

Wetlands and Subaqueous Lands Value Stream Mapping - A LEAN Improvement

Project Date: February 6, 2007 to Present

PROBLEM

The Wetlands and Subaqueous Lands Section of DNREC enforces the State's laws governing construction in wetlands and waters, including the Subaqueous Lands Program, the Wetlands Program, the Marina Program and the 401 Water Quality Certification Program. These programs require the review and issuance of numerous types of authorizations (permits, leases, letters of authorization, certifications, map changes, jurisdictional determinations, etc.) The Value Stream Mapping (VSM) process was undertaken to increase the program's efficiency in processing applications for authorizations in order to make the process simpler, faster and more predictable for the regulated community.

CURRENT STATE

As of February, 2007:

- Project applications moved slowly through the process.
- Permits took 60 to 90 days to issue.
- Not always timely recording of leases by owner which resulted in delays to close out project.
- Applications were not always complete or accurate when received.

FUTURE STATE

What the project team wanted to change.

- Increase the frequency of public notices.
- Draft and adopt new Statewide Activity Approval.
- Remove Secretary's signature from leases between private owners and the State.
- DNREC to be responsible for recording the leases with the Recorder of Deeds Office.
- Develop an application check list.
- Institute a mid-process electronic review to expedite the process.
- Revise the basic application form and appendices.
- Revise all permit and lease templates.

MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Weekly public notices decreased the application process time.
- Improved understanding and communication with the consultants/contractors who participated in the Value Stream Mapping event.
- Adoption of new Statewide Activity Approval eliminated the need for public notice for about 25% of the permit applications received.
- Recording of leases by DNREC staff increased staff time but made the process more seamless and timely.
- Revised the basic application form.
- Developed an application checklist.

IMPLEMENTATION TEAM

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* Consultants and Contractors

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

	Deadline	Status
Institute time limit for denying without prejudice/withdraw	11/06	Complete
Changes to mailing of leases/documents	12/06	Complete
Purge wetlands mailing list	12/06	Complete
Collect metrics	12/06	Open
Public notice template and training for staff	12/06	Complete
Improve file organization using color coding	12/06	Aborted
Status board & 15-minute team review meetings	12/06	Completed/Aborted
Pre-application meetings with scientists & consultants	1/07	Complete
Institute time-slicing	1/07	Incomplete
Improve application document appendices	1/07	Complete
Improve guidance document	1/07	Complete
Revise lease signing process		Complete
Revise internal check lists	2/07	Complete
Lease renewal prompts for individuals	2/07	Complete
Design standard notification for Secretary	2/07	Complete
Community education	TBD	Incomplete
Generate leases from database	TBD	Incomplete
Follow up on DNREC public hearing policy	TBD	Incomplete
Investigate licensing/certification process	TBD	Aborted
Revise basic application form	12/08	Complete
Revise appendices	TBD	On-going
Revise permit forms and conditions	TBD	On-going

LESSONS LEARNED & FOLLOW UP

- Tracking board and hallway "stand-up" meetings slowed down the process for the small staff in the Wetlands program. The tracking board was stopped. Meetings need to be longer so they could include time application status review.
- Once the process was mapped most of the suggestions for change came from the consultants/contractors.
- Lost staff during the implementation phase and unable to do all the suggestions in the Future State.
- Developed some processes that were not accepted by the customers (ie. Formal per-application process).
- Increasing the frequency of public notices increased the costs.
- Unable to remove Secretary's signature from leases because it was in statute.
- Unsuccessful in measuring the tracking improvements in the process.
- Identified solutions to the problem are not always applicable to a specific program .