission meeting on June 21. "It is an honor to work with the dedicated people of ADEM that are characterized by Roy Collins."

Following a tour of duty in the U.S. Navy, Roy graduated from Auburn University and has worked at ADEM since 1994.



Roy Collins

Groundwater Professionals Gather in Montgomery

Approximately 1.5 million Alabamians depend on groundwater resources as their source of drinking water. Ensuring a clean, safe supply of this precious commodity is a priority for the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, along with helping drinking water systems operate at maximum efficiency.

Each year, ADEM hosts a Groundwater Conference for public drinking water utilities, municipal officials, government agencies, and environmental consultants to meet and discuss issues of importance related to groundwater availability, impacts to groundwater resources, and changing regulatory requirements.

More than 150 professionals who work to manage and protect groundwater resources attended the conference in Montgomery in June where they heard presentations on a variety of topics including real-time monitoring of groundwater conditions, field testing of aquifers, remediation strategies, and new methods of water resource management.

ADEM also took advantage of the conference to review what reports have to be submitted to the Department and how to discover the release of pollutants. Drinking water systems were also encouraged to prepare for natural events, such as droughts and storms, which could possibly disrupt the safety or reliability of the state's drinking water supplies.

ADEM UPDATE Available Online

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management publishes the *ADEM UPDATE* quarterly to inform Alabamians on the latest news and activities of the Department. As a cost-savings measure, the *ADEM UPDATE* is no longer printed. It is distributed electronically and available online through the publications link on the ADEM website at adem.alabama.gov.



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