# WisDOT Guidance for the Transportation Construction General Permit (TCGP)



(Updated 11-20-2024)

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### **Executive Summary**

This guidance has been developed to help guide staff through the stormwater discharge permitting requirements of WisDOT directed and supervised projects. This document is intended to supplement guidance and provide support to design and construction staff in the interpretation of permit requirements for the Transportation Construction General Permit (TCGP).

## **Background Information**

Discharge of pollutants to waters of the state are regulated by the DNR through the Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permits. The TCGP is a specific WPDES permit for stormwater discharges on WisDOT directed and supervised projects that have one acre or more of land disturbance. Projects with less than one acre of land disturbance are not required to obtain WPDES permit coverage.

The WPDES program is part of the larger National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) that is under the federal Clean Water Act and administered by EPA. EPA has delegated authority to the Wisconsin DNR to administer stormwater discharge permits via the WPDES program on non-tribal lands. Wisconsin Administrative Code NR-216 provides the framework for the WPDES program.

# **Applicability**

#### Non-Tribal Lands

Coverage under the Transportation Construction General Permit (TCGP) is required for all WisDOT directed and supervised projects with **one acre or more** of land disturbance.

#### Tribal Lands

Areas that fall within tribal boundaries are under EPA jurisdiction and therefore the TCGP does not apply. Coordination with the EPA through a similar permitting process under the NPDES Construction General Permit (CGP) is necessary for these areas. Projects that fall partially within tribal lands may require both a TCGP and NPDES CGP. See additional guidance under "Special Considerations: Tribal Lands" section of this document.

#### **TCGP Process Overview**



## **Land Disturbing Construction Activity**

#### TCGP Definition

Land Disturbing Construction Activity is "any man-made alteration of the land surface resulting in a change in the topography or existing vegetative or non-vegetative soil cover that may result in storm water runoff and lead to increased soil erosion and movement of sediment into waters of the state. Land disturbing construction activity includes, but is not limited to, clearing and grubbing, demolition, excavating, pit trench dewatering, filling and grading activities."

#### What counts as Land Disturbing Construction Activity?

The following activities should be considered when calculating the land disturbance for a project:

- Any area where subsoils will be exposed or vegetation will be removed or disturbed, including areas within your slope intercepts. It is also advised to include additional area beyond the slope intercept to allow for incidental disturbances such as blending near the slope intercept.
- Underground utility work including pipe culverts and storm sewer installations.
- Grading associated with beam guard replacement or upgrading of end terminals.
- Staging areas where existing vegetation will be removed or disturbed.
- Land disturbance at select sites and temporary support activity sites, which do
  not possess separate DNR storm water permit coverage, are to be added to the
  project total when WisDOT determines it will be covered under the TCGP
  permit coverage for the project. Temporary support activities may be within or
  outside of the highway right of way.

Note: These disturbances will be unknown during the design of a project, however will need to be added to the total land disturbance for a project when added during construction through the ECIP process.

#### What does not count as Land Disturbing Construction Activity?

- Work that is limited to the pavement structure and does not expose the subgrade (milling, grinding, pulverizing, spot repairs, shouldering, paving, etc.).
- Other activities that do not expose the subgrade.

# Notice of Intent (NOI)

Projects that have land disturbance of one acre or more are required to obtain TCGP coverage. The process for submitting for permit coverage under the TCGP is called the Notice of Intent (NOI).

Submittal of the NOI should be done concurrently with the request to the DNR TL for final concurrence on a project, typically around the 90% design stage. In addition to the NOI submittal, project teams should indicate permit coverage on the DNR/DOT Project Review Form (DTNR0002) when submitting the project for final concurrence.

If a project does not have one acre or more of disturbance, but has a high probability of exceeding the one acre threshold during construction due to temporary support activities, the project team should consider obtaining permit coverage under the TCGP during design.

If a project does not submit for coverage during design, and later exceeds the one acre disturbance threshold, TCGP coverage will need to be obtained before the additional disturbance areas can commence work.

#### Submitting the NOI:

The NOI is submitted through the DNR's ePermitting website. See Appendix A "Submitting the Notice of Intent (NOI)" for a step-by-step work flow through the process.

