# TMDL Action Entries in ATTAINS

*How ATTAINS TMDL Action Entries are Entered and Displayed in How's My Waterway*
*TMDL Action Entry ≠ Agency TMDL Action (i.e. TMDL)*

The ATTAINS production system serves as a nationally consistent repository for approved Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) documents and other accepted plans (i.e., "4B Restoration Approaches," "Alternative Restoration Approaches" and "Protection" plans) as Action Entries. Complete submission of Action Entries into ATTAINS will foster greater transparency of data across states, report consistent Action information for the public, and ensure accurate performance measures calculations for EPA.

The **purpose** of this help guide is to provide clarity to Assessment, Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Tracking and Implementation System (ATTAINS) users regarding the connection between each ATTAINS TMDL data entry element encountered in the Actions Module, the corresponding information in the TMDL Submission, and how TMDL information entered in ATTAINS is made viewable to the public. Note: While ATTAINS includes other types of Actions (accepted plans), this document focuses on TMDLs, which have different data elements than the other Action types.

EPA Regions are expected to ensure all approved TMDLs, along with their associated metadata details, are entered in ATTAINS before or upon EPA approval, as captured below.[1] EPA Regions are charged with verifying, and correcting if needed, all details related to each TMDL Action Entry entered in ATTAINS, including all relevant dates, associated assessment unit IDs, pollutants, and addressed parameters**.** TMDLs under development can be entered in Draft status in ATTAINS and are not made visible to the public through How's My Waterway until the Action has been approved in the system. It must also be noted that an approved TMDL is still considered in place whether (or not) it has been entered into the System. A submitted and approved TMDL document and package will include more information than what is required by the ATTAINS system in an Action Entry.

The intention of this TMDL Action Entry-specific help guide is not to supplant CWA regulations or existing TMDL guidance,[2] but to assist states and Regions in entering TMDL Action Entries in ATTAINS. Key documents and metadata uploaded to ATTAINS for the public benefit are not equivalent to official TMDL records maintained for regulatory or legal purposes. All data and information entered in ATTAINS can be readily accessed by the public, unless otherwise noted. All documents, state comments etc. uploaded to ATTAINS will be publicly available either by web service or by How's My Waterway (HMW), which is the public interface of ATTAINS. States and EPA should avoid including Personal Identifiable Information (PII) and any other potentially sensitive information in ATTAINS. An understanding of these database connections will help to inform the TMDL program of recommended practices for data entry that will result in consistent and valuable TMDL information being tracked for analysis and display.

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[1] EPA Regions are also expected to ensure all Alternative Restoration Approaches and Protection Approaches, along with their associated metadata details, are entered in ATTAINS before or upon EPA acceptance. This help guide only addresses TMDLs.

[2] E.g., *Guidelines for Reviewing TMDLs under Existing Regulations Issued in 1992*.

## ATTAINS Action Module Summary – TMDL Action Entries

General ⟩ Pollutants ⟩ Permits ⟩ Sources ⟩ Documents ⟩ Summary

| Entry Tab | Description |
|---|---|
| **General** | Stores the general information related to a TMDL Action Entry. |
| **Pollutants** | Stores the TMDL Pollutant specific information related to a TMDL Action Entry.<br><br>Allows linking of the TMDL Action Entry to a waterbody Assessment Unit Identifier (AUID) and defines what parameter(s) is (are) addressed. |
| **Permits** | Stores the specific Permits information associated with the TMDL pollutant in a TMDL Action Entry.<br><br>Although this is an optional Entry Tab, for TMDLs with source types indicated as "Point/Nonpoint source" or "Point Source", EPA recommends permits info be provided and associated to the corresponding Assessment Units and Pollutants. Permit information is shown in How's My Waterway and will enable future queries of relevant TMDLs for permitted facilities. |
| **Sources** | Stores the information regarding sources of impairment associated with the TMDL Pollutant in a TMDL Action Entry. |
| **Documents** | Stores the specific documents associated with a TMDL Action Entry.<br><br>*The upload of at least one document (e.g. TMDL Report) is required for the TMDL Action to move past the **Draft** status.* |
| **Summary** | The Summary Tab displays all the associated information that was entered, and documents uploaded in a TMDL Action Entry.<br><br>*For ATTAINS users with Read-Only rights, this is the only Tab displayed.* |

## Submitting TMDL Geospatial Data necessary for *How's My Waterway* (HMW)

Any Assessment Unit (AU) represented in a TMDL (or other accepted plan) is required to have associated Geospatial Data submitted by states/Regions as part of the of the ATTAINS State Integrated Report (IR) Data Submittal Process; this will ensure accurate representation of associated waterbodies through web services and applications like How's My Waterway.

Geospatial Files are uploaded under the Assessment Unit Module's Upload GIS form.

