

KY NUTRIENT NEWS

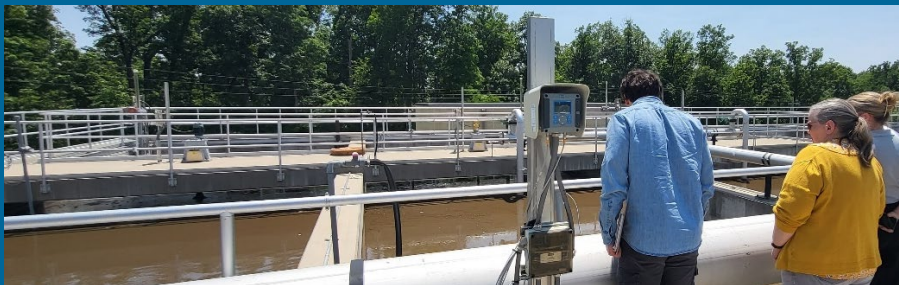
Kentucky Division of Water Quarterly Nutrient Newsletter

4th Quarter 2025



One Year of Nutrient Optimization Audits

December 2025 marks the first full year of nutrient optimization audits provided by the Kentucky Division of Water at no cost to participating wastewater treatment plants. During that time, staff from the Surface Water Permits Branch, Field Operations Branch and Gulf Hypoxia Program provided twenty-three (23) free audits of wastewater facilities to support nutrient treatment and energy efficiency. Typical audits include a discussion of facility processes, a walkthrough of the facility, and then a model run using the [MEASUR](#) tool to identify operational efficiencies.



Kentucky’s Plant Optimization Program builds off a three (3) year voluntary pilot program that ran from 2015-2018, achieving considerable energy savings and nutrient treatment improvements for most participants. The Division of Water also incorporated lessons learned from the Tennessee Plant Optimization Program, which represents an ongoing collaboration between Kentucky and Tennessee water agencies.

Since 2024, Kentucky added nutrient optimization to thirty (30) renewal or modification permits, but nutrient audits are also available on a voluntary basis. More information is available on the Division’s [website](#), including Nutrient Reduction Evaluation Forms ([NRE Instructions](#) & [NRE Form](#)). Contact Paulette Akers at paulette.akers@ky.gov to schedule your audit to learn how you can save money on your utility bill and improve your treatment efficiency.

Permitting information	30 facilities have had nutrient optimization added to their permit at renewal or modification
Permitted with audits completed	Of the 30, 16 have already had audits completed. 7 are undergoing construction or asked to defer and 6 were not interested.
Voluntary	7 major facilities who are not required to conduct audits have requested and received audit visits

UPDATES

- In 2025 Kentucky surpassed 5,500 Ag. Water Quality Plans completed!
- DOW’s latest [Water Resources Report](#) provides a snapshot analysis of Kentucky’s precipitation, drought, streamflow, and water storage.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

- The Kentucky Water Utilities Advisory Committee will meet Friday, **December 5th** at 300 Sower Boulevard in Frankfort. More information can be found [here](#).
- The 2027 Clean Water State Revolving Fund infrastructure loan program is open until **December 16, 2025**. More information is available [here](#).
- The 2026 Kentucky Fruit & Vegetable Conference will take place **January 12th-13th** in Bowling Green. Registration information is available [here](#).
- The Kentucky Commodity Conference will be held, **January 15th** at the Slone Convention Center in Bowling Green. More information can be found [here](#).
- The Kentucky Cattlemen’s Association Convention will be held **January 15-16th** at the Owensboro Convention Center. More information is available [here](#).
- The 2026 Kentucky Pork Producers Annual Meeting will be held **January 16th** in Bowling Green. More information is available [here](#).
- The **2026** Kentucky Operator Certification schedule for surface water, drinking water, wastewater and solid waste is now available [here](#).
- The deadline for DOW’s 319(h) funding is **February 13th**. Application information is available [here](#).

RESEARCH & NEWS LINKS

- [Public Health Advisory Lifted for Carpenters Lake near Owensboro, Kentucky – Naturally Connected](#)
- [Lt. Gov. Coleman Joins Local Officials in Mercer County to Break Ground on Herrington Lake Wastewater Treatment Project – Naturally Connected](#)
- [Interactive plan aims to protect limestone water in horse and bourbon country | College News](#)
- [Organizations Encouraged to Apply for Federal Funding to Reduce Water Pollution – Naturally Connected](#)
- [KACD Commonwealth Conservation Corner - November 2025](#)
- [Using drones to protect Kentucky corn: UK researchers lead precision agriculture study | College News](#)
- [WOTUS Proposed Rule Ag Fact Sheet](#)

Guide to Dam Inspections

Dams are a ubiquitous feature across Kentucky that supply drinking water, mitigate flooding, and facilitate recreation. Research by the [U.S. Geological Survey](#) suggests that small impoundments serve a critical nutrient detention function, making regular maintenance of these dams critical. The Kentucky Division of Water works with NRCS, the Division of Conservation and local Conservation Districts to inspect 200 NRCS dams that meet the criteria of [KRS 151](#). DOW recently developed a [video](#) explaining the Dam Safety Program. To learn more, visit DOW’s [Dam Safety Program webpage](#).