#### **TCGP Amendments**

After TCGP coverage has been obtained for a project, circumstances may arise that require the project's TCGP coverage be amended.

#### When is an amendment necessary?

The TCGP requires an amendment for erosion control and stormwater management plans "whenever there is a change in design, construction, operation or maintenance at the construction site, which has the reasonable potential for the discharge of pollutants and which has not otherwise been addressed in the erosion control and stormwater management plans."

The TCGP language is very broad and as such, can cover a wide array of circumstances. Yet, not every change requires a TCGP amendment. Since every project is different, and similar issues can have drastically different impacts depending on the surrounding environment, the need to amend the TCGP coverage should be a discussion at the project level between the WisDOT Project Manager (PM), WisDOT Stormwater and Erosion Control Engineer (SWECE), and DNR Transportation Liaison (TL). If the project level and DNR disagree on the need for an amendment, the conflict resolution process of the Cooperative Agreement (CoA) should be followed.

#### What are some common examples of changes requiring amendments?

- Addition of selected sites or temporary support activity sites that do not require separate DNR WPDES permit coverage and WisDOT determines will be covered under the TCGP.
- Changes in access locations for the site.
- Additional land disturbing activity within the project limits that was not included in the original plans.
- Significant changes in erosion control best management practices from the original plans.
- Increases in impervious areas that will remain after construction is complete, including both within the project limits or on temporary support activity sites.
- Significant changes in permanent, post-construction stormwater control practices (SCPs) from the original plans.
- Changes in the construction schedule or sequencing that has reasonable potential to impact environmental commitments for the project.

#### What are some common examples of changes that do not require an amendment?

- Additional BMPs from what is shown on the plans.
- Minor adjustments to BMP locations based on field conditions.
- Minor changes in construction schedule.

#### Submitting an amendment for TCGP coverage:

Contractor submitted ECIPs and ECIP amendments are reviewed concurrently by WisDOT and WDNR. The ECIP review process remains the same, as described in Trans 401 and the CMM. ECIP approval remains with WisDOT, in consultation with the DNR. If an amendment to the TCGP is necessary, the approved ECIP and/or ECIP amendments must be sent to DNR TL requesting an amendment to the Certificate of Coverage. This should be done by emailing the corresponding DNR TL the approved documents with the project information and the Facility Identification Number (FIN) that is shown on the Certificate of Permit Coverage for the project. DNR TL should send an acceptance response via e-mail. If no response given, include your sent e-mail in the project records.

## Notice of Termination (NOT)

Projects with TCGP coverage are obligated to adhere to all requirements in the TCGP until a project reaches final stabilization and the DNR issues the NOT for the project.

Once a project reaches final stabilization, WisDOT staff shall submit the NOT request to the DNR through the DNR's ePermitting system. The NOT request will be reviewed by the DNR TL to determine if the TCGP requirements have been met. The DNR TL will provide a confirmation email when the permit coverage has been terminated. Keep a copy of this email in the project records and forward a copy to the region SWECE.

#### What is final stabilization?

The TCGP defines final stabilization as "All land disturbing construction activities at the construction site have been completed and that a uniform perennial vegetative cover has been established with a density of at least 70% of the cover for the unpaved areas and areas not covered by permanent structures or that employ equivalent permanent stabilization measures."

#### When is the project ready to submit the NOT?

The 70% coverage is intended to be the percentage throughout the entire project, not averaged between different portions of the project. Bare and lightly vegetated areas may need additional attention to get to a 70% density threshold and be suitable for permit termination.

Some areas may not be able to achieve 70% density due to rock or sandy soils. In these cases, it may be determined, with approval of the DNR TL, to at least match the surrounding vegetative characteristics adjacent to the site. In these situations, document in the project diary that density is less than 70% however has met the density of the surrounding natural vegetation.

The NOT should not be submitted unless all TCGP covered selected sites or temporary support activity sites also meet the final stabilization requirements.

#### Submitting the NOT:

The NOT is submitted through the DNR's ePermitting website. See Appendix B "Submitting the Notice of Termination (NOT)" for a step-by-step work flow through the process.

