



TENNESSEE WATER REGULATORY FORUM

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

Fleming Training Center
2022 Blanton Dr.
Murfreesboro, TN 37129

TN Department of
**Environment &
Conservation**
Division of Water Resources

Note from the Director

Dear Water Professionals and Stakeholders,

On behalf of the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) Division of Water Resources (DWR), it is my pleasure to welcome you to the inaugural Tennessee Water Regulatory Forum. If we've talked at all, you know that outreach and collaborative communication is very important to me. I'm very proud of my team, and I'm excited for you to connect with them and the work they do today.

Earlier this year, members of our team had the opportunity to attend a similar forum hosted by our neighbors to the north, Kentucky. We left inspired, not only by the quality of the discussions, but by the spirit of collaboration and transparency that shaped the event. That experience sparked a vision – to bring that same energy and openness to Tennessee. Today, that vision becomes a reality.

This forum was created to foster meaningful dialogue, provide regulatory clarity, and strengthen partnerships across sectors. Just as importantly, it reflects our commitment to being more accessible, transparent, and responsive to our external stakeholders. Whether you are a permit holder, represent a utility, a consulting firm, a local government, or a watershed organization, we want this space to support your work, answer your questions, and strengthen your connection to DWR.

Your presence here today reflects a shared commitment to innovation, stewardship, and service to Tennessee communities. We are honored by your presence and grateful for your commitment to safeguard Tennessee's most vital resource – our water.

In addition to the presentations and discussions, this forum also offers valuable networking opportunities with DWR staff and fellow attendees. We encourage you to take advantage of these moments to build relationships, ask questions, and share your experiences.

Throughout the day, you'll hear from DWR staff about available tools and resources and participate in discussions on emerging issues such as infrastructure funding, stormwater management, drought management, water related emergency response, decentralized systems, and nutrient control. We hope these sessions equip you with valuable insights and spark new ideas for collaboration.

Thank you for being part of this important first step. Your engagement is essential to the success of this forum and to the future of water protection in Tennessee.

Gratefully,



April Grippo
Director,
Division of Water Resources

Get to Know TDEC Leadership



Ronné Adkins, Ph.D.
Deputy Commissioner,
Bureau of Environment



David Salyers, P.E., P.G.
Commissioner,
Department of Environment
and Conservation



Karen Simo
Deputy Commissioner,
Bureau of Operations,
Strategy & Engagement



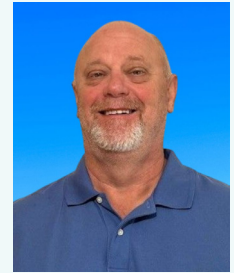
Michael Atchley
Deputy Director,
Technical & Permitting Programs



Brad Harris, P.E.
Deputy Director,
Land Based Systems



Paula Mitchell
Deputy Director,
Central Office Operations &
Fleming Training Center



Chris Rhodes
Deputy Director,
Environmental Field Offices



Jonathon Burr
Environmental Fellow
Natural Resources



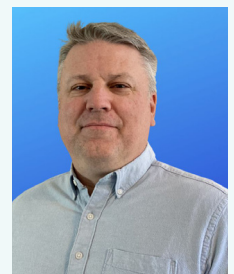
Karina Bynum, Ph.D., P.E.
Environmental Fellow
Watershed Restoration



