Permitting Enhancement and Evaluation Platform (PEEP)

User Guide

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

Office of Process Improvement

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Purpose

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) Permitting Enhancement and Evaluation Platform (PEEP) is an online resource that conveys and tracks critical steps and target timeframes for permit applications and other requests for DEQ approval. Thus, applicants, sponsors, agents, the public, and DEQ staff may use PEEP to track and manage approval processes. The goal is to foster transparency, collaboration, and efficiency in DEQ's evaluation processes.

The Permitting Enhancement and Evaluation Platform User Guide (the Guide) will direct users in how to use PEEP – including filtering and mapping to find a specific approval action, viewing the details of a specific action, and interpreting those details. The Guide also includes information concerning PEEP's notification system for applicants, agents, and other task assignees such as partner state and federal agencies involved in approval processes; as well as reporting capabilities to help manage assigned tasks, and a listing of additional helpful resources.

DEQ's PEEP Information Page

DEQ maintains a dedicated webpage that provides information concerning PEEP.

The webpage details what PEEP tracks – the specific DEQ programs and the data availability for each DEQ program based on when that program was added to PEEP. **Please note**: applications or approval requests received prior to this date will not be available in PEEP.

This webpage also defines key PEEP elements – such as the specific types of tracked actions, platform-specific terminology, notification schedule, and filter settings for viewing data.

Further information on how to use PEEP, and whom to contact with additional questions is also provided.

What PEEP Tracks

PEEP tracks the approval processes for several DEQ initial permit/plan reviews and other DEQ-driven approval actions; as well as subsequent modifications of specific permit types or approved plans/banking approvals.

DEQ currently plans that PEEP will track at least 56 unique types of permits or approvals encompassing 125 approval actions across 11 different programs.

Below is a list of the DEQ Programs and the date PEEP began tracking the associated requests:

- Virginia Water Protection Permit (VWPP) Program – July 1st, 2022
- Wetland and Stream Channel Mitigation Banking – February 27th, 2023
- Air Permitting – March 20th, 2023
- Nutrient Banking – May 23rd, 2023
- Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permitting – June 2nd, 2023
- Stormwater and Erosion and Sediment Control Plan Review – June 30th, 2023
- Virginia Pollution Abatement (VPA) Permitting – June 2nd, 2023
- Virginia Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (VPDES) – May 2nd, 2023

Future Release Schedule:

- Renewable Energy Permitting – July 21st, 2023
- Land Protection / Waste Permitting – September 11th, 2023
- Groundwater Withdrawal Permitting – February 1st, 2024

The Excel table linked below details the specific Request Types (i.e., permits or action approvals) included in PEEP. The table also shows the Media and Program Type associated with each Request Type – providing users further information as to how PEEP Filtering is defined. If a user is interested in searching by a specific Media or Program Type, the Excel table will allow the user to better understand the Request Types associated with such filtering.

Permit Request Types

Key PEEP Elements

DEQ Approval Actions: DEQ approves permits, plans, banks, and oversees and approves other actions that are collectively referred to as DEQ approval actions.

Critical Tasks for Each Approval: PEEP displays the critical tasks necessary for each approval action process. These critical tasks do not include every step of an approval process, instead each critical task is made of a series of subtasks that require completion to resolve the overarching task.

Task Assignee: The party who is responsible for completing a subtask is the assignee. Task assignees include DEQ, coordinating agencies and parties, agents, and applicants. See the PEEP Task Assignees/Agency Acronyms [ADD ANCHOR] section below for a list of task assignees included in PEEP.

Target Schedule: The target schedule establishes a reasonable timeline of how long an approval action process should take if every task assignee responds in an accurate and timely manner. The target schedule is represented by the horizontal grey bars for each task and subtask, and

the red vertical line defining the overall target schedule for obtaining approval. Target schedules may be based on regulatory deadlines. When an approval action processing timeframe is running behind the overall target schedule, a new predicted final decision date will display as a blue vertical line.

Notifications: PEEP sends notifications to applicants, agents, and other task assignees. Notifications will occur when assigned subtasks are due, and again on a specific cadence as an item remains overdue. Agents will also receive a notification five days in advance of an upcoming due date. Notifications will occur as follows:

- Agents – Five days prior to a subtask being due, the day a subtask is due, and then at 14, 28, and 42 days if that subtask remains overdue. After they are 42 days overdue, agents will receive notifications of subtasks due monthly.

- Applicants – The day a subtask is due, and then at 14, 28, and 42 days if that subtask remains overdue. After they are 42 days overdue, applicants will receive notifications of subtasks due monthly.