For selected sites and temporary support activity sites that meet final stabilization requirements before the main project, use the guidance under "Special Considerations: Selected Sites and Temporary Support Activities".

# Posting the Certificate of Permit Coverage

Once a project is covered under the TCGP, a Certificate of Permit Coverage will be provided by the DNR TL to the WisDOT PM. This certificate must be posted at the project site before starting land disturbing construction activities.

#### Where can the certificate be posted?

The TCGP requires the certificate to be posted in a conspicuous place on the construction site. The goal is to have the certificate posted where it can be readily available and viewed by the public. The certificate should be protected from weather damage to maintain legibility.

In general, where practical and feasible, the certificate should be posted on the project site within the right of way. This may include the window of the construction field office (if located on site),

the project information board, or separately at the entrances to the site. If using the project information board, ensure the certificate does not cover up other information on the board.

In certain circumstances, posting the certificate on the project site may not be practical for safety reasons. This would include areas along high speed roadways or areas that otherwise pose hazards for the public to properly view the certificate. For these projects, posting at the project field office (window), even if located off site, would be acceptable since it is publicly accessible and directly related to the project.



# **TCGP Coverage Expiration & Renewal**

The TCGP allows coverage of a project site for a period of three years from the time coverage is granted. Depending on the project schedule and ability to meet final stabilization requirements for NOT, renewal may be necessary.

#### How is permit coverage renewed/extended?

At this time, DNR does not have a means through the ePermitting system to do renewals. WisDOT and DNR have agreed to complete renewals through a batch renewal process on a quarterly basis. DNR (through the stormwater permits coordinator) will provide a listing of projects due to expire permit coverage within the upcoming quarter. WisDOT (through the Statewide Erosion & Sediment Control Engineer and with collaboration from the region PDS chiefs) will request for project teams to determine if the project will require a renewal of permit coverage. A list of projects requesting an extension of coverage will be sent to DNR for review and approval. Projects that do not request an extension are expected to complete the NOT before the expiration of coverage.

#### Will projects be notified of the extension being granted or need a new certificate?

Projects that are granted an extension will be provided notice to the WisDOT Statewide Erosion & Sediment Control Engineer through a letter of extension. Project teams should assume continuation of coverage unless otherwise notified.

There will not be a new certificate of coverage issued; therefore, project teams will continue to use the original certificate for posting at the project site.

# Special Considerations: Selected Sites and Temporary Support Activities

#### Transfer of TCGP Coverage

The transfer of coverage form (TOC) should be used to transfer the responsibility for a selected site that is covered under the TCGP. This form would apply in the following scenarios:

- If contractor wants to transfer the select site to a different project or contractor.
- If property owner wants to keep the site open for commercial use. Property owner would need to pursue individual coverage from DNR for the site. Permit coverage would be transferred from the TCGP to the individual permit.

This form is available online by searching for WDNR form 3400-222 (04/23) or available on the <u>WisDOT Erosion Control</u> webpage.

#### Site conversion from TCGP coverage to separate WPDES Permit Coverage

If a site that was originally covered under the TCGP receives its own WPDES permit coverage from DNR, the project staff should submit the site for a release of permit responsibility. Since initial submittal and approval for TCGP coverage is handled through the ECIP process, the process for the release of permit responsibility will also be handled through the ECIP process via an ECIP amendment to document the change in that site from TCGP permit coverage to site specific WPDES permit coverage. WisDOT will request the release of permit responsibility for the site in an email and attach the corresponding ECIP information. BOX links to the information in the email are also acceptable. The DNR TL will review and provide email confirmation that the site is released from permit responsibility. The project team should keep a copy of the release of responsibility email with the project records.

#### Release of Permit Responsibility

If the main project is still in progress but a selected site or temporary support activity site has met the final stabilization criteria, or the site has obtained separate WPDES coverage as discussed above, the project team should request the site be released from permit responsibility. This is different from a notice of termination (NOT) since the termination process covers all portions covered under the Certificate of Permit Coverage FIN #.