Britton Dotson
Environmental Fellow
Groundwater



Vojin Janjic
Environmental Fellow
Technical Services



Erich Webber
Environmental Fellow
Drinking Water

TN Water Regulatory Forum

AGENDA

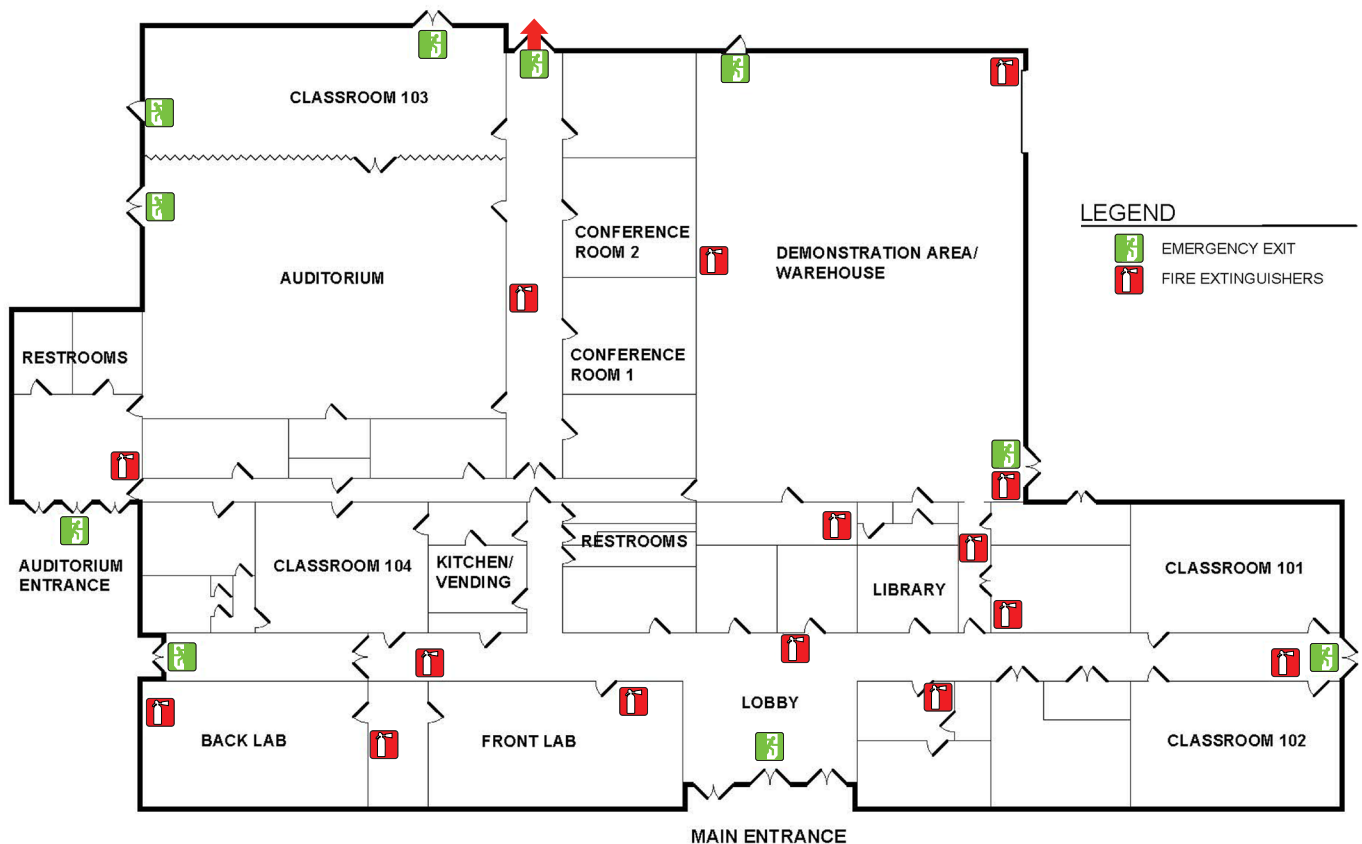
November 12, 2025
8:30 am–4:00 pm
Fleming Training Center, Murfreesboro, TN

8:30–9:00 am	Arrival and Check-In*
9:00–9:15 am	Welcome, Introductions, and Forum Overview
9:15–10:15 am	Intro to the Division of Water Resources
10:15–10:35 am	Networking Break*
10:35–11:55 am	Get to Know TDEC’s Water Programs and Staff – Who’s Who
11:55–Noon	Instructions for Afternoon Breakout Sessions
Noon–12:45 pm	Lunch Break
12:45–2:40 pm	Breakout Sessions
2:40–3:00 pm	Final Networking Break*
3:00–3:40 pm	TDEC Stakeholder Resources
3:40–4:00 pm	Forum Wrap Up

*Division staff from all program areas will be available in Classroom 103 during check-in and breaks to answer questions.