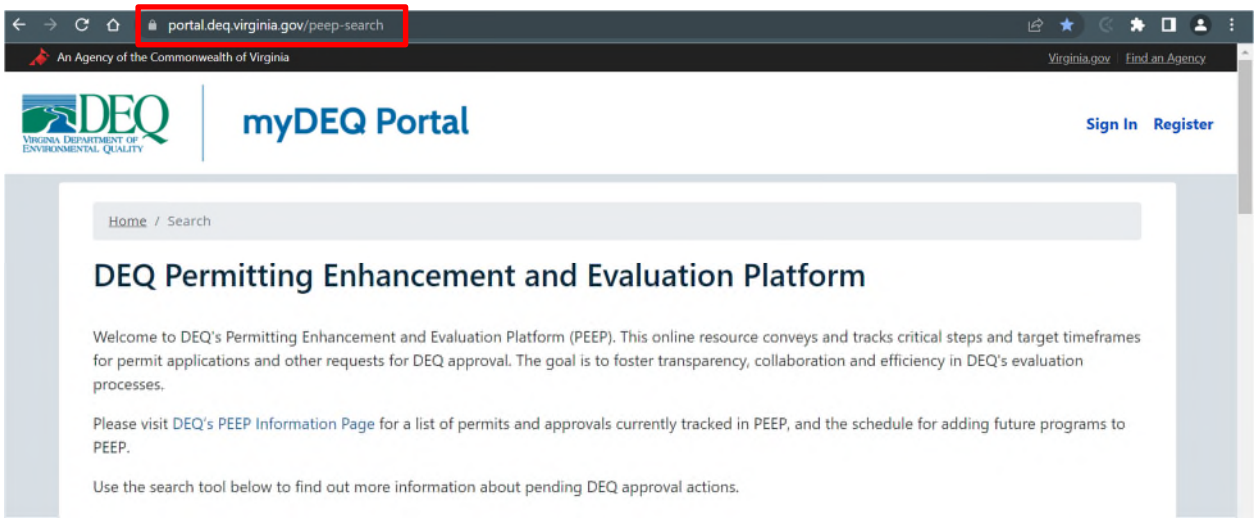
- Task Assignees – Notifications are sent at 6 a.m. each Tuesday to Task Assignees other than the applicant or designated agent(s).

Data Filtering: PEEP has nine filter options to narrow down search results. A user can apply several filters or directly search for a specific request number by typing the number in the Request Number filer.

USACE: As part of the PEEP for Virginia Water Protection Permit Program, DEQ included United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) SPGP and Individual Permit processes. As mentioned above, the targets are suggested schedules to keep permits on track. The USACE is working with DEQ as its resources allow to provide the detailed information that PEEP requires.

Site Access

To access PEEP, users are to visit: https://portal.deq.virginia.gov/peep-search



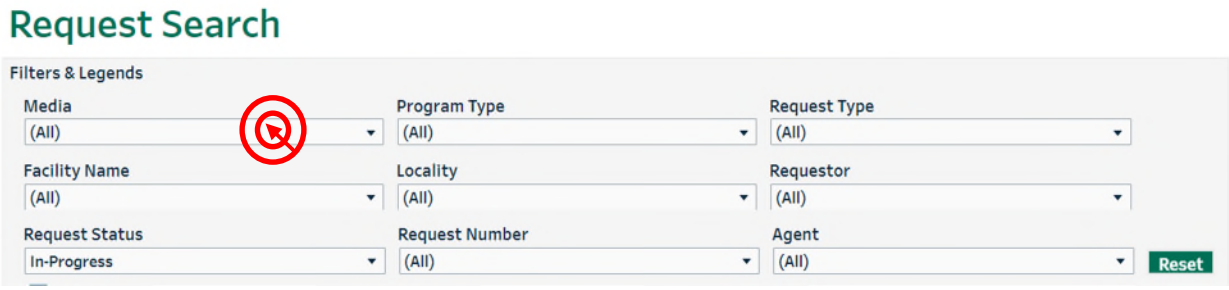
There is no login required – the site is available for use by anyone at any time. Once the site is accessed, users may use PEEP's various search capabilities or Mapping feature to find a specific approval action. Browser compatibility is universal; however, the best user experience may be achieved through Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome.

Data Availability

The information in PEEP is refreshed daily – thus all information is up to date as currently entered into DEQ records.

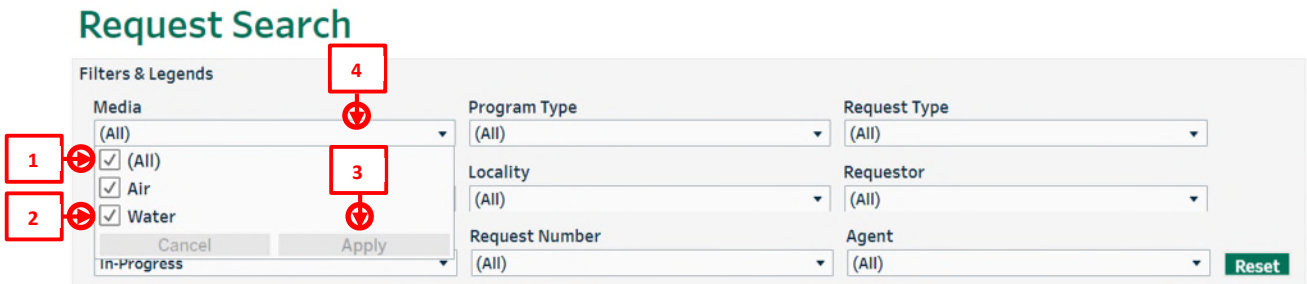
Filtering

PEEP has nine available filters that allow users to narrow down search results and to assist users in finding a specific approval action or actions. PEEP defaults to all approval actions DEQ is currently processing. To view a listing of elements within a filter, click in the filter box and a drop-down menu will populate.

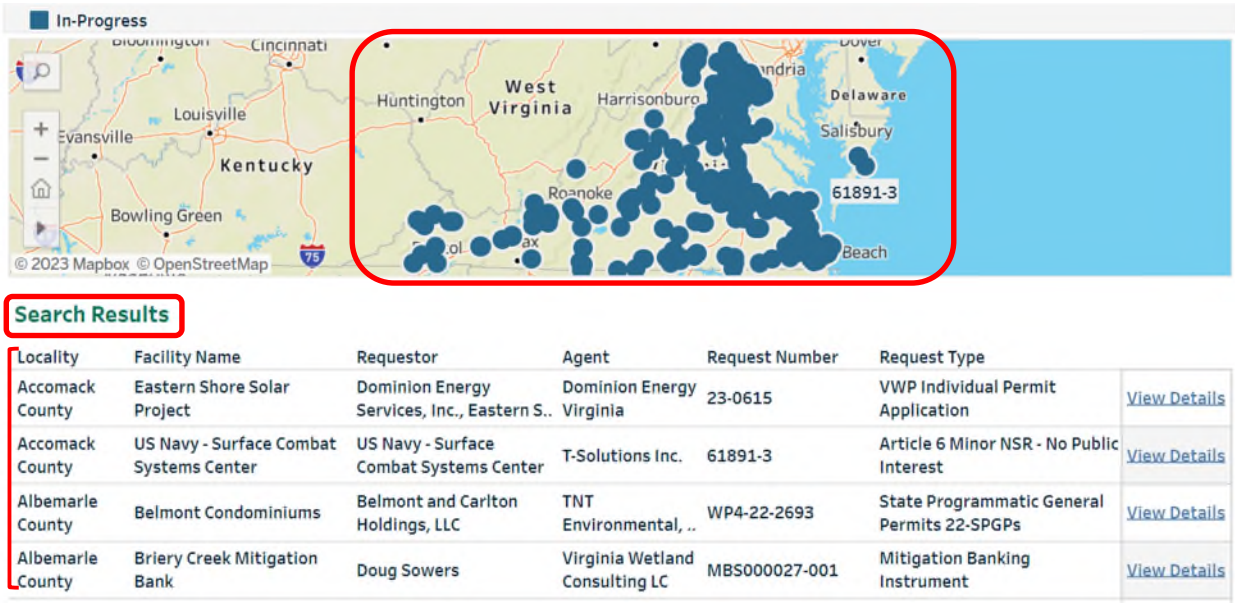


Next click the (All) filter (1) to deselect all available elements within that filter. Then click on which element you would like to filter the search by, for instance under media you may select

Water (2) to filter by all DEQ water media programs. Then click Apply (3). To minimize a filter's drop-down menu, click in the filter box (4).



PEEP will now filter Mapping and Search Results based on your filter selection.



You may select multiple filters to narrow your search by repeating the filter selection process described above.

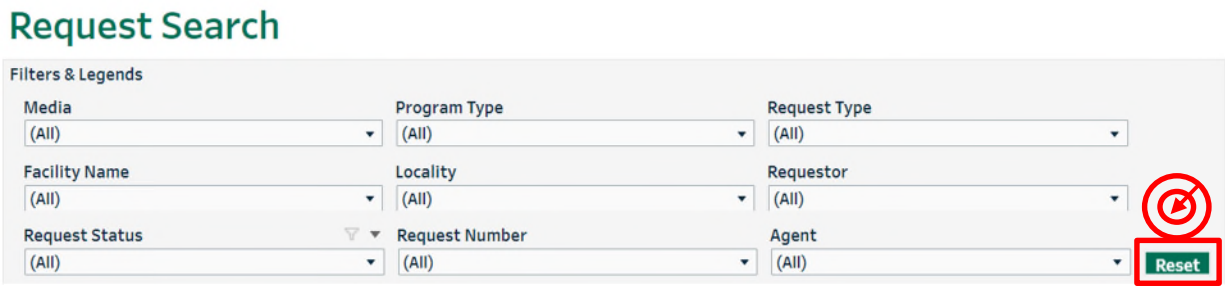
Available filters are:

- **Media** defines the overarching media by which DEQ's various programs are divided. Media examples would include Air, Water, and Land.
- **Program Type** filters the specific program that a permit or approval action is associated with. For instance, all air permits will be under Air Permitting.
- **Request Type** provides a listing of the available approval requests being tracked by PEEP.
- **Facility Name** provides a listing of facilities associated with current or recently completed approval actions. A facility is the overall owner of a location for which there

may be one or more DEQ approval actions. Examples include a specific wood processing facility or data center.

- **Locality** provides a listing of Virginia counties or other incorporated local entities in which DEQ approval actions are or have occurred.
- **Requestor** lists facility owners currently seeking or having obtained DEQ approval. The Requester is the entity that runs or owns a facility.
- **Request Status** is the status of a request – either Completed or In-Progress. PEEP defaults to display actions that are currently in-progress. However, users can also view completed requests occurring within the last 30 days, or view both In-Progress and Completed in the Last 30 Days requests.
- **Request Number** can be used to filter to a specific request by the approval review's assigned request number.
- **Agent** allows users to search by a specific entity that is serving as a designated agent for an applicant or sponsor seeking an approval action.