Release of permit responsibility will be done through email communication with the DNR TL in the following process:

- 1) WisDOT project team submits the site for termination by emailing the DNR TL and attaching photos showing the final condition of the site.
- 2) DNR TL will review the information. The TL will either advise for more information or determine that the site meets final stabilization requirements.
- 3) WisDOT project team will provide additional details, if necessary.
- 4) DNR TL will provide the WisDOT project team with email confirmation that the site has been released from permit responsibility.
- 5) WisDOT project team includes DNR correspondence for the release of permit responsibility in the project records.

When the final stabilization of the site coincides with or is after the main project meeting final stabilization, the site does not need to request a release from permit responsibility and can instead be terminated with the project through the Notice of Termination (NOT), as detailed elsewhere in this guidance document.

# Special Considerations: Winter Shut Down Projects

The TCGP requires the erosion control plan to provide "description of erosion and sediment control practices put in place for the winter to prevent soil from leaving the construction site during periods of winter and spring thaw and rains". While items can be put into the project plans, most often these items are unpredictable and dependent on the contractor schedule, staging, and weather conditions.

The below guidance provides best practices for projects that have a winter shutdown period, however each project should be tailored to meet the needs of that individual project site. Project Leaders shall work with the regional SWECE and DNR TL to establish specific expectations for the project.

- Project team, contractor, DOT Regional SWECE, and DNR TL shall conduct a winter shut down
  meeting approximately 3 weeks prior to suspending land disturbing construction operations.
  The following are suggested items that may be part of the discussion:
  - o Anticipated progress prior to suspending operations.
  - Areas that will be permanently stabilized versus those that will be temporary.
  - Methods for providing temporary stabilization and or removal of existing controls.
    - Inlet protection is typically removed prior to winter to avoid freeze-up conditions that contribute to poor drainage and/or flooding.
    - Review areas where redundant erosion control devices will be necessary to properly prevent discharges from the project site due to winter thaws and spring snow melt.

- Slope stabilization near structure abutments and streambanks.
- Removal of in-water devices or requirements for winter periods. This may include temporary diversion channels, channel markers or temporary buoys, turbidity barriers, and cofferdams.
- For projects with selected sites, discuss the anticipated stabilization for the shut down period as well as whether the site will remain active when the project resumes operations.
- o For projects with active dewatering operations, discuss the removal of these devices and clean-up of discharge locations prior to winter shutdown.
- For projects where the roadway will be open to traffic, ensure the stability and functionality of the erosion control devices will not be hindered by winter maintenance activities such as plowing operations.
- Spring swallow netting, inspections, and maintenance.
- Document temporary erosion control measures implemented for winter shutdown on an exhibit and file in the project's erosion control diary. Ensure areas that are treated with soil stabilizer are documented on this exhibit.
- Per the requirements of the TCGP, the DOT shall conduct weekly inspections of implemented
  erosion and sediment controls. During the winter shut down months, these inspections likely
  will not yield significant changes. Therefore, it is recommended that project teams discuss the
  regular inspections with the DOT Regional SWECE and DNR TL during the winter shut down
  meeting. Document the agreed upon inspection frequency in writing in the project erosion
  control records. Some recommended guidance using a risk-based approach is below:
  - In general, discontinue weekly inspections unless there is a waterway located within, adjacent to, or in close proximity to the project and is susceptible to winter runoff from the project.
  - For projects with a waterway, discuss inspection frequency based on risk assessment at the time of winter shut down. Additional attention needs to be focused on projects that contain an Outstanding Water Resource (OWR) or Exceptional Water Resource (EWR).
  - o Provide inspections in any week that there is a 24-hour mean temperature that rises above 50 degrees Fahrenheit.
  - Provide inspection within 24 hours after a rainfall event of 0.5 inches or greater. This
    does not include frozen precipitation events.
- Per the requirements of the TCGP, erosion control records are to be maintained at the
  construction site. In some cases, the field trailer will not remain on site during the shutdown
  period. If the field trailer will not remain on site, inform the DOT Regional SWECE and DNR TL
  where the project erosion control records will be stored during the winter shutdown period.
- Review the project ECIP and amendments to ensure all winter shutdown measures are
  addressed. If not, the contractor should submit an amendment to the ECIP to document the
  site's erosion control needs during the winter shutdown period. It is recommended that this
  ECIP amendment is submitted at least 14 days prior to starting stabilization operations for the
  winter shutdown period.