## TMDL Action Entries – Data Elements in ATTAINS

| ATTAINS Element Required/ Optional/Conditional Elements[3] | ATTAINS Action Module Entry Tab | Explanation | Corresponding TMDL Report Component and/or Information | Implications and Public Visibility (e.g. How's My Waterway) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action ID – *Required Element* | General | Action Unique Identifier that will be used to track the TMDL Action Entry entered (e.g., corresponding TMDL information and associated documents) in ATTAINS. The Action ID is permanent and cannot be changed once it has been entered. Action IDs must be unique within the organization (e.g. State). | N/A (May be included in TMDL Report or Decision Document) | The ID is shown in the Plan Summary page in HMW. It is also shown on the HMW Community page → Restore tab → Restoration Plans (along with the Action Name). It is not provided on the Waterbody Report page. |
| Organization— *Required Element* *(system computed)* | General | Name of organization to which the TMDL applies (typically State organization) | State Agency | |
| Action Name— *Required Element* | General | TMDL Report Name | Report Name | Consider a meaningful name for the public. The name is displayed in the Waterbody Report page and Plan Summary page, and the Community page's Restore tab within HMW. |

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[3] "Required" and "optional" elements indicate requirements for entry into ATTAINS and are not intended to reflect those elements that are statutory or regulatory requirements. Conditionally required elements become required contingent on other entry values.

## TMDL Action Entries – Data Elements in ATTAINS

| ATTAINS Element *Required/ Optional/Conditional Elements[3]* | ATTAINS Action Module Entry Tab | Explanation | Corresponding TMDL Report Component and/or Information | Implications and Public Visibility (e.g. *How's My Waterway*) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Action Status— *Required Element (system computed)* | General | Identifies TMDL Action Entry as: **Draft:** Indicates TMDL Action Entry is still under development. **Submitted:** Indicates TMDL Action Entry is complete and has been submitted to EPA for review. **Final (EPA Final Action):** Indicates that the submitted TMDL Action Entry has been accepted/approved by EPA Region, after it was reviewed for accuracy and completeness against EPA's approval TMDL records. **Modify:** Indicates when a TMDL Action Entry is being modified to make corrections. *Note: TMDLs in Draft status are presumed to be under development for the purposes of WQ-27 measures tracking. Currently, there is no TMDL Action Entry status in the system for TMDLs that have been withdrawn and are inactive.* | N/A | Only TMDL Action Entries that have been marked as 'Final' will be visible in HMW. |
| Action Type— *Required Element* | General | Identifies Action Entry as TMDL (drop-down list provided). *Note: Other Action Type options are available in ATTAINS, but this TMDL Action Entry help guide is specific to TMDLs.* | TMDL | |
| Agency (Code) – *Required Element* | General | Denotes the government entity that is establishing/issuing the TMDL (e.g., **State**, **EPA**, or **Tribe**). | Entity issuing the TMDL | Agency Code is not visible in HMW. |

## TMDL Action Entries – Data Elements in ATTAINS

| ATTAINS Element *Required/ Optional/Conditional Elements[3]* | ATTAINS Action Module Entry Tab | Explanation | Corresponding TMDL Report Component and/or Information | Implications and Public Visibility *(e.g. How's My Waterway)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Count This Action Toward Measures*-- *Required Element* | General | Indicates (with a **Yes** or **No**) if the TMDL action Entry includes waterbody segment(s) (Assessment Units) and/or causes that were identified in the State's 303(d) Vision Priority waters. If not sure, it is preferable to mark this as "**Yes**" to make sure a TMDL Action Entry that should count towards the WQ-27 measure is not undercounted.<br><br>*Note: A scenario where this could be "No" would be situations where a state plans to revise a TMDL as part of its 303(d) Vision priorities. Marking 'No' for the original TMDL entry tells ATTAINS to not count that TMDL towards the measure. This allows the new, revised TMDL to demonstrate progress toward the measure by indicating "Yes."* | N/A | Not relevant to HMW. |
| Completion Date— *Required Element* | General | This should correspond to the date that the **State submitted the official final TMDL to EPA for approval,** whether it was originally submitted through ATTAINS or outside of ATTAINS. A TMDL Action Entry must have an entered completion date before the TMDL Action Entry can be submitted.<br><br>*Note: Completion Date is important for tracking EPA's 30-day review time of TMDLs. States and Regions are encouraged to enter TMDL Action Entries as soon as appropriate.* | Date of Official State's Submittal of final TMDL to EPA for review and approval | For TMDLs (and non-TMDL actions), this date shows as the "Completed Date" in HMW. |

