

TDEC Public Participation Plan Office of External Affairs		Policy Number: OEA-P-01-Public Participation Plan-03012026
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Summary of Procedure: This policy serves as a blueprint for TDEC’s engagement of the public in environmental decision-making processes. The guiding principles, best practices, and techniques in this plan establish a consistent and comprehensive framework for public engagement, participation, and outreach. TDEC staff should refer to the Public Participation Toolkit for more detailed instructions on the mechanics of public hearings and meetings.		
Number(s) and Name(s) of Referenced Files:		

Revision Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Revised By
0	7/1/2021	Initial issuance	
1	3/1/2026	Revised to facilitate a larger meaningful engagement discussion	Tara Pedraza and John LeCroy

I. RESPONSIBLE OFFICES

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Division of Stakeholder Engagement, Office of External Affairs (OEA) is responsible for overseeing the

Public Participation Plan (PPP). Each division is responsible for ensuring compliance with division-specific public notice and comment rules, with assistance from the TDEC Office of General Counsel as needed. TDEC's nondiscrimination coordinator is responsible for assisting TDEC's external customers with information about TDEC's nondiscrimination obligations and grievance procedures.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to advance TDEC's mission by providing a consistent framework for meaningful public engagement.

III. DISCLAIMER

This document is policy only and does not create legal rights or obligations. Agency decisions in any particular case will be made applying applicable laws and regulations to the specific facts.

IV. SCOPE

This policy applies to all TDEC public participation activities.

V. POLICY

Introduction

TDEC's Public Participation Plan is a blueprint to facilitate the engagement of the public in the environmental decision-making process. This plan underscores TDEC's commitment to fostering a welcoming and inviting public participation process. At the heart of TDEC's approach is the goal of providing robust opportunities for the public to contribute to regulatory decisions and the development of programs and services.

TDEC's public participation strategy is anchored in state and federal requirements, striving for engagement that is not just a formality but a meaningful and impactful process. Meaningful public participation consists of informing, consulting, and working with potentially affected communities at various stages of TDEC's environmental decision-making process to address questions and concerns. The plan also details how TDEC guarantees access for various groups, including people with disabilities, Limited English Proficiency (LEP), and underrepresented populations.

While this plan delineates guiding principles, best practices, and techniques for effective public engagement, TDEC acknowledges the uniqueness of communities. Recognizing that a one-size-fits-all approach may not always be optimal, TDEC commits to working individually



with communities on a case-by-case basis. This tailored approach ensures that TDEC engagement efforts are not only meaningful but also adapted to the specific needs and nuances of each Tennessee community, and that all legal and regulatory requirements are met.

Mission

TDEC exists to enhance the quality of life for citizens of Tennessee and to be stewards of our natural environment by:

- Protecting and improving the quality of Tennessee’s air, land, and water through a responsible regulatory system;
- Protecting and promoting human health and safety;
- Conserving and promoting natural, cultural, and historic resources; and
- Providing a variety of quality outdoor recreational experiences.

TDEC is committed to providing a cleaner, safer environment that goes hand-in-hand with economic prosperity and increased quality of life in Tennessee. We deliver on our mission through managing regulatory programs that maintain standards for air, water, and soil quality while providing assistance to businesses and communities in areas ranging from recreation to waste management. We also manage the state park system and programs to inventory, interpret and protect Tennessee’s rich natural, historical, and archaeological heritage.

Organization and Structure

TDEC is organized and administered to protect human health and the environment, conserve natural resources, manage state parks, and promote overall quality of life in Tennessee. TDEC’s external programs are delivered primarily through two bureaus: the Bureau of Environment (BOE) and the Bureau of Conservation (BOC). Each bureau is further divided into program areas and divisions overseeing and administering the environmental activities of the department.

TDEC is the chief environmental regulatory agency in Tennessee. TDEC has authority under state statutes, as well as delegated authority from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), to regulate:

- Air pollution;
- Solid and hazardous waste;

- Radiological health;
- Underground storage tanks;
- Cleanup of polluted sites; and
- Water resources.

TDEC's Bureau of Environment has a central office in Nashville in addition to eight environmental field offices located across the state. It develops rules, prepares policy and guidance documents, issues permits, inspects facilities, and conducts enforcement. TDEC also offers a program of grants and loans to assist local communities with the development and maintenance of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure as well as solid waste disposal, waste prevention, brownfield redevelopment, and recycling programs.

TDEC's Bureau of Conservation manages [state parks](#), [state natural areas](#), and state archeological sites encompassing more than 200,000 acres across Tennessee. These facilities include rustic, natural, and historic sites, resort parks, restaurants, marinas, and golf courses. Tennessee State Parks feature more than 3,000 campsites in 36 park campgrounds while offering interpretative and resource-based recreation activities, including birding, biking, fishing, hiking, and swimming. The Bureau of Conservation's Office of Outdoor Recreation has a mission to advance conservation and expand access to outdoor recreation, improving the quality of life and economy across Tennessee.

Both Bureaus regularly engage with the public as they conduct normal day-to-day business. The techniques, best practices, and guiding principles described in this plan provide a consistent framework to assist TDEC staff as they build community relationships that are open, transparent, and based on mutual trust and respect.

Goals of the Public Participation Plan

The following goals describe how TDEC strives to ensure meaningful involvement:

Work collaboratively with communities to identify shared goals and opportunities.

TDEC has established partnerships with community organizations, local governments, and non-governmental organizations to foster meaningful dialogue, identify common objectives, and explore opportunities for collaboration.

Educate the public on TDEC programs and activities to enhance public awareness.

TDEC utilizes a variety of methods to educate the public including workshops, webinars, newsletters, meetings, and consultations. These outreach efforts inform the public about TDEC's programs and activities.

Provide consistent communication regarding state law and TDEC's regulatory authority.

TDEC has developed accessible communication channels to keep the public informed, including a website with relevant state laws, regulatory responsibilities, and public participation opportunities.

Ensure everyone has meaningful access to all of TDEC's programs, resources, and initiatives.

TDEC staff utilizes community assessments to help develop customized plans to address the unique cultural, linguistic, and logistical needs of an area.

Evaluate engagement strategies to continually improve future public participation.

TDEC regularly assesses the effectiveness of engagement strategies, seeks feedback, and implements improvements to enhance the quality and impact of public participation efforts.

This plan expands upon these goals with respect to specific public participation strategies and actions. This plan reaffirms TDEC's commitment to ensuring that its public involvement opportunities are welcoming and inviting to all individuals. TDEC is committed to providing

*How the U.S. EPA defines **meaningful involvement**:*

- *People have an opportunity to participate in decisions about activities that may affect their environment and/or health;*
- *The public's contribution can influence the regulatory agency's decision;*
- *Community concerns will be considered in the decision-making process; and*
- *Decision makers will seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected.*

persons with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from its programs, services, and activities through compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. Through these goals, TDEC aims to encourage informed citizens to engage in meaningful public

participation activities that ensure a robust environmental decision-making process.