Breakout Session Schedule

	Auditorium	Classroom 101	Classroom 102	Conf Room 1	Conf Room 2
Session 1 12:45–1:10 pm	NPDES (aka Water Based Systems) Permitting	Nutrient Management	ARAPs / Wetlands	Water Reuse	Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems
Session 2 1:15–1:40 pm	Emerging Contaminants	Nutrient Management	ARAPs / Wetlands	Engineering Plan Review Process	Decentralized Systems
Session 3 1:45–2:10 pm	Training Opportunities	Drought Mgmt. and System Resilience	ARAPs / Wetlands	Engineering Plan Review Process	Biosolids
Session 4 2:15–2:40 pm	Stormwater Mgmt. Technical Session	Water Related Emergency Response	Infrastructure Funding	Engineering Plan Review Process	Performance of Drip Dispersal Systems



Breakout Session Description

<p>ARAPs / Wetlands</p>	<p>Jonathon Burr / Michael Atchley Discussion of TDEC’s Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit (ARAP) Program, including how it relates to state water quality certifications and wetlands.</p>
<p>Biosolids</p>	<p>John Newberry / Brad Harris, P.E. Discussion with TDEC technical staff about the key issues related to biosolids management.</p>
<p>Decentralized Systems</p>	<p>Brad Harris, P.E. Discussion with TDEC technical staff about the key issues facing municipalities related to decentralized systems.</p>
<p>Drought Management and Water System Resilience</p>	<p>Erich Webber Discussion with TDEC technical staff about the key issues facing operators related to drought management and water system resilience.</p>
<p>Emerging Contaminants</p>	<p>Peter Murrey Brief overview of key emerging contaminants currently receiving heightened media/public interest, followed by a listening session where attendees may share their thoughts/concerns.</p>
<p>Engineering Plans Review Process</p>	<p>Angela Jones, P.E., CPM Brief overview of TDEC’s review process for submitted engineering plans, followed by discussion of specific technical questions.</p>
<p>Infrastructure Funding</p>	<p>Vena Jones / Paula Mitchell Information on financial assistance for water infrastructure upgrades, including traditional projects, lead service line projects, risk and resiliency, and emerging contaminants.</p>
<p>NPDES Permitting</p>	<p>Sarah Terpstra, PSM / Ariel Wessel-Fuss, EI Discussion of hot topics related to TDEC’s permitting of water-based systems.</p>

Breakout Session Description

<p>Nutrient Management</p>	<p>Karina Bynum, Ph.D., P.E. Discussion with TDEC technical staff concerning issues related to nutrient management.</p>
<p>Performance of Wastewater Systems using Drip Dispersal</p>	<p>Brad Harris, P.E. Presentation of highlights from TDEC's Report on the Performance of Wastewater Systems Utilizing Drip Dispersal in Tennessee.</p>
<p>Stormwater Management</p>	<p>Ann Morbitt Discussion of technical issues related to stormwater management with Division of Water resources technical experts.</p>
<p>Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems</p>	<p>Chris Rhodes Information on permitting for installation of subsurface sewage disposal (septic) systems and related activities along with an open discussion with TDEC technical staff.</p>
<p>Training Opportunities</p>	<p>Jenny Strobel / Reanna Harron Discussion of training resources offered by DWR, including the Fleming Training Center's operator certification exam prep training, continuing education opportunities, and more.</p>
<p>Water Related Emergency Response Resource</p>	<p>Will Pride / Erich Webber Presentation on TDEC emergency response resources followed by an opportunity to ask questions related to Emergency Response.</p>
<p>Water Reuse</p>	<p>Angela Jones, P.E., CPM Discussion of TDEC's current efforts related to water reuse, including the key issues facing operators.</p>

Meet the DWR Units and Managers

Compliance & Enforcement

- Accurate compliance data for NPDES permits
- Accurate compliance data for drinking water facilities
- Enforcement orders
- NEPA reviews
- Regulatory assistance with compliance reporting

The Compliance and Enforcement Unit ensures facilities report complete, accurate, and timely monitoring data for the NPDES and Safe Drinking Water programs in line with federal requirements. The unit provides outreach and guidance on regulatory changes and reporting requirements and supports field staff in meeting federal inspection commitments. The unit coordinates with TDEC attorneys to draft, issue, and track compliance orders. The unit also reviews National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) applications.



Jessica Murphy
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Drinking Water

- Laboratory certifications for drinking water compliance samples
- Water well driller/installer licensure
- Water well construction guidance
- Source water protection plan guidance and approval
- Lead in schools testing and guidance
- Emergency response guidance

The Drinking Water Unit provides regulatory oversight for the Public Water System Supervision federal grant, which includes general supervision over construction and operation of public water works systems. The unit is authorized to adopt and enforce rules and regulations governing the location, continuous operation, and maintenance of these facilities.



Anna Sartors
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Engineering Services

- Approved construction documents
- Stormwater technical guidance
- Safe Dams program services
- Engineering resources, training, and education
- Coordination with funding agencies

Engineering Services provides technical support to nearly all other units within the Division of Water Resources. Unit responsibilities include the review and approval of engineering documents for drinking water and wastewater projects statewide, managing the Safe Dams Program, and consulting for the Stormwater Program to ensure regulatory compliance and public safety through technical guidance, enforcement support, and design criteria updates.



Angela Jones, P.E., CPM
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Fleming Training Center

- Operator training
- Operator certification
- Technical assistance
- Tennessee plant optimization assistance
- Cross-connection control training

The Fleming Training Center (FTC) offers comprehensive training and certification programs for water and wastewater treatment operators. It provides advanced instruction, continuing education support, and a wide range of resources and study materials to operators throughout the state.



John Lawrence
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Information & Budget

- Invoice processing
- Annual maintenance fee collection
- Grant administration
- Purchasing for the division
- Division budget management

The Information and Budget Unit is responsible for grants, contract, and budget management for all Division of Water Resources statewide programmatic activities. The unit is responsible for processing receivable and payable invoices, authorizing travel and training funding, and completing federal reporting for grants from both Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency.



Brian Canada
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Land Based Systems

- Septic system permits
- Septic system installer and pumper permits
- State operational permits for decentralized wastewater systems utilizing drip disposal
- Notices of coverage for the land application of biosolids
- State operation permits or NPDES permits for animal feeding operations
- Underground injection control authorizations

The Land Based Systems Unit oversees programs that focus on the land application of wastewater and the beneficial use of wastewater and wastewater products. This includes oversight of programs related to both surface application, such as biosolids, and subsurface disposal.



Brad Harris, P.E.
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Natural Resources

- Individual ARAP review and issuance
- ARAP technical assistance
- Mitigation bank review and issuance
- Aquatic resource inventory review and concurrence
- Policy and rule development

The Natural Resources Unit regulates impacts to wetlands and streams through permitting and mitigation oversight. The unit ensures that any authorized alterations to these waters are minimized and include appropriate compensatory mitigation, when necessary. The unit also provides technical support, develops policy, and coordinates permitting practices statewide.



Eddie Gordon
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State Revolving Fund Loan and State Water Infrastructure Grant Program

- **Grants and loans for:**
 - Drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities
 - Lead service line replacement
 - Addressing emerging contaminants
- **Grants for:**
 - Stormwater projects
 - Lead service line inventories
 - Asset management plans
 - Emerging contaminants
 - Small or disadvantaged drinking water systems

The State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan and State Water Infrastructure Grant (SWIG) program manages and awards over \$3 billion in low-interest, partially forgivable loans for utilities and municipalities and water/wastewater/stormwater grants across the state. The Unit's core responsibilities include deploying federal funding for projects that address human health and safety issues and regulatory compliance issues, and using funding for small or disadvantaged systems to maintain or improve technical, managerial, and financial compliance requirements.



Vena Jones
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Water Based Systems

- Discharge permits
- Compliance monitoring and inspections
- Public education and engagement
- Technical assistance and training

The Water Based Systems (WBS) Unit regulates the discharge of pollutants from point sources into waters of the state through National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits. The Unit also oversees municipalities implementing Tennessee's pretreatment program. The Unit's core responsibilities include reviewing applications and issuing permit coverage for state operating permits (SOP) and both individual and general NPDES permits, as well as public engagement, conducting pretreatment audits, and supporting compliance.