## TMDL Action Entries – Data Elements in ATTAINS

| ATTAINS Element<br>*Required/ Optional/Conditional Elements*[3] | ATTAINS Action Module Entry Tab | Explanation | Corresponding TMDL Report Component and/or Information | Implications and Public Visibility *(e.g. How's My Waterway)* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| TMDL Date (Approved/ Established) – *Required Element* | General | This should correspond to the date that **EPA approved or established the TMDL.** This usually corresponds with the date on the approval letter. A TMDL Action Entry must have an entered TMDL Date before the TMDL Action Entry can be in **Final (EPA Final Action)** Status.<br><br>*Note: TMDL Date is important for tracking EPA's 30-day review time of TMDLs. States and Regions are encouraged to enter TMDL Action Entries as soon as appropriate.* | Date of EPA approval of the State's Official Final TMDL Submittal | For TMDLs, this date shows as the "Completed On" date in HMW. |
| TMDL Other ID— *Optional Element* | General | A space to provide an alternative TMDL identifier. | N/A | Not shown in HMW. |
| Indian Country– *Optional Element* | General | Indicates (with a **Yes**, **No** or **Shared Jurisdiction**) whether the TMDL Action Entry covers waters in Indian country. This is not necessarily an indication of EPA approval of an Action in Indian Country. In most cases this should default to "**No**". | Scope of TMDL | Not shown in HMW. |
| Comment– *Optional Element* | General | A space to provide an optional comment about the TMDL Action Entry. | N/A | Comments cannot be viewed by the public. |
| TMDL History— *Optional Element* | General | TMDL History provides a way of linking an existing TMDL Action Entry to a current TMDL Action Entry that is being entered. | N/A | |
| Pollutant Group– *Optional Element* | Pollutants | This provides a drop-down menu that filters parameter options. Used for filtering only the next field (Pollutant Name). | N/A | |
| Pollutant Name– *Required Element* | Pollutants | This indicates the pollutant for which the TMDL was calculated. | Pollutant for which the TMDL was prepared | HMW displays the pollutants on the Plan Summary page. |
| Source Type– *Required Element* | Pollutants | This indicates the source breakdown for the TMDL (i.e., **Point/Nonpoint source**, **Point source**, or **Nonpoint source**). | Identification of point and nonpoint Sources (ATTAINS does not need to include specific sources) | Currently not shown in HMW. |

## TMDL Action Entries – Data Elements in ATTAINS

| ATTAINS Element *Required/ Optional/Conditional Elements*[3] | ATTAINS Action Module Entry Tab | Explanation | Corresponding TMDL Report Component and/or Information | Implications and Public Visibility (e.g. How's My Waterway) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assessment Units– *Required Element* | Pollutants | This identifies the Assessment Units (waterbody segments) for which the TMDL is developed. Entry should correspond to the Assessment Unit IDs as they have been identified under the State's IR and available for user-selection in ATTAINS. | Identification of the waterbody segment(s) for which the TMDL was prepared. | This helps connect Actions back to the Waterbody reports in ATTAINS. HMW uses the Assessment Unit IDs to discover what TMDLs have been developed for a given water and/or have been developed within a selected watershed. |
| Parameters (Addressed Parameters) – *Required Element* | Pollutants | The term "Addressed Parameters" refers to parameters identified as causes of impairment or the standard that is impaired in the Section 303(d) list, or later identified through the TMDL process, that are being addressed by the pollutant TMDL. For TMDLs that address WQ-27 303(d) Vision Priority waters, either the parameter or the pollutant must exactly match the parameter identified in the priorities for it to be counted towards the measure.<br><br>*Note: Addressed Parameters can be the same as the Pollutant but it does not always have to match. For example, if an Assessment Unit was listed on the Section 303(d) list for Dissolved Oxygen, but there was a Nitrogen TMDL calculated to address it, then the Addressed Parameter would be Dissolved Oxygen and Nitrogen would be the Pollutant. In some cases, a TMDL pollutant can correspond to multiple Addressed Parameters.* | Causes of Impairment (that appear on the Section 303(d) List, or are being later identified through the TMDL process) that have been identified as addressed by TMDL. Applicable water quality standards component may be informative. | Addressed parameters are displayed in HMW on the Plan Summary page under the impairments addressed section. They are also shown in the Waterbody Report page under the "Plans to Restore Water Quality" section. |
| Margin of Safety– *Optional Element* | Pollutants | Margin of Safety implicit or explicit entry fields. Loading set aside for explicit. | Margin of Safety, *identifying conservative assumptions in the analysis for implicit MOS or the loading set aside for explicit* | Not currently shown in HMW. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| TMDL Endpoint– *Optional Element* | Pollutants | The TMDL Endpoint refers to the TMDL Loading Capacity. | The calculated TMDL loading capacity of a waterbody for the applicable pollutant, which is defined as the greatest amount of a pollutant loading that a water can receive without violating water quality standards. | If populated, the TMDL endpoint will be displayed beneath the associated Assessment Unit on the Plan Summary page. |
| Load Allocations– *Optional Element* | Pollutants | Load Allocations (LAs) identify the portion of the loading capacity attributed to existing and future nonpoint sources and to natural background. | *Load Allocations* | Not currently shown in HMW. |
| Assessment Unit– *Conditionally Required Element* | Permits | Assessment Unit(s) that is associated with the Permit. Assessment Units must have been previously associated with a pollutant under the Pollutant Entry Tab before they can be associated with permits. | Assessment Unit ID as it appears in the TMDL Report | If permits are provided, the permit IDs (i.e., NPDES ID) will be shown beneath the associated Assessment Unit on the Plan Summary page. |
| Pollutant Name– *Conditionally Required Element* | Permits | This refers to the TMDL pollutant. The Pollutant for the WLA of the Associated Permit. | *Pollutant for which the TMDL is being prepared* | If permits are provided, the permit IDs will be shown beneath the associated Assessment Unit, with the Pollutant, on the Plan Summary page. |
| NPDES Identifier– *Conditionally Required Element* | Permits | Identification numbers of the NPDES permits within the waterbody and are associated to TMDL pollutant. | *Identification numbers of the NPDES permits within the waterbody* | If permits are provided, the permit IDs will be shown beneath the associated Assessment Unit on the Plan Summary page. |
| Other Identifier– *Optional Element* | Permits | A space to provide an alternative permit name, or other identifying information. | None | If permits are provided, the permit IDs will be shown beneath the associated Assessment Unit on the Plan Summary page. Other Identifier is not currently shown in HMW. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Waste Load Allocations– *Optional Element* | Permits | Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) identify the portion of the loading capacity allocated to existing and future point source(s). | *Waste Load Allocations (WLAs) identify the portion of the loading capacity allocated to existing and future point source(s).* | Not currently shown in HMW. |
| Assessment Units– *Conditionally Required Element* | Sources | Assessment Units that are addressed by the TMDL's identified sources and for which the TMDL is developed. | Assessment Unit ID as it appears in the Integrated Report | TMDL Source information is not currently shown in HMW. |
| Source– *Conditionally Required Element* | Sources | Indicates the specific source types associated with the TMDL Pollutant. The Source is selected from a dropdown list. | *Identification of point and nonpoint Pollutant Sources* | TMDL Source information is not currently shown in HMW. |
| Source Comment– *Optional Element* | Sources | A space to provide an optional comment about the TMDL source. | N/A | Comments cannot be viewed by the public. |
| Agency Code– *Required Element* | Documents | Denotes the government entity that is establishing/issuing the document (e.g. **State**, **EPA**, or **Tribe**). Example: State TMDL Final Report should be denoted with **State** Code vs. EPA Decision Rationale, which should be denoted with **EPA** Code. | N/A | Agency Code not shown in HMW. |
| Document Name– *Required Element* | Documents | Name of the document that is being uploaded. | N/A | The name of the document shows in HMW. Use names that will be meaningful to the public. |
| Document Type– *Required Element* | Documents | Indicates what type of document is being uploaded. Examples: "TMDL Report," "Decision Rationale," "Public Comments," etc. These function as labels for the document. The applicable Document Type labels are selected from a dropdown list. If necessary, multiple labels can be applied to the same document if it contains multiple components. | TMDL Report | Not currently shown in HMW. |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| File– *Required Element* | Documents | For choosing the File of the associated document that will be uploaded in the TMDL Action Entry.<br><br>Documents will be published exactly as uploaded.  (For example:  Do not upload documents with a Draft watermark unless you intend for it to appear that way when published.)  **Avoid including Personal Identifiable Information (PII)** and any other potentially sensitive information in documents uploaded into ATTAINS.<br><br>Associated documents can be entered and removed in a TMDL Action during the **Draft** status.  Once the TMDL Action has passed this stage, documents <u>cannot be removed</u>.<br><br>Only EPA is authorized to enter Documents in a TMDL Action that has passed the **Draft** status.<br><br>Documents recommended for upload in a TMDL Action include:<br>• Comments received and responsiveness summary<br>• State Final TMDL Report<br>• State Submittal Letter<br>• EPA Approval Letter<br>• EPA Decision Rationale | TMDL Report including required elements outlined in Regulation and Guidance Submittal letter *specifying TMDL is being submitted for final review and approval.* | Documents associated with the TMDL (or other Plan) are published exactly as entered in ATTAINS (the file name and extension are currently shown in HMW).<br><br>TMDLs (and other Plans) do not become visible to the public until in **EPA Final Action** Status. |
| Document Comment– *Optional Element* | Document | A space to provide an optional comment/ additional description info about the TMDL document that is being uploaded into the TMDL Action Entry. | None | Comments cannot be viewed in HMW. However, Document Comments are visible via the ATTAINS services. |