Public Engagement

Public engagement is a broad concept that involves interaction and communication between TDEC and the public. It goes beyond the specific act of participating in decision-making and includes activities that promote dialogue, build relationships, and foster collaboration. TDEC

communicates and engages with the public in a variety of ways through its day-to-day conservation and regulatory activities. From providing technical assistance, interpretive programming, and education, workshops, webinars, public meetings, to formal public hearings,

With the motto, "Tennessee State Parks are forever and for everyone," the Bureau of Conservation aims to boost public engagement across all sites. TDEC released a comprehensive strategic plan for all state parks that outlines upcoming developments, goals, and strategies to enhance visitor experiences. This plan prioritizes a meaningful experience for visitors through interpretation, education, and recreation services. Key strategies include staff training in interpretation, fostering relationships with representative communities, connecting all to Tennessee resources through technology optimization, enhancing exhibit accessibility, and offering a variety of programs to maximize participation.

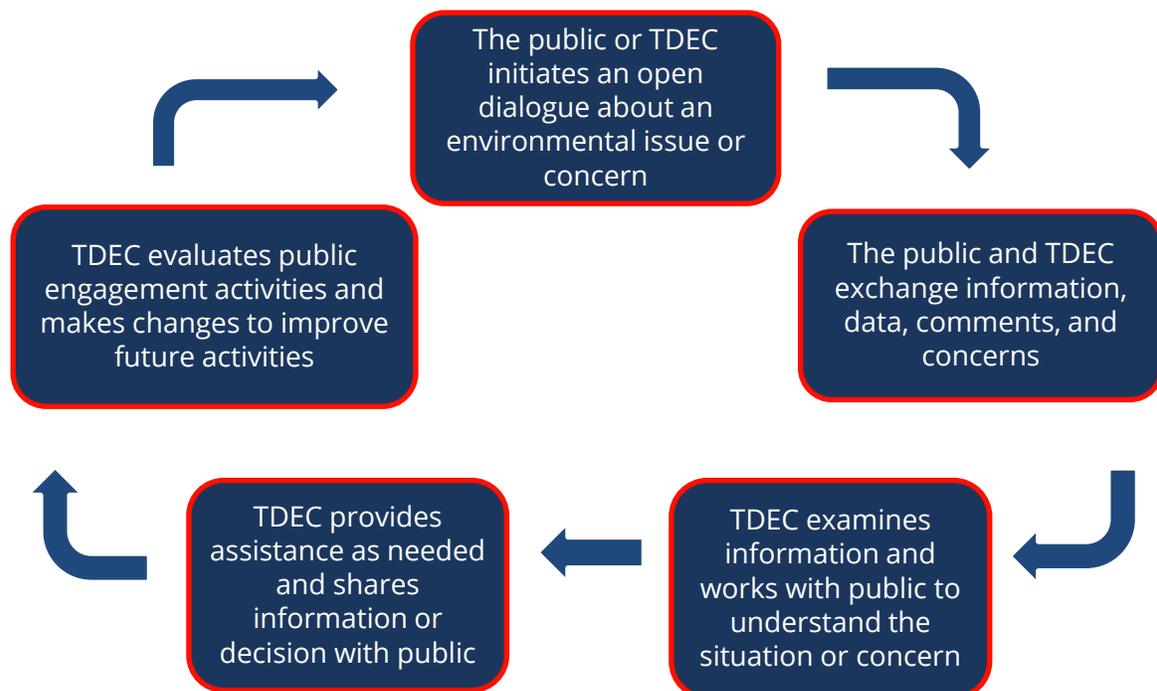
TDEC employees strive to create opportunities for meaningful interaction with the public. Meaningful interaction involves two-way communication, seeking not only to inform and educate the public but also to listen to their concerns, ideas, and feedback.

Public engagement may be active, like discussing grant opportunities with potential applicants, or passive, when an individual researches permit application criteria on the department's website. Open dialogue and information sharing foster collaboration and

understanding. *While many TDEC staff have regular interaction with the public, TDEC's Office of External Affairs serves as the primary point of contact for stakeholders and proactively works with communities to identify shared goals and opportunities to partner together.*

TDEC Data and Map Viewers. TDEC manages a variety of critical work through active databases referred to as Dataviewers. These Dataviewers promote greater transparency, accountability, and wider access to public information and can be found on the department's website. Dataviewers pull information from the same consolidated databases TDEC staff use to keep track of environmental regulatory activities. The public can access data and use our Dataviewers anytime on TDEC's website. Dataviewers reflect overnight updates TDEC staff make to the databases. Information in this dynamic database is constantly changing as records are updated daily. As a result, any changes made to the database should be available on the Dataviewer the next day. For more information on TDEC's Data and Map Viewers and to access information, click [here](#). Dataviewers feature a detailed Help function to assist users once they are searching within the database. The public may also email the TDEC Help Desk at BG-Help_Desk@tn.gov or call (615) 532-0287.

Figure 1. Public Engagement Flowchart



Public Participation

Public participation refers to the involvement of the public in TDEC’s decision-making processes. Unlike public engagement which is a broad concept and focuses on creating opportunities for dialogue, public participation is a term that focuses on actively involving members of the public by giving them the opportunity to influence the outcome or action being considered. For TDEC, public participation typically occurs in the context of rulemaking, permitting, and the development of guidance

documents. Public participation encompasses various levels of involvement ranging from information sharing and consultation with minimal public involvement to collaboration and empowerment, which allows for greater public involvement (See Table 1. TDEC’s Public Participation Scale below).

TDEC aims to work collaboratively with communities, providing timely and accurate information to the public to educate and inform about programs and activities, including regulatory requirements. Meaningful involvement is paramount to meeting all of the goals established in the PPP and ensures the public has a role in shaping outcomes. Meaningful involvement is centered on fostering positive relationships between TDEC and the public that lead to mutual benefits and learning opportunities. See the section below on “Enhanced Methods of Public Engagement” for more information regarding specific methods and tools. TDEC’s final decisions are based on the application of applicable law to the facts of a given situation.

TDEC values community and stakeholder input and **public hearings** provides an excellent opportunity and forum for TDEC staff to receive comments regarding proposed regulatory actions.

One example where public comments influenced a permit outcome occurred during a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit public hearing for an outfall location on a waterbody. During the public hearing, TDEC received relevant information from community members indicating the proposed outfall location was in an area that is dry during certain parts of the year (and therefore technical assumptions about mixing were incorrect) and where residents recreate and enjoy spending time. TDEC staff considered those comments and reevaluated the location with the applicant and confirmed the comments made by the public. This ultimately resulted in the relocation of the outfall to a more appropriate location. This example highlights the importance of public involvement in TDEC’s regulatory actions and resulted in a better permit for people, the community, and the environment.

Public Participation Range

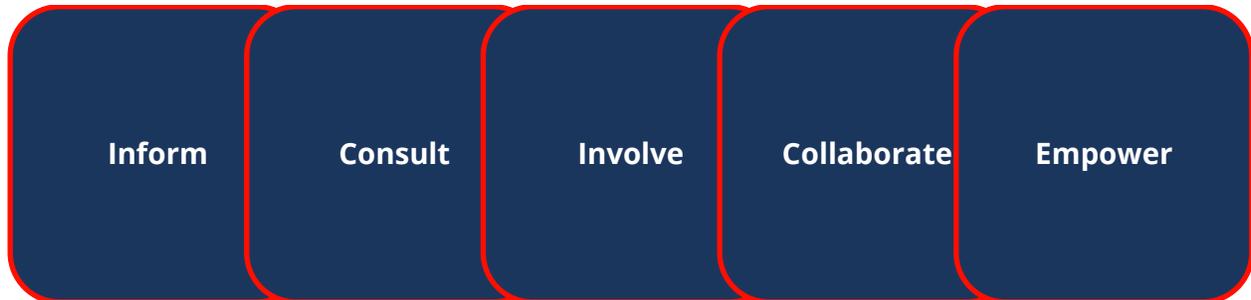
The EPA has adopted the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) Spectrum of Public Participation. The EPA's Public Participation Spectrum describes five levels of public participation to assist the agency. EPA's Public Participation Guide can be found [here](#). TDEC has modified this tool to establish and communicate expectations about opportunities for meaningful involvement (See Table 1. TDEC's Public Participation Range below). Understanding how TDEC approaches public participation is vital because the process informs our decision-making and builds trust with the public we serve. TDEC staff play a pivotal role in utilizing their knowledge of a permitting action's process, the regulatory requirements, and their judgment to strategically plan and provide suitable opportunities for meaningful public involvement.

TDEC's approach to meaningful public involvement is structured around three key steps:

- Identifying the legal requirements associated with the action;
- Using TDEC's Public Participation Range of engagement activities to align the appropriate level of participation with the regulatory requirement and/or desired outcome; and
- Applying suitable tools and best practices.

This tailored approach aims to develop a comprehensive plan that effectively serves the impacted community, ensuring that public participation is meaningful and aligned with legal requirements and community needs. Public understanding promotes a sense of empowerment and collaboration, reinforcing the importance of community involvement in shaping decisions that impact their daily lives.

Table 1. TDEC’s Public Participation Range



Purpose	Information sharing with external partners.	Provide and exchange data and information.	Obtain advice or comments.	Reach a workable agreement, settlement, or decision together.	Empower the public to take action.
Promise to the Public	“We will keep you informed.”	“We will listen, acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on your input at the appropriate time.”	“We will take your advice or comments into account when making a decision, and we will inform you how your advice or comments influenced our decisions.”	“We will work together in good faith to reach an understanding that we can all support and implement as agreed.”	“We will support your decision and assist in your implementation.”
Outreach Methods	TDEC Website, fact sheets, presentations, news releases, public notices, and newsletters	Meetings with individuals, public hearings and public meetings, workshops, community meetings, webinars, and listening sessions	Advisory Groups, consultant roundtables, and certain working groups	Compliance Review Meetings, Boards, and Commissions	TDEC Grants and task forces

Public Participation Methods

TDEC utilizes formal practices to comply with regulatory requirements while also informing the public, seeking community and stakeholder input, ensuring meaningful involvement, and responding to community concerns during the decision-making process. TDEC also utilizes informal practices to enhance information-sharing and community engagement. These multiple communication channels help TDEC distribute information to, and solicit input from, impacted communities and stakeholders. The methods below are not an exhaustive list but highlight the most commonly used public participation strategies.

Public Notice. Issuing a **public notice** informs the public about an upcoming opportunity to take part in the decision-making process. At a minimum, TDEC complies with all public notice requirements of applicable statutes and rules. Requirements vary depending on the program area and the type of action (information about common TDEC permits are discussed in Attachment 2). However, public notices typically include a project description, an explanation of the proposed action, instructions for commenting (including deadlines), instructions for how to find additional information, contact information for division technical staff, and other relevant information. The public notice is posted on TDEC's website and emailed to a list of persons who have requested to be notified. Members of the public may contact TDEC to be added to the email list and receive public notices. These forms of notices are cost-effective and are most likely to reach the public.

To reach local community members, some rules additionally require publishing the notice in a newspaper and/or posting signs near the location of the proposed activity. Newspaper notices are expensive and may not reach a significant number of people. TDEC does not consider a newspaper notice to be a cost-effective method of reaching the public, but it will continue to comply with applicable legal requirements.

By contrast, signage is a relatively inexpensive and effective way to notify local community members of a proposed activity. (See Figure 2. Example of a Public Notice Sign) When required, signs should be placed where they are readily visible to the public, typically within about five feet of the paved shoulder of roads. (See Figure 3. Example of Instructions for

Public Notice Sign Template) In addition to compliance with applicable notice rules, the following factors are considered when placing signs:

- Proximity to the proposed activity;
- Visibility to the general public, which may require placement of signs further away from the proposed activity;
- Public safety; and
- Respect for private property rights and compliance with applicable laws (*i.e.*, local ordinances, Tennessee Department of Transportation rules, county highway rules).

Notice signs cannot provide every detail, but should provide general information, including:

- Location of the proposed activity;
- Brief description of the proposed activity and TDEC's permit file number;
- Website for more information (QR codes may also be provided);
- Comment deadline;
- Hearing time, date, and location, if applicable;
- Contact information for technical staff; and
- Other information as appropriate.

Figure 2. Example of a Public Notice Sign

PUBLIC NOTICE

NPDES Permit Application (Renewal and Modification) for Discharge of Treated Mine Wastewater and Industrial Stormwater

Applicant:	Additional Information:		
<p>Vulcan Construction Materials, LLC Rogersville Quarry TN0072761</p> <p>Receiving stream(s): Caney Creek</p>	<p>TDEC Public Participation Webpage: www.tn.gov/environment/ppo-public-participation.html</p> 	<p>TDEC Data and Map Viewers: www.tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/tdec-dataviewers.html</p> 	<p>Permit page for this project: https://dataviewers.tdec.tn.gov/dataviewers/f?p=2005:34051:9051360087956:::34051:P34051_PERMIT_NUMBER:T:0072761</p> 
<p>To comment on this proposal: Please email TDEC.Mining@tn.gov or mail comments to the Mining Section at 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921.</p>			

Figure 3. Example of Instructions for Public Notice Sign Template

INSTRUCTIONS:

The first page of this document may be used as a template to create a public notice sign. Please note that you are not required to use this template. Other public notices may be accepted if they comply with all rules and requirements. See Rules 0400-40-05-.06 [NPDES Rules](#) or Rules 0400-40-07-.04 (4)(d). [ARAP Rules](#). Alternately, public notice signs are available free of charge at each TDEC Environmental Field Office.

The Division recommends printing the sign at least 2' x 3' and placing the sign as close as possible to a public road. Examples are shown below. The sign must be maintained for a minimum of 30 days. The Division recommends using a durable material such as corrugated plastic or a vinyl banner. Please provide proof of sign posting (such as photos) to your permit writer.



Public Hearings and Rulemaking Hearings. A TDEC public hearing or rulemaking hearing allows the public to provide comments on the record about a proposed permit or rule. There are some differences between public hearings and rulemaking hearings.

A **public hearing** on a permit action may be held as required by statute or rule. In some cases, TDEC or the permit applicant is aware of a high degree of community interest. In this case, TDEC – either on its own initiative or at the request of the applicant – will schedule the hearing as part of its original public notice. If a hearing has not been set, the public notice will include instructions for how the public can request a hearing. Program area points of contact can be found on the public notice located on TDEC’s Public Participation Opportunities webpage. TDEC will consider those requests that are filed in a timely manner and describe the reasons why a hearing is warranted. Minimum time frames for notification of hearings vary according to applicable statutes or rules.

As part of the rulemaking process, on behalf of its related boards, TDEC is required by law in most situations to hold a **rulemaking hearing** to amend, change, or propose a new rule. Rulemaking hearings provide the public with an opportunity to formally comment on a proposed rule. These hearings are governed by Tennessee’s Uniform Administrative Procedures Act rather than division-specific statutes or rules.

TDEC generally conducts public hearings in a hybrid format, allowing for both in-person and online participation, and ensures there is an option to call into the meeting by phone in case of limited Internet access. Although not required by law, TDEC typically offers an informal public meeting immediately prior to the formal public hearing to ensure that useful information is shared and that the public has an opportunity to speak and interact with TDEC staff informally. The public meeting typically involves a presentation of the proposed action and a question-and-answer session. By contrast, the purpose of the formal public hearing is solely to receive comments from the public, to be considered and addressed later.

TDEC understands that unexpected events may occur that disrupt a public hearing, rulemaking hearing, or public meeting. These unexpected events might include inclement weather, power outages, unforeseen technical problems, and other conditions that interfere with the scheduled hearing or meeting. In these situations, TDEC may implement a

contingency plan, providing an additional date and time for the entire or virtual only component of the public hearing or meeting. In addition, TDEC will provide timely information to the public concerning the unexpected event and contingency plan, re-noticing the hearing, and providing the required comment period.

In less extreme situations, TDEC provides contact information for staff holding the hearing or meeting. This allows the public an opportunity to contact staff with questions concerning the meeting or hearing. For example, due to the nature of conducting hybrid public hearings and meetings, in some instances, unexpected technical difficulties may occur causing some members of the public to experience connection problems. TDEC recognizes this and established a best practice of providing a phone number and email address for online participants to contact if they have technical difficulties.

Additionally, virtual public meetings are held in a manner that ensures the meaningful participation and involvement of individuals with limited English proficiency and individuals with disabilities. This includes during times of national, state, or local emergency.

TDEC works to schedule public hearings at convenient times and locations for the interested public, working with local elected officials and community leaders as needed. For example, TDEC generally schedules permit hearings on weekday evenings to facilitate participation by community members who have a vested interest and who work during the day. Rulemaking hearings, on the other hand, are usually scheduled during the workday because these are generally attended by environmental professionals.

Informal Meetings. Meetings are a less formal avenue for TDEC to collaborate with stakeholders than hearings. These informal meetings can range from small, private meetings to larger public meetings. Small meetings are typically held at a TDEC office or conducted virtually via video conference in response to requests from stakeholders. TDEC staff may offer such meetings if individuals or organizations express particular interest in a

Office of External Affairs helps a community reimagine the Ocoee Whitewater Center

In the aftermath of the devastating fire that led to the total loss of the Ocoee Whitewater Center, the Office of External Affairs was invited to step in to guide the planning for the future management of this community asset. Working closely with staff and local stakeholders, the group discovered an exceptional opportunity to reimagine the future of the whitewater center, focusing on state park management and operations. This vision aims to create a facility that not only serves as a national example but also remains deeply rooted in TDEC's commitment to fostering unique natural, cultural, and recreational experiences for the community and all Tennesseans.

External Affairs's ability to serve as a bridge between leadership, Tennessee State Parks, and federal agencies allowed for productive discussions and collaboration. The team, through facilitated discussions, recognized the importance of enhancing relationships between partners to develop a long-term strategy for the facility. These discussions strengthened ties with federal counterparts and positioned TDEC to play a pivotal role in shaping the future vision and operational framework of the Ocoee Whitewater Center.

matter. These meetings allow advocates to share their preliminary concerns (often before a permit is drafted), allow TDEC to answer questions, and help identify potential information gaps. Some informal meetings are more collaborative and focus on building partnerships and exploring

opportunities.

Public meetings may be held to encourage participation and engage a wide audience in information-sharing and discussion. Informal public meetings are not required by statute or rule but are effective when used to increase awareness of an issue or proposal and may be paired with a public hearing to allow staff to respond to questions prior to the more formal public hearing.

Similar to hearings, members of the public may request a meeting by contacting the TDEC program area initiating the action. Program area points of contact can be found on the TDEC website. The public may also contact TDEC's Office of External Affairs in their respective regions to request a meeting.

Other Methods. TDEC uses a variety of methods to ensure access to information about programs, services, and activities. TDEC primarily uses its website, news releases, public notices, newsletters, and emails to inform the public about an upcoming initiative or action. TDEC aims to provide the public with adequate and timely information concerning an upcoming action to enable those potentially affected or interested persons to make informed and constructive contributions.

Title VI/Non-Discrimination Considerations for Public Participation

TDEC complies with all federal and state non-discrimination laws in the administration of programs and services, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. TDEC's Public Participation Plan works in concert with the non-discrimination program to identify specific tactics for outreach and involvement. Non-discrimination information is available on the TDEC Non-Discrimination website (tn.gov/environment/nondiscrimination), as well as flyers in all office locations.

Language Access. TDEC takes reasonable steps to ensure that people of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access to participate in our services, programs, and activities. TDEC offers free language assistance services to participate in our programs or activities for people whose primary language is not English. These services may include the translation of written documents or providing qualified interpreters in-person or over the telephone. TDEC's LEP services extend to public participation opportunities and reasonable steps will be taken to ensure people of LEP can participate in TDEC's decision-making process. TDEC's Language Access Plan details LEP considerations, services, and best practices.

Disability Access. TDEC is committed to providing persons with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in or benefit from its programs, services, and activities through compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, as amended by the ADA Amendments Act of 2008. TDEC has established a Disability Access Plan outlining TDEC's efforts to comply with disability law, including information regarding reasonable modifications to ensure persons with disability have equal opportunities to participate in or benefit from TDEC's programs, services, and

activities. TDEC provides full access to public participation programs and activities for persons with disabilities. This includes providing reasonable accommodations including facility accessibility and auxiliary aids and services.

Locations and Accessibility. TDEC ensures that all hearings and meetings are held in venues that meet the ADA accessibility standards and allow for meaningful participation by individuals with Limited English Proficiency. When applicable, TDEC works with permit applicants and staff to ensure appropriate venues are used for public engagement. Criteria for venues include but are not limited to:

- The facility is conveniently located near the location of the proposed activity. For statewide actions, such as general permits or rulemaking, meetings are typically held at state offices in Nashville;
- The facility is physically accessible to individuals with disabilities;
- The facility is a neutral location such as a community center, state office, school, or library;
- Room acoustics will allow the public to hear clearly;
- The room capacity will comfortably hold the number of participants expected;
- Space will be sufficient for TDEC to set up information and materials;
- Information will be provided in a language other than English if LEP attendees are expected based on the community assessment;
- The cost of the facility is reasonable; and
- The facility has the needed audio and visual equipment to facilitate public involvement, including Internet access for virtual participation.

Preference may be given to locations accessible by public transportation if the other factors are satisfied.

Virtual and Hybrid Meetings. Utilizing technology to provide hybrid in-person and virtual participation opportunities allows TDEC to reach a wider audience and increases accessibility to members of the public. TDEC generally conducts rulemaking and public hearings utilizing a hybrid format whenever the technology at the meeting location allows. TDEC utilizes Microsoft Teams or Webex to conduct virtual meetings, webinars, public hearings, and

rulemaking hearings. The virtual meeting component has telephone dial-in capabilities to ensure that people without Internet access can participate. Hybrid public meetings have helped overcome common barriers to participation such as transportation and childcare.

Enhanced Methods of Public Engagement

In some cases, such as significant environmental activities, TDEC may choose to provide enhanced public outreach. What is considered a significant environmental activity varies across TDEC program areas and often is based on the level of public interest rather than the potential for pollution. Activities eligible for general permit coverage or that are otherwise exempt from public notice requirements are not significant environmental activities. In most cases, in-kind renewals would not qualify as significant, but exceptions may include highly impactful or controversial facilities. Examples of activities that may qualify as significant environmental activities include, but are not limited to:

- Aquatic Resource Alteration Permits (ARAPs) for aquatic alterations associated with pipelines;
- Permits for new or expanded landfills;
- A permit for a new major source of air pollutants;
- ARAPs or NPDES permits for new or expanded quarries;
- Individual NPDES permits for new or increased discharges that result in greater than *de minimis* degradation; and
- A complex remediation or brownfield redevelopment project involving multiple agencies with a significant positive community impact.

In addition to projects like those mentioned above, TDEC may determine that enhanced outreach is appropriate for significant environmental activities:

- In areas with limited Internet access, both rural and urban;
- In areas with significant LEP populations;
- In areas with high poverty or unemployment rates;
- Reasonably anticipated to result in a high degree of public interest among local community members; and
- Where unusual community factors otherwise apply.

The decision of whether to engage in enhanced community outreach in a particular situation resides with division directors. A permit unit manager may flag a particular action as being likely to lead to a high degree of public interest early in the review process, or that interest may be demonstrated later in the process. If so, permit staff work with the regional OEA representative to develop a plan for enhanced outreach.

If TDEC determines that enhanced public notice is appropriate, options for enhanced outreach may include, but are not limited to:

- Providing more than the minimum required signage;
- For linear projects, mailing the public notice directly to landowners with TDEC-regulated impacts on their property;
- Posting public notices at local public libraries, city halls, or other public locations and providing copies of decision documents to libraries;
- Notifying local elected officials and other community leaders and asking for recommendations about additional options to effectively notify the public, including contact information for others who should be directly notified;
- Scheduling a public meeting, workshop, or listening session after an application has been received but prior to the formal public notice; and
- Offering private meetings to affected persons or organizations.

TDEC is limited in what it can require applicants to do. Under Tennessee's Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, TDEC cannot impose mandatory requirements on applicants except through rules. So, enhanced notice and engagement are a TDEC responsibility unless applicants agree to voluntarily participate.

Responsible Offices

Office of External Affairs

The **Office of External Affairs** in TDEC's Division of Stakeholder Engagement serves as the primary point of contact for external stakeholders with environmental concerns across the

state. Each of TDEC’s eight regions has a Regional Director who actively works with local and state officials, business, industry, the general public, community development representatives, and environmental groups (see map of Field Offices below). The Office of External Affairs coordinates and facilitates public meetings, regulatory hearings, information sessions, and community engagement opportunities to ensure TDEC is transparent while meeting its mission.

Environmental Field Offices

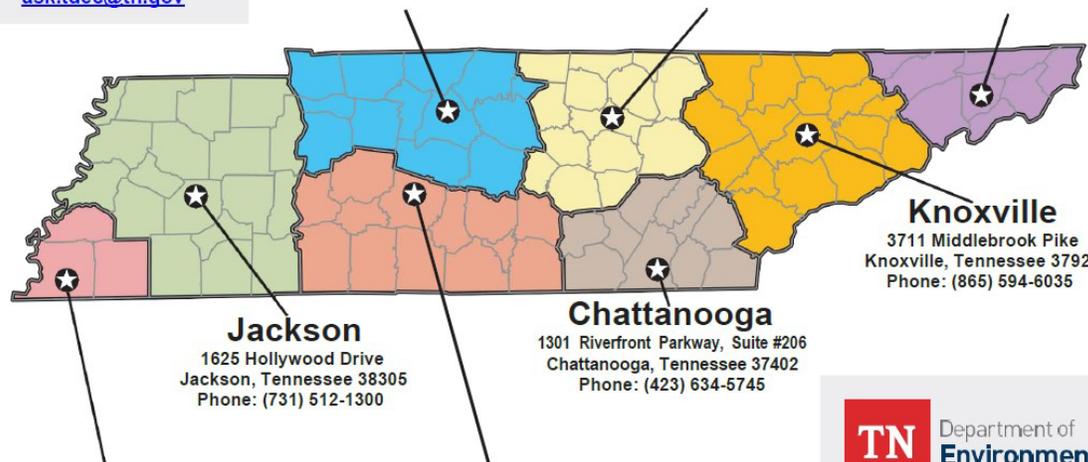
<https://www.tn.gov/environment/contacts/about-field-offices>

Have a question about Tennessee’s Environment?
Call 1-888-891-TDEC (8332)
ask.tdec@tn.gov

Nashville
711 R.S. Gass Boulevard
Nashville, Tennessee 37243
Phone: (615) 687-7000

Cookeville
1844 Foreman Drive
Cookeville, Tennessee 38501
Phone: (931) 520-6688

Johnson City
2305 Silverdale Road
Johnson City, Tennessee 37601
Phone: (423) 854-5400



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1301 Riverfront Parkway, Suite #206
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37402
Phone: (423) 634-5745

Knoxville
3711 Middlebrook Pike
Knoxville, Tennessee 37921
Phone: (865) 594-6035



The Office of External Affairs also maintains a [resource portal](#) for elected officials, business and industry, and Tennessee residents. These portals include common links, guidance documents, permit information, and other information of interest.

TDEC is organized into program areas that oversee and administer the environmental and resource management activities of the department. These program areas have staff with



technical expertise and responsibility for regulatory actions, resource management, resource protection, and who provide project-specific information to the community and stakeholders. TDEC strives to operate in a transparent manner and provides access to information on the [TDEC Website](#). Program staff are trained in the public notice procedures applicable to their roles. Program area staff post public notices, meeting information, permitting documents, and other program specific documents on the website and are accessible any time by the public.

Nondiscrimination Coordinator

TDEC's nondiscrimination coordinator in TDEC's Office of Policy and Planning assists with the development of policies and procedures as well as nondiscrimination training. The nondiscrimination coordinator may assist program staff and OEA concerning LEP access, including translation services, and accessibility for persons with disabilities. For questions regarding any of TDEC's non-discrimination programs, policies, or procedures, please contact the non-discrimination coordinator at TDEC.TitleVI@tn.gov.

Online Resources

Information is available to the public primarily through the TDEC website, <https://www.tn.gov/environment.html>.

Public Participation Webpage

The [Public Participation Opportunities](#) webpage features information about public notices sorted by Division. Each page includes instructions to join virtual meetings.

Calendar of Events

Upcoming and past events are posted on TDEC's [Calendar of Events](#) webpage. The events include meetings of TDEC's affiliated boards and commissions, public notice of rulemaking



hearings, and other opportunities to provide feedback on Department programs and permits.

TDEC Data and Map Viewers

TDEC manages a variety of critical work through active databases referred to as Dataviewers. These Dataviewers promote greater transparency, accountability, and wider access to public information and can be found on the department's website. Dataviewers pull information from the same consolidated databases TDEC staff use to keep track of environmental regulatory activities, rosters, and status. The public can access data and use our Dataviewers anytime on TDEC's website, <https://www.tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/tdec-dataviewers.html>.

Accessibility Information

All State of Tennessee websites are developed using accessible web standards, as discussed in the Accessibility Statement. TDEC sites include features designed to improve accessibility for all users. Additionally, all pages are enabled with Google Translate via the bottom right corner to translate page contents to over 120 languages.

Conclusion

This Plan guides TDEC's engagement with the public in Tennessee. TDEC staff who interact with the public will be notified of this Plan and trained in its implementation to ensure consistency across all Divisions. TDEC performs its work in an open and transparent way, with awareness and sensitivity to Tennessee's changing demographics. As TDEC applies the strategies discussed in this Plan, it expects to be a better steward of the State's resources and a better partner for the communities it serves.

VI. Attachments



Attachment 1. Format for Upcoming Public Hearings and Meetings Webpage

TDEC's Public Participation Opportunities webpage features information about public notices, upcoming public hearings and meetings, rulemaking hearings, and documents for public comment. Divisions use the following format example as a best practice for publishing upcoming public hearings and meetings.

Upcoming Public Hearings & Meetings:

Each hearing or meeting listed below has a direct link to the online Meeting. Details on how to connect are included in the public notice document. People who attend the hearing/meeting by phone and who are not able to register online will be given the opportunity to confirm their participation during the hearing. Your participation is appreciated.

Data Viewer Note: Internet Explorer is no longer supported for our Data Viewer applications. Please use one of the following browsers: Chrome, Fire Fox or Edge.

Date (2024)	Time (Central)	Topic	Notice	Location	Virtual Link
03-21	5:30 PM	NRS22.192 - TN Gas Pipeline Co. Hearing Presentation	 NOPH	Dickson Co. Gov. Bldg 303 Henslee Drive Dickson, TN 37055	 TEAMS
05-06	5:00 PM	NRS23.200 - TN Dept. of Transportation Public Notice	 NOPH	Coffee County Administrative Plaza 1329 McArthur Street Manchester, TN 37355	 TEAMS

Typically, most public hearings begin with an informational session before the formal hearing begins. Please see the public notice document for details.

Virtual Participation Instructions and Guidance

(For participation in public meetings/hearings through web conferencing)

-  [WebEx Participation Instructions](#)
-  [Teams Participation Instructions](#)

Please note that you may also participate in public hearings by telephone. Call-in information for each hearing, as well as a number to call during the hearing for technical assistance, is provided in each public notice.



Attachment 2. Tables of Common TDEC Permits and Public Notice Requirements

The tables below describe common permits issued by TDEC along with public notice and public hearing or meeting requirements. The tables also indicate how members of the public may request public hearings or meetings. The list of information in the tables may not be exhaustive.

Table 2. Air Pollution Control

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
Construction Permit	Construction of an air contaminant source or modification of an existing air contaminant source.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a new non-major source or a non-major modification at an existing major source, once an application has been deemed complete, a public notice is issued with a 30-day comment period. For a new major source or a major modification of an existing major source, a public notice with a 30-day comment period is issued once a draft permit and preliminary determination is made that the permit can be issued. Notice is given via electronic notice on the Department's website and may also include newspaper publication. 	For new major sources or major modifications at existing major sources, a formal public hearing may be held if requested.	Interested parties may request a public meeting or hearing by contacting the Director, Tennessee Division of Air Pollution Control. Send written request to Michelle W. Owenby, Director, Division of Air Pollution Control, Davy Crockett Tower, 7 th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243 or by email at air.pollution.control@tn.gov .
Operating Permit	Operation of an air contaminant source.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For a major source and other sources required to have a Title V operating permit, a public notice with a 30-day comment period is issued along with a draft permit . There is no public notice requirement for minor source operating permits. 	For a major source or a non-major source required to have a Title V permit, a public hearing may be held if requested.	Interested parties may request a public meeting or hearing by contacting the Director, Tennessee Division of Air Pollution Control. Send written request to Michelle W. Owenby, Director, Division of Air Pollution Control, Davy Crockett Tower, 7 th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243 or by email at air.pollution.control@tn.gov .

Additional permitting information available at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/permit-permits/air-permits.html>

Table 3. Water Resources

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Construction Permit	Discharge of stormwater associated with construction activity disturbing one or more acres or less than one acre but part of a common plan of development. In limited situations, an individual permit may be required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time the general permit is drafted, a public notice is issued on the TDEC website and distributed via the Division of Water Resources' mailing list and through publication in newspapers in four major cities. Applicants request coverage under this general permit. Applications and notices of coverage are available on the TDEC dataviewer, but separate public notices are not issued for coverage of individual projects under general permits. For an individual permit, a public notice is issued on the TDEC web site and distributed via the Division of Water Resources' mailing list. The applicant must also place a division-approved legal notice in a local newspaper and post a placard near the project site. 	<p>A public hearing is held for the draft general permit.</p> <p>For an individual stormwater permit, a public hearing may be held if requested.</p>	Interested parties may request in writing that the Commissioner hold a public hearing on an application for an individual permit. This request may be made via mail to Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Davy Crockett Tower, 5 th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243, or email at water_permits@tn.gov . The request shall be filed as soon as practicable within the period allowed for public comment and shall indicate the interest of the party filing it and the reasons why a hearing is warranted.

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit (ARAP)/Section 401 Certification	A new activity that alters the properties of streams, rivers, lakes, or wetlands. General permit vs individual permit dependent upon type or extent of the alteration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time the general ARAP is drafted, a public notice is issued on the TDEC website and distributed via the Division of Water Resources' mailing list and through publication in newspapers. Applicants request coverage under this general permit. Applications and notices of coverage are available on the TDEC dataviewer, but separate public notices are not issued for coverage of individual projects under general ARAPs. For an individual permit, a public notice is issued on the TDEC web site, distributed via the Division of Water Resources' mailing list, and published in a newspaper. The applicant must post a placard near the project site. 	A public hearing is conducted for the issuance of general permits. A public hearing for an individual permit may be held if requested to discuss water quality concerns relevant to the permitted activity.	Interested parties may request in writing that the Commissioner hold a public hearing on any individual permit application. This request may be made via mail to Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Davy Crockett Tower, 5 th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243, or email at water_permits@tn.gov . The request shall be filed as soon as practicable within the period allowed for public comment and shall indicate the interest of the party filing it and the reasons why a hearing is warranted.
Discharge permits through publicly owned treatment works (POTW)	Discharge (other than domestic sewage) into the local POTW system.	A POTW with a pretreatment program must comply with the public participation requirements of 40 C.F.R. part 25.		

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
NPDES Individual Permit	Discharge of pollutants directly from sources to surface waters of the state.	A public notice with a 30-day comment period is issued once a draft permit and preliminary determination is made that the permit can be issued. Applicants for new or increased discharges must post a sign on a public road near the facility. NPDES permits for major facilities require newspaper publication.	A public hearing may be held if requested to discuss water quality concerns relevant to the permitted activity. Public hearing notices must be published in a newspaper.	Interested parties may request in writing that the Commissioner hold a public hearing on any individual permit application. This request may be made via mail to Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Davy Crockett Tower, 5 th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243, or email at water_permits@tn.gov . The request shall be filed as soon as practicable within the period allowed for public comment and shall indicate the interest of the party filing it and the reasons why a hearing is warranted.
State Operating Permit	Applies to non-discharging sewerage systems, including decentralized systems and animal feeding operations.	A public notice with a 30-day comment period is issued once a draft permit and preliminary determination is made that the permit can be issued.	A public hearing may be held if requested to discuss water quality concerns relevant to the permitted activity.	Interested parties may request in writing that the Commissioner hold a public hearing on any application. This request may be made via mail to Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Davy Crockett Tower, 5 th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243, or email at water_permits@tn.gov . The request shall be filed as soon as practicable within the period allowed for public comment and shall indicate the interest of the party filing it and the reasons why a hearing is warranted.

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
Tennessee Multi-Sector Permit (TSMP) (NPDES Industrial Stormwater Permit)	Stormwater discharge from industrial activity.	At the time that the general permit is drafted, a public notice is issued on the TDEC web site and distributed via the Division of Water Resources' mailing list. Applicants request coverage under this general permit and applications and notices of coverage are available for public review on the TDEC dataviewer, but separate public notices are not issued for general permits.	At least one public hearing is scheduled for any general permit.	N/A.

Additional permitting information available at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/permit-permits/water-permits.html>.

Table 4. Solid & Hazardous Waste Management

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
Solid Waste Disposal Facility Permit	New, expansion of, and changes in ownership of Class I, II, III landfills, or composting with food waste or biosolids	A preliminary public notice is issued within 30 days after the date of receipt of a Part I application. An additional public notice is given upon a tentative permit decision being reached, including a notice to deny a permit.	After a tentative permit decision has been reached, a 45-day public comment period begins in which comments are received. Hearings may be proactively scheduled due to the expected level of public interest. The Commissioner holds a public hearing whenever a significant degree of public interest in a draft permit exists. The Commissioner may also hold a public hearing if such a hearing might clarify one or more issues involved in the permit decision. Go to the Division's webpage, Waste Notices & Hearings (tn.gov) , to view public notices, public participation opportunities, and request to be added to the mailing list.	Any interested party can request a public hearing during the 45-day public comment period, if no hearing has already been scheduled. A request for a public hearing must be in writing and must state the nature of the issues proposed to be raised in the hearing. This request may be made via mail to Nick Lytle, Solid Waste Permitting Section Manager, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Davy Crockett Tower, 7th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243 or email at Nickolaus.Lytle@tn.gov .
Special Waste Approval	Disposal or processing of special wastes.	N/A	N/A	N/A

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
Hazardous Waste Permit	Treatment, storage, or disposal of a hazardous waste (not under generator exclusions)	Public notice requirements vary based on the complexity of the proposed action. The public may request public notices to be sent directly to their attention by submitting a request to be added to the Solid/Hazardous Waste Management Mailing List. Go to the Division's webpage, Waste Notices & Hearings (tn.gov) , to view public notices, public participation opportunities, and request to be added to the mailing list.	Public hearing and meeting requirements vary based on the complexity of the proposed action. Go to the Division's webpage, Waste Notices & Hearings (tn.gov) , to view public notices, public participation opportunities, and request to be added to the mailing list.	Interested parties may submit comments and request in writing during the comment period that the Division hold a public hearing, if no hearing has already been scheduled. A request for a public hearing must be in writing and must state the nature of the issues proposed to be raised in the hearing. This request may be made via mail to Beverly Philpot, Hazardous Waste Program Manager, Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Davy Crockett Tower, 7th Floor, 500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243, or email at Beverly.Philpot@tn.gov . The request shall be filed as soon as practicable within the period allowed for public comment and shall indicate the interest of the party filing it and the reasons why a hearing is warranted.