Sarah Terpstra, PSM
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Watershed Planning

- TN list of impaired and threatened streams (303(d) list)
- Monitoring data QC/WQX
- TMDLs
- Triennial review of water quality criteria
- NPDES modeling support/review
- HAB response

The Watershed Planning Unit is responsible for developing state water quality criteria, instream monitoring plans, water quality assessments, and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Reports. The Unit also manages all water quality data, reviews and tracks water quality modeling, maintains water quality advisory information, and coordinates the TN Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) program.



Richard Cochran
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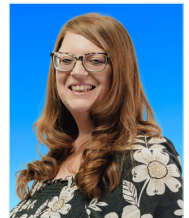
Additional DWR Key Staff



Ann Morbitt
Stormwater Coordinator
Division of Water Resources
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Regan McGahen
Communications & Outreach
Coordinator
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Carley Ferguson, CAP
Executive Admin Assistant
Office of the Director
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Water Resources Data & Map Viewers

DWR makes available on our website data and map viewers to promote greater transparency, accountability, and wider access to public information. These interfaces pull information from the same active, consolidated databases TDEC staff use to keep track of critical work, including environmental regulatory activities, rosters, and status.



Data Viewer

Ambient Monitoring Data Report

This report summarizes monitoring data from across the state. The data is drawn from ambient monitoring of surface waters routinely performed by the DWR staff.



Hydrologic Determinations Report

This report enables constituents in the State, NGOs, contractors and other entities to research information about hydrologic determinations in Tennessee per Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 69-3-105, which establishes standard procedures for making stream and wet weather conveyance determinations that take into consideration biology, geology, geomorphology, precipitation, hydrology, and other scientifically based principles.



Known Exceptional Tennessee Waters and Outstanding Natural Resource Waters Report

This report compiles the list of waters characterized as “Exceptional Tennessee Waters” and “Outstanding National Resource Waters” as set forth in the regulation by the Tennessee Board of Water Quality, Oil and Gas. (Rule Chapter 0400-40-3-.06)



Permits Report

This interactive report summarizes the majority of active and inactive permits issued by the Division of Water Resources.



Map Viewers

Construction Stormwater Permitting

This interactive mapping application shows the permit locations specific to construction stormwater.



Hydrologic Determinations

This application enables constituents in the State, NGOs, contractors and other entities to research information about hydrologic determinations in Tennessee.



Water Quality Assessment and Permits

This interactive mapping application shows the most current water quality assessment, permit locations, watershed boundaries, and monitoring site locations.



Water Wells

This application facilitates the distribution of water well data to the public. It provides water well data by 7.5 Minute Quadrangle Reports and provides tools for on-screen data display. Users may download and print maps showing an area of interest.



Other Tools

Ask TDEC Questions Webform

This webform provides the public with an opportunity to send questions about environmental programs, permitting, or county-specific concerns directly to TDEC. Users will need to provide an email address, select a topic from the drop-down menu, and submit some type of question. Attachments can be inserted.



MyTDEC Forms Portal

This portal provides the public with access to a wide range of environmental forms, including applications and reports related to stormwater permits, sewer overflow events, and water supply testing. Users can browse, complete, submit, and pay for forms in the portal.



Informational Pages

ARAP Permitting

These webpages include information regarding the Aquatic Resource Alteration Permit (ARAP) program and associated tools and resources. This includes information for individual permits, general permits, compensatory mitigation, and associated tools.



Bacteriological and Fishing Advisories in Tennessee

This webpage shows notifications for Tennessee citizens when waters in the State pose a potential threat to public health. The Department notifies citizens when waters are not safe to swim in due to high bacteria levels and/or fish are not safe to eat due to contamination.



Division of Water Resources

This is the home page for the Division, which is responsible for managing, protecting, and enhancing the quality of the state's water resources through voluntary, regulatory, and educational programs.



Drinking Water Program

This webpage includes relevant reports, manuals, and lists such as compliance reports, capacity development reports, and groundwater 305(b) reports. Also available are forms, such as the application for wellhead protection approval and plans review/approval for public water systems, and helpful links such as Tennessee's source water assessment and wellhead protection facts.



DWR Organization Charts

This regularly updated PDF provides a look at how staff are organized across DWR, including Field Offices. It also provides contact information for each listed staff member.



Fleming Training Center

This webpage provides information about the Fleming Training Center, including their offering of advanced classes in a variety of water and wastewater areas. It includes information on certification and continuing education requirements for the over 4,000 operators in Tennessee.



Lead in Drinking Water Testing in Schools and Child Care Centers

This webpage includes resources and tools that can help reduce childhood lead exposure. Some linked resources users may access are tips for childcare facilities, a toolkit, sampling procedures, and checklists. The webpage also includes a program registration portal.



NPDES Permitting

This webpage provides links to various permits established under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program.



Nutrient Management in Tennessee

This webpage provides a variety of links and resources that include background on nutrient pollution, the Tennessee nutrient reduction task force, models, tools, best management practices, and nutrient reduction success stories.



Plans Review and Approval for Public Water Systems

This webpage outlines the process for submitting construction plans for public water systems, including accepted and excluded document types, a submittal checklist, and project tracking tools. It also provides guidance on what happens after submission and offers contact information for technical assistance.



Plans Review for Sewage Works

This portal is one-stop-shopping for everything an applicant needs related to submitting sewage works plans for review. The page links to key guidance for submitting and tracking sewage works construction plans, including accepted document types, submittal checklists, and design criteria. The page also offers tools for project tracking and contact information for technical assistance.



State Revolving Fund Loan and State Water Infrastructure Grant Program

This portal provides information and resources related to the administration of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Loan Program and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Loan Program, which provide technical assistance and low-interest loans to cities, counties, utility districts, and water authorities across the state for planning, design, and construction of drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

The site has resources to help local governments, water districts, utilities, and other eligible entities navigate the process to procure loans and grants for the planning, design, construction, and rehabilitation of water infrastructure.



Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems (SSDS)

These are informational and permitting pages for those involved with Subsurface Sewage Disposal Systems to include construction permits, installers, pumpers, land disposal, soil consultants, and records search.



TDEC Calendar of Events

The TDEC calendar of events shows events happening throughout the entire Department of Environment and Conservation, including hearings, meetings, and events.



TDEC Environmental Field Offices

This webpage will help users find the nearest Environmental Field Office (EFO) – your starting point for any environmental question, concern, or complaint. Each EFO is staffed with a Regional Director for External Affairs as well as technical staff who are available to assist with permitting needs, outreach functions, and general guidance.



Water Notices and Hearings

This webpage provides information on all public participation opportunities across TDEC's water programs. Resources include schedules, access links, and connection instructions for upcoming environmental hearings and meetings. Users will find information to stay informed, engaged, and connected to the regulatory decision-making process.



Water Permits

This webpage contains links to all the information and more detailed webpages related to permitting and water resources.



Water Quality Rules, Reports, and Publications

This webpage includes information on water quality laws, rules, planning documents, assessment publications, and technical/engineering documents.



Watershed Stewardship

The webpage is a clearinghouse of information focused on resources that support the overall health and management of the watersheds across the state. This includes information about the watershed management approach, Tennessee watersheds and wetlands, the Tennessee Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program, and bacteriological and fishing advisories.



Wellhead Protection Program

This webpage includes information focused on preventing contamination of public water systems that rely on groundwater. It includes a background summary highlighting risks from industrial spills, underground discharges, and improper waste disposal as well as information tables with sources of groundwater contamination and potentially harmful components of common household products.



DWR Contact Information

Central Office

Compliance and Enforcement Unit

DWR.EnvironmentalReview@tn.gov
DWRWater.Compliance@tn.gov

Drinking Water Unit

DW.Labs@tn.gov
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Engineering Services Unit

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Fleming Training Center

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Information & Budget Unit

DWR.CustomerSupport@tn.gov

Land Based Permitting Unit

landbasedsystems@tn.gov

Natural Resources Unit

ARAP.permits@tn.gov

State Revolving Fund Loan and State Water Infrastructure Grant Program

Ask.SRF@tn.gov

Water Based Systems Unit

Water.Permits@tn.gov

Watershed Planning Unit

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Environmental Field Offices

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Division of Water Resources

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Additional Presenters

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