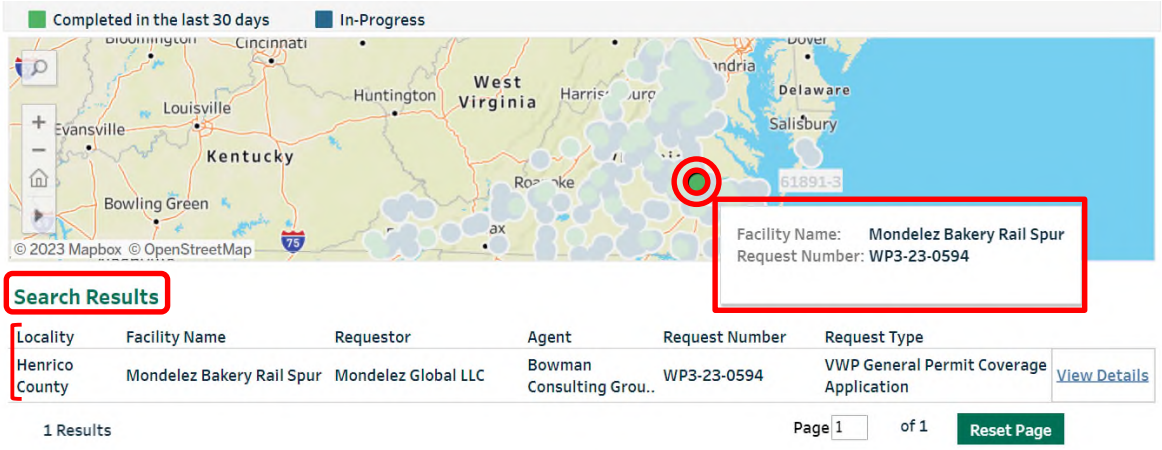
There is a Reset button that enables the user to reset all filters. This is useful when multiple filters have been applied and the user wishes to return to an unfiltered view and restart searching. To initiate reset – the user simply clicks on the Reset button.



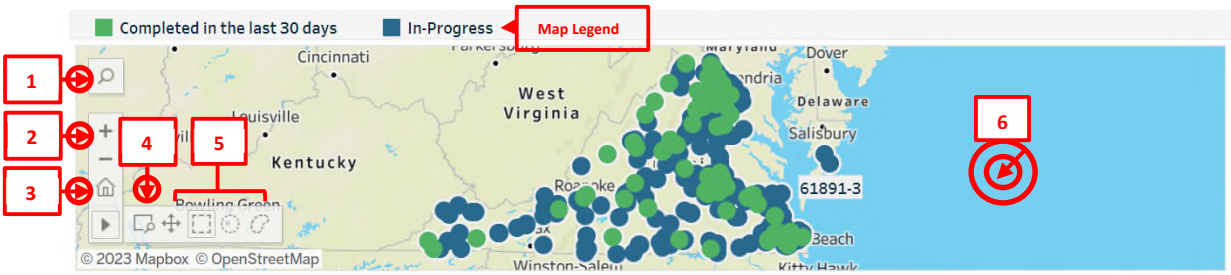
The availability of a specific element within a filter is defined by actual data availability. For instance, the localities available in the Locality filter is limited to those localities that have an active or completed activity within that locality.

Mapping

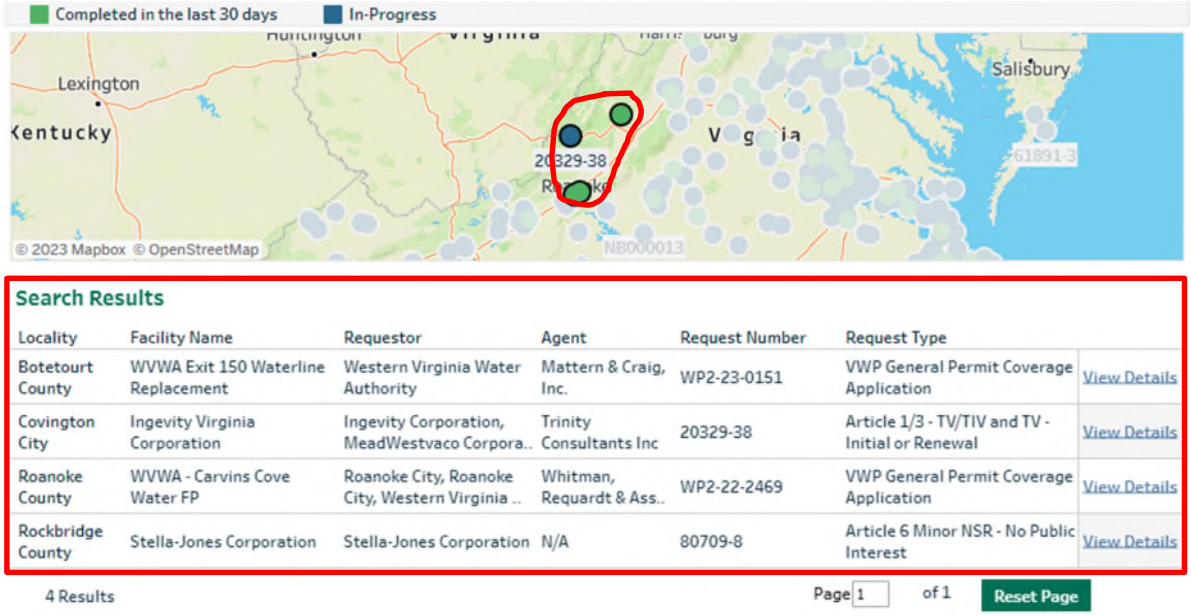
The portal's Mapping provides users another means by which to locate a specific DEQ approval action. All approval actions in PEEP will have an associated geospatial point denoting facility location that is displayed on the map. You can hover over a dot to reveal a project's Facility Name and Request Number. Users may also click on a dot to display the DEQ approval request associated with that geospatial point. The information concerning that point will populate below in the Search Results.



Users may also further manipulate the map using the embedded map tools. You can zoom in and out (2), return to the default zoom (3), zoom to a specific selected area (4), pan the map, and conduct shape-based map selection using square, circle, and lasso polygon selection (5). These selections will display all requests within the selected geographic area in the Search Results. To undo any map selection simply click on another area on the map and the current selection will be removed (6).



Below is an example search result using the lasso selection tool. Using the lasso tool, a specific area of the map was selected yielding 4 search results – 1 In-Progress and 3 Completed in the Last 30 Days requests.



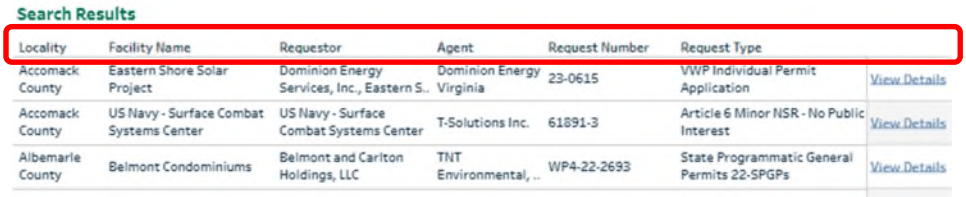
Search Results

Search results displays all records as based on filter or map selections. The default search results show pending requests.

The Search Results will also provide the locality in which the request is located, the facility name, the project owner, the applicant's designated agent (if applicable), the request number, and the request Type.

At the bottom of the Search Results, the total number of results based on current filtering or map selection will be displayed, as will the current and total number of pages comprising the search results. The system will display 24 records per page. In order to move between search results pages, users will click the black forward and backward arrow buttons. To return to the first page of the search at any time, the user may click the Reset Page button.

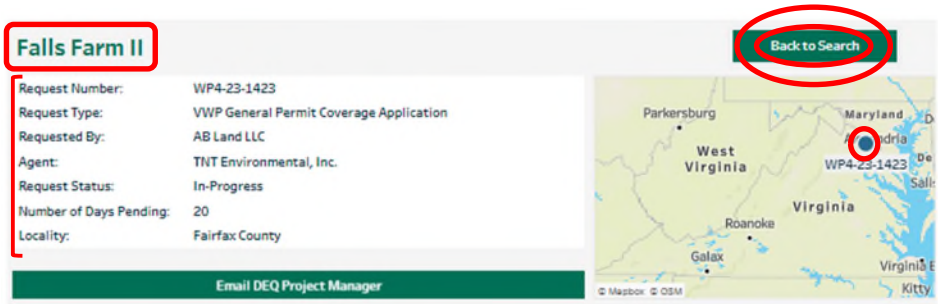
If a user is interested in a specific request, they may click the View Details – which is the blue underlined text in the right most column of each request listing.



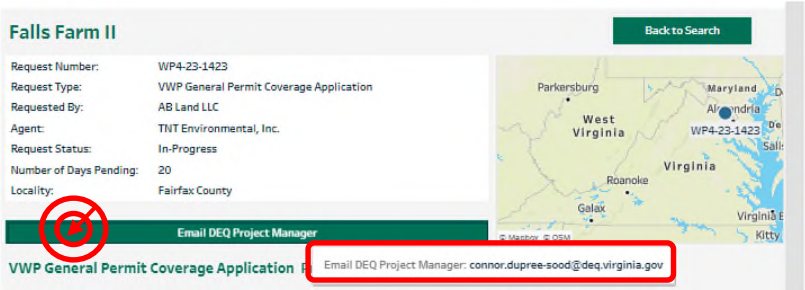
View Details

Clicking the View Details sub-screen will populate request-specific information including: request's project name, the Request Number, the Request Type, the Requestor (or applicant), the requestor's designated Agent (if applicable), the current Request Status (which may be in progress or a completed request action such as issued, withdrawn, or denied), the number of pending days , and the locality in which the request is located.

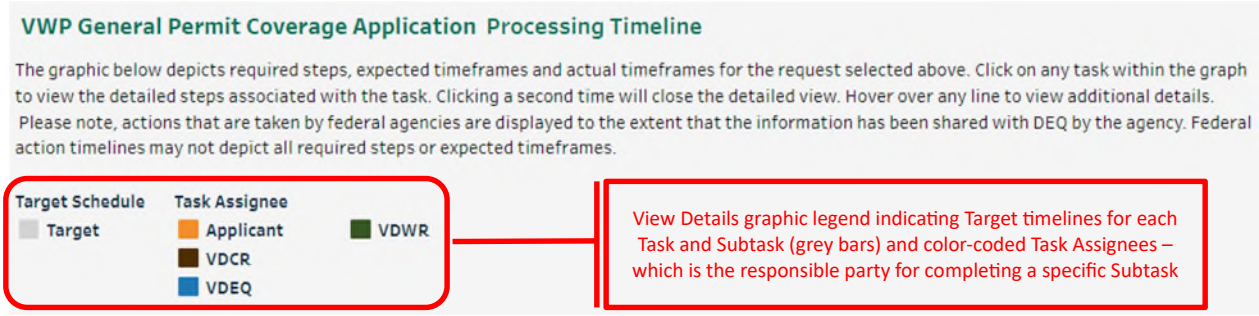
At any point you want to return to the PEEP search screen, click the Back to Search button in the upper right-hand corner of the View Details sub-screen. The View Details screen also contains the Request's mapped location.



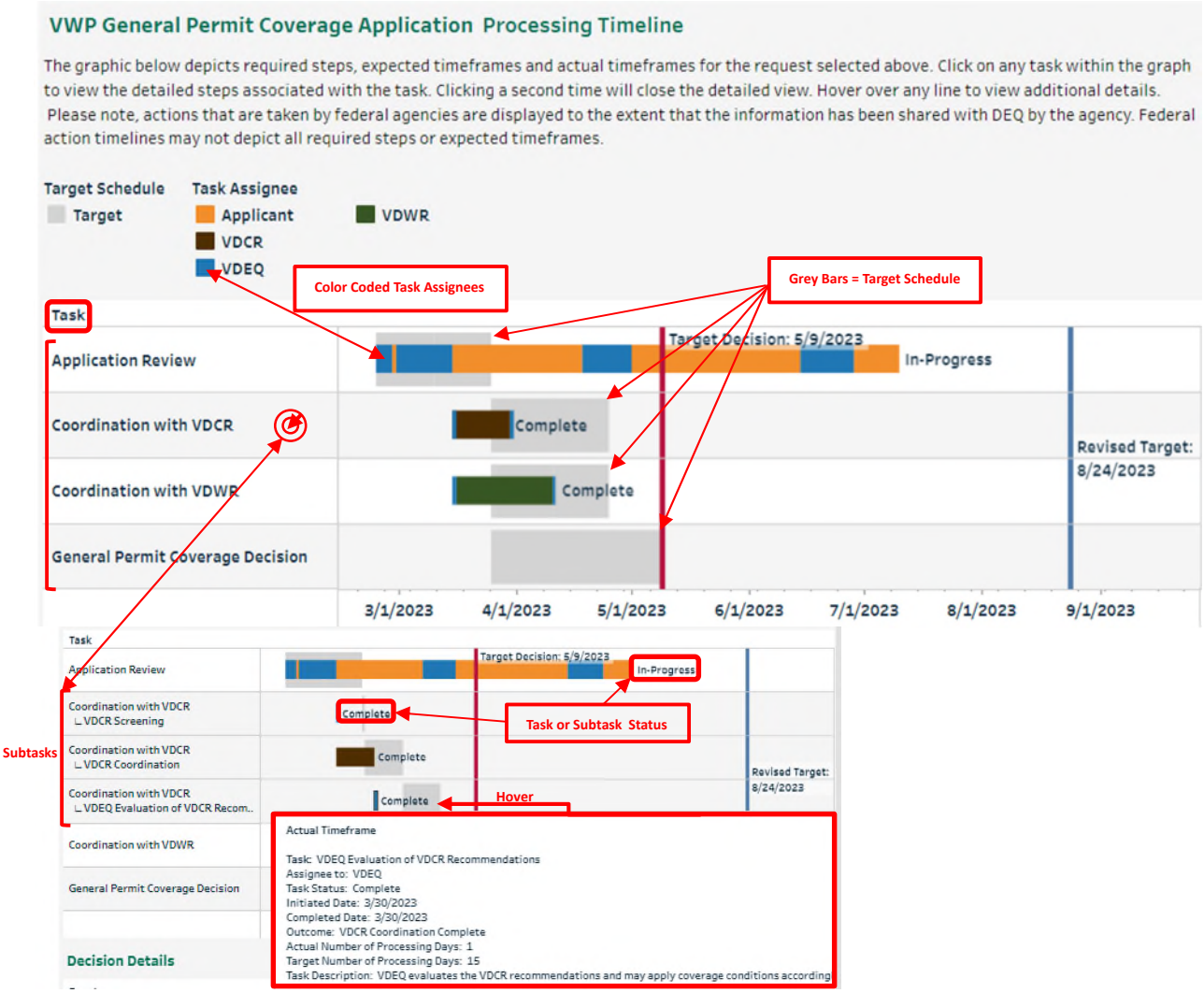
If a user has questions pertaining to a specific request, they may email the DEQ Project Manager by clicking on the Email DEQ Project Manager button. Drafting and completion of the email will occur through your device's Outlook email application. If the system fails to prompt email creation, or you do not have Outlook on the device by which you are accessing PEEP, you may hover over the Email DEQ Project Manager button to reveal the email address of the project manager.



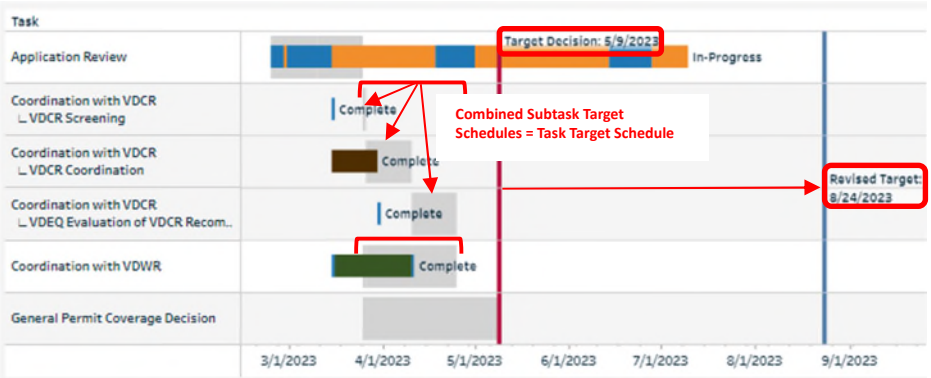
The View Details screen displays a timeline showing targets, tasks, assignees responsible for tasks, and a legend specifically denoting the target timeframe, as well as all Task Assignees. Task assignee is the responsible party tasked with completing a specific subtask.



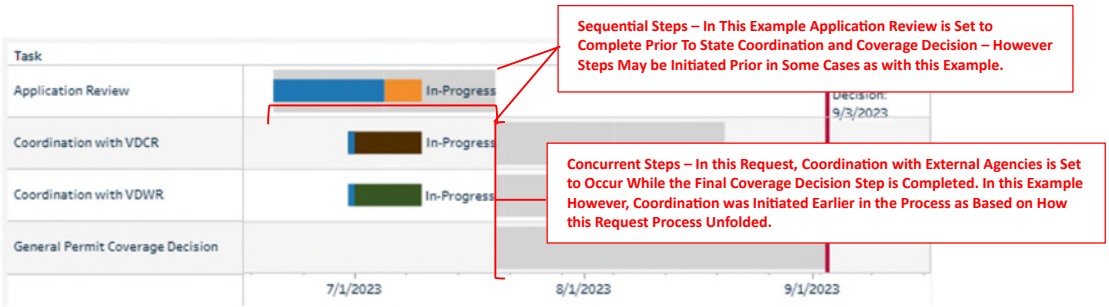
The View Details graphic is a Gantt Chart-based graphic displaying an approval action's critical path. Each part of an approval process is broken down into Tasks, which are further dissected by subtasks. Each subtask within a task will have a target timeframe to complete, as well as a task assignee. Hover over a specific subtask to get further details regarding that subtask. Click on a task's name to expand all subtasks making up that task. Each initiated subtask will be color coded to match the Task Assignee legend, denoting the responsible party for that subtask. Each task will also display current status as either Complete or In Progress to the right of the progress bar.



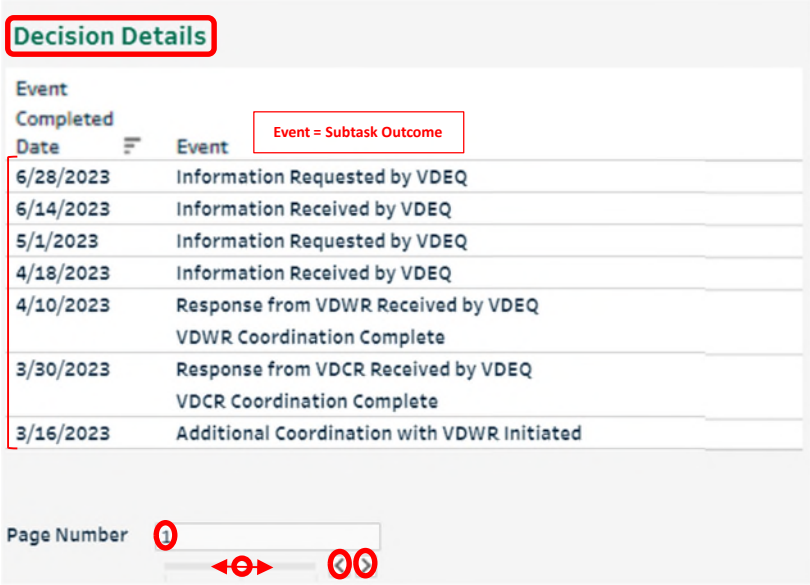
The sum of all subtask target timelines makes up the Tasks Target, and the sum of all tasks makes up a request's total Target Decision date. This date is shown as a red line with the specific Target Decision date. A second Revised Target blue line and date may show if the decision date is revised . The system will automatically re-adjust the Revised Target blue line as the approval process continues and additional data is input into the Portal. The red Target Decision line is static – as this is based on the initial project timeframe of action approval for a specific request type.



The Target Schedule represented by the grey bars will be staggered as based on anticipated start time and will also denote tasks that may require completion prior to another task's initiation. Tasks may start earlier than this Target Schedule, depending on the nature of the Task and how review unfolds. Some tasks may occur concurrently – and so the Target Schedules will overlap. Ultimately, a final approval decision – often denoted by the last Task within each request visualization, may require the completion of all other Tasks – though this is not always the case. Some Tasks may not be necessary. For instance, coordination with additional or other agencies is often not required for every request. In addition, for completed requests that have been withdrawn or denied, some Tasks may not have been initiated or completed.



The View Details visualization also provides a Decision Details card that tracks the dates of all completed subtasks (referred to as events in this location). This information may be considered a running list of the date and outcomes of all the subtasks of a request's approval process. When a request's approval process has numerous subtasks that have been completed, the user may use the page number slider or the forward and backward arrows to view additional completed subtasks and the specific outcome of each subtask. Each view is limited to a specific number of events, unless you move the page number slider all the way to the left – which will populate all events on a single page with a scroll bar. The complete event listing is sorted by completion date – with the most recent event completion date being first.



Decision Details

Event = Subtask Outcome

Event Completed Date	Event
6/28/2023	Information Requested by VDEQ
6/14/2023	Information Received by VDEQ
5/1/2023	Information Requested by VDEQ
4/18/2023	Information Received by VDEQ
4/10/2023	Response from VDWR Received by VDEQ
	VDWR Coordination Complete
3/30/2023	Response from VDCR Received by VDEQ
	VDCR Coordination Complete
3/16/2023	Additional Coordination with VDWR Initiated

Page Number 1

A second sub card provides the total Processing Days by each Assignee. This card is tracking how long each Task Assignee has taken to complete their respective subtasks.

Processing Days

Assignee	Number of Processing Days
Applicant	91
Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation (VDCR)	15
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (VDEQ)	49
Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (VDWR)	25

Contacts

For further information, or if any questions or concerns, please contact:

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571-719-0843

Trisha Beasley
Trisha.Beasley@deq.virginia.gov
703-583-3940

Appendix I: Glossary of Terms

Agent – An entity designated to act on an applicant's or sponsor's behalf in seeking a request.

Critical Path – the main pathway to receiving a DEQ decision regarding an approval process (i.e. Request Type). The Critical Path is defined by multiple sub-components called Tasks.

DEQ Project Manager – The DEQ staff member assigned to processing the request.

Event – The outcome of a Subtask.

Facility Name – The name of the Facility for which request(s) are being sought.

Locality – Virginia counties or other incorporated local entities in which DEQ approval actions are or have occurred.

Media – The overarching media by which DEQ's various programs are divided. Media examples would include Air, Water, and Land.

PEEP – Performance Evaluation and Enhancement Platform.

Program Type – The specific program that a permit or approval action is associated with. For instance, all air permits will be under Air Permits.

Request – A DEQ approval action such as a permit or bank application.

Requestor – The applicant/sponsor entity currently seeking or having obtained DEQ approval of a request type.

Request Number – Approval review's assigned request number. This number is often internally generated by DEQ for tracking purposes.

Request Status – The status of a request – either Completed or In-Progress. PEEP defaults to display actions that are currently in-progress. However, users can also view completed requests occurring within the last 30 days, or view both In-Progress and Completed in the Last 30 Days requests.

Request Type – Specific DEQ approval actions being tracked by PEEP such as a VWPP General or Individual Permit.

Revised Target – Represented by a blue line in the PEEP View Details Visualization, this is a revised date of Request completion as based on how the Request review process is unfolding. This date will continually revise as based on how quickly Tasks are completed.

Subtask – Each Task is comprised of a series of Subtasks that result in events or outcomes.

Target Decision – Represented by a red line in the PEEP View Details Visualization, this is a target date of Request completion as based on the Request Type. This date remains static and will not change as based on how Request processing unfolds as it is the initial target decision date as based on Request Type.

Target Schedule – Represented by grey bars in the PEEP View Details Visualization, the Target Schedule is the target timeline identified for all Tasks and Subtasks that make up a Request's Target Decision. Thus, a Task's Target Schedule is the sum of the Target Schedules of all Subtasks making up a Task; and a Request's total Target Schedule is the sum of all Tasks comprising a Request.

Task – The sub-components of the Critical Path. Tasks are the principal parts of a DEQ approval process for a specific Request Type that require completion to reach to an approval decision for a specific Request Type.

Task Assignee – The party responsible for completing a subtask, such as an applicant being responsible for providing additional information to complete a Request's application.

View Details – Links user to a PEEP sub-screen that provides Request details as well as processing schedule.

Appendix II: PEEP Task Assignees/Agency Acronyms

PEEP Acronym or Term	Description
Applicant/Sponsor	Entity seeking a permit or other action approval
External/Other Agency	Undefined external agency(ies) that may be involved in an approval process
FLM	Federal land managers
Locality	Local governing body
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA - NRSC	U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFERC	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USNOAA	U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
VDACS	Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
VDCR	Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation
VDEQ	Virginia Department of Environmental Quality
VDH	Virginia Department of Health
VDHR	Virginia Department of Historic Resources
VDOAV	Virginia Department of Aviation
VDOE	Virginia Department of Energy
VDOF	Virginia Department of Forestry
VDWR	Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources
VESCP	Virginia Erosion and Sediment Control Program
VIMS	Virginia Institute of Marine Science
VMRC	Virginia Marine Resources Commission
VPDC	Virginia Planning District Commission

Appendix III: Additional Resources

DEQ's PEEP Information Page: https://www.deq.virginia.gov/get-involved/permitting-enhancement-and-evaluation-platform-peep

PEEP How-to Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1y1rCerJXRc