

## Idaho TMDL Kaizen

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After 16 years of implementing the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Program, DEQ under-took a Kaizen, which is a comprehensive method to review an entire process. My talk will describe how this review was achieved, who participated, and what the outcomes were. DEQ relied upon an outside contractor to facilitate the Kaizen. Kaizen participants included 17 DEQ personnel, from the Administrator for Water, state office and regional office staff to a technical editor. The goal of the Kaizen was to map the entire process from initial TMDL assignment to final EPA approval, noting who is involved, the time invested at each key step and opportunities to shorten the TMDL process and better define the roles and responsibilities of those involved. The Kaizen lasted 4 days, concluding with a presentation to the DEQ Director along with other DEQ staff involved in the TMDL program. Mapping the current TMDL process revealed opportunities for streamlining the process in terms of time and resources. A future TMDL process was formulated based on those opportunities. Changes from the current to the future process resulted in a 25% decrease in process steps, 37% reduction in document handoffs, and 62% reduction in delays. Key benefits of the future versus current process are decreased lead and cycle times, a full understanding of the process steps, more efficient use of staff time, and better communication on priorities. While some of the changes can be implemented quickly and at little cost, others will require a longer term strategy to achieve.