PERMIT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
Solid Waste Permit-by-Rule	Change to the chemical or physical characteristics of a solid waste by a solid waste processing facility. Eligible activities or facilities for a Permit-by-Rule are tire storage facilities, convenience centers, land application facilities, certain composting programs, and transfer stations.	N/A	N/A	N/A
Notification of Hazardous Waste Activity	Generation of 100 kg (220 lbs.) of hazardous waste or more or more than 1 kg (2.2 lbs.) of acutely hazardous waste generated in a month, absent a regulatory exemption. Generators of less than above quantities are not required to notify but are encouraged to do so.	N/A	N/A	N/A

Additional permitting information available at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/permit-permits/waste-permits0.html>.

Table 5. Mineral & Geologic Resources

REQUIREMENT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
<p>Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit (ARAP)/Section 401 Certification</p>	<p>A new activity that alters the properties of streams, rivers, lakes, or wetlands. General permit vs individual permit dependent upon type or extent of the alteration.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At the time the general ARAP is drafted, a public notice is issued on the TDEC website and distributed via the Division of Mineral and Geologic Resources' mailing list and through publication in newspapers. Applicants request coverage under this general permit. Applications and notices of coverage are available on the TDEC dataviewer, but separate public notices are not issued for coverage of individual projects under general ARAPs. For an individual permit, a public notice is issued on the TDEC website, distributed via the Division of Mineral and Geologic Resources' mailing list, and published in a newspaper. The applicant must post a placard near the project site. 	<p>A public hearing is conducted for the issuance of general permits. A public hearing for an individual permit may be held if requested to discuss water quality concerns relevant to the permitted activity.</p>	<p>Interested parties may request in writing that the Commissioner hold a public hearing for an individual permit application. The request must be filed before the close of the comment period and shall indicate the interest of the party filing it, the reasons why a hearing is warranted, and the water quality issues being raised. Submit requests to the Mining Section, Knoxville Environmental Field Office, Attn: Public Notice Coordinator, 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37923, or by email to Dennis.Conger@tn.gov.</p>
<p>NPDES Individual Permit</p>	<p>Discharge of pollutants directly from sources to surface waters of the state.</p>	<p>A public notice with a 30-day comment period is issued once a draft permit and preliminary determination is made that the permit can be issued. Applicants</p>	<p>A public hearing may be held if requested to discuss water quality concerns relevant to the permitted activity.</p>	<p>Interested parties may request in writing that the Commissioner hold a public hearing. The request must be filed before the</p>

		for new or increased discharges must post a sign on a public road near the facility. NPDES permits for major facilities require newspaper publication.	Public hearing notices must be published in a newspaper.	close of the comment period and shall indicate the interest of the party filing it, the reasons why a hearing is warranted, and the water quality issues being raised. Submit requests to the Mining Section, Knoxville Environmental Field Office, Attn: Public Notice Coordinator, 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37923, or by email to Dennis.Conger@tn.gov .
Tennessee Multi-Sector Permit (TSMP) (NPDES Industrial Stormwater Permit) (Mining-related)	See Water Resources section.			
Tennessee Mineral Surface Mining Permit	Surface mining activities, including final reclamation. Applies only to certain non-coal facilities.	Applicant must publish a notice of intent to operate a surface mine.	Commissioner must consider written statements from interested parties. Additionally, Surface Mining permits are typically processed in conjunction with a NPDES permit which has separate public participation requirements.	No provision for a public meeting/hearing, though one may be requested on an associated individual NPDES permit if there are water quality concerns.

Additional permitting information available at <https://www.tn.gov/environment/permit-permits/mineral-geologic.html>.

Table 6. Bureau of Conservation

REQUIREMENT	REGULATED ACTIVITY	PUBLIC NOTICE	PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	REQUESTING A PUBLIC HEARING OR MEETING
<p>TCA 11-3-120 Management Plan for each State Park</p>	<p>TDEC is directed to formulate a long-range management plan for each state park that includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding requirements for state parks and an analysis of whether the revenue-generating facilities are self-sustaining; 2. Facilities preservation, maintenance, and utilization; 3. Management and personnel staffing, training, compensation and professional development; 4. Preservation, development and expansion of existing and new park resources and facilities; 5. Educational programming; and 6. Land acquisition. <p>Each management plan shall include goals and projections for state parks for the next ten years and updated every 5 years.</p>	<p>Each management plan shall be posted on the department's website, and public notice shall be given in accordance with Title 8, Chapter 44. Notice of the public meeting shall be given to any friends groups or other groups with a particular interest in the park.</p>	<p>A public meeting is conducted in each park or in the vicinity of each park upon updating the management plan.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>Office of Outdoor Recreation Grant Requirements</p>	<p>Applying organizations are required to submit public input for a grant project with their grant application.</p> <p>The applicant must conduct 2 public meetings pertaining to the grant application scope using the Project Presentation. The meeting must be conducted between the Intent to Apply Workshop and the application deadline, and the meeting must obtain adequate public input. The meeting must be advertised per the organization's standard procedures.</p>	<p>A sign advertising the meeting(s) at the project development site is required.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. These meetings are scheduled to specifically discuss the project and to obtain community comments. 2. All meetings can be conducted as stand-alone or prior to a regularly scheduled meeting, i.e., City Board or County Commission. 3. One of the two meetings can be conducted via social media or virtually. Social media meeting must have the ability to comment on Project Presentation and virtual meetings must be recorded. 4. Meetings cannot be conducted on same day of the week or same time of day and must be conducted at a reasonable time of day to allow citizens to participate. 	<p>Public does not request. Applying organization schedules the public meeting.</p>
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Attachment 3. Example of a Community Assessment

The Community Assessment below serves as an example and describes the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). This was completed for a TDEC project in 2023.

Community Assessment for Knoxville MSA Conducted in 2023

Knoxville MSA Summary:

Population: 759,957

Low Income: 30%

Limited English Households: 1%

English spoken at home: 94%

Spanish spoken at home: 3%

Other Indo-European language spoken at home: 1%

City of Knoxville Summary:

Population: 190,907

Low Income: 45%

Limited English Households: 2%

English spoken at home: 93%



Spanish spoken at home: 4%

Other Indo-European language spoken at home: 1%

Arabic spoken at home: 1%

Other and unspecified: 1%

Seven Islands State Birding Park in identified disadvantaged Census tract

Outreach Recommendations:

Translative Services (low LEP Population)

- Do not translate flyer and meeting materials
- Ask on RSVP form for request for translative services at public meeting and provide upon request

Community Focus

- Work with community groups and leaders to share public meeting opportunity
- Provide outreach materials in public libraries, places of worship, and community centers