 Project team should take pictures following winter shut down stabilization and the contractor suspending operations. This will provide baseline information in the event of any unauthorized discharges from the project site during the winter shut down period.

## Special Considerations: Substantially Complete Projects

When a project attains substantially complete status, as outlined in standard spec 105.11.2.1.3, there are still permit requirements that must be adhered to until the project has achieved final stabilization and the notice of termination is submitted. Use the following practices to ensure compliance with the TCGP:

- Erosion control inspections shall continue to be completed by the project team within 24 hours after a rainfall event of 0.5 inches or greater. Regular weekly inspections, those not due to a rainfall event, may be discontinued once the project attains substantially complete status. Do not delegate these inspections to others.
- Project team should take pictures following placement of the permanent erosion control
  measures and the project being substantially complete. This will provide a baseline for the
  project site at the time of project completion.
- Per the requirements of the TCGP, erosion control records are to be maintained at the
  construction site. Once the project meets substantially complete status, the field trailer is
  usually removed and project staff are no longer on site regularly. When this occurs, inform the
  DOT Regional SWECE and DNR TL where the project erosion control records will be stored until
  the project's NOT is approved.
- For substantially complete projects that will remain over winter before meeting the final stabilization requirements and NOT approval, discuss the inspection frequency with the DOT Regional SWECE and DNR TL. Document the agreed upon inspection frequency in writing in the project erosion control records.

# Special Considerations: Multiple Project Sites or Multiple Project IDs

#### Segmentation

Segmentation occurs when project limits are intentionally changed to keep the project under one acre of disturbance and purposely avoiding the need for TCGP coverage. Projects should not be segmented to avoid the need for TCGP coverage.

#### Multiple project sites under one Project ID and one let contract

Under this scenario, multiple distinct and separate project sites are included under a single project I.D. and let as one contract (example: three different bridge sites under one I.D./contract). If each individual project site can be constructed independently of the others, and none of the individual sites have one acre or more of land disturbance, then TCGP coverage would not be required. If any single site would have one acre or more of land disturbance, all the sites would need to be covered under the TCGP.

#### Multiple project IDs under one let contract

Under this scenario, there may be multiple project I.D.'s being constructed under one let contract. In these situations, the project team has options for submitting NOI's for TCGP coverage and should evaluate the best option for the project schedule and anticipated completion dates of the project. Options include submitting all ID's under one NOI, submitting each ID individually under separate NOI's, or a combination. The decision should be based on how each projects schedules and activities coincide with each other.

#### Example:

You have a project that will be let with the following three IDs (each project has 1 acre or more of land disturbing activities):

- 1000-11-71 (Project X)
- 1000-11-72 (Project Y)
- 1000-12-71 (Project Z)

Project X is a reconstruct and it is scheduled to have land disturbing activities occurring from May through August. Project Y is a bridge replacement project within the limits of Project X and is scheduled to be completed from mid-June through August. Project Z is a resurface project adjacent to the limits of Project X and is scheduled to be completed in September through October. In this case you could submit the NOI for Projects X and Y together since they are on similar schedules and the Notice of Termination (NOT) can likely be submitted in September or October once you have 70% permanent vegetation established and temporary erosion control items removed. Project Z could be submitted under a separate NOI since it may have late seeding and you may have to wait until the following year to submit the NOT if the permanent vegetation is not established by the winter. Having the separate NOIs will give you the advantage of not having to monitor all three projects into the following spring if Project Z is not established before winter. If all three projects had similar schedules, it would be simpler to submit them all under one NOI.

# Special Considerations: Tribal Lands

Projects that fall within tribal boundaries require different processes because the DNR does not have authority to issue coverage under the TCGP. In these cases, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is the permitting authority and will issue permits under the NPDES program.

This section is intended to clarify project permitting requirements for stormwater discharges from construction sites under the Clean Water Act (CWA), National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) for projects with one acre or more of disturbance and that fall within tribal boundaries.

When working on tribal lands, it is important to work closely with the Regional Environmental Coordinator (REC) and Regional Tribal Liaison to ensure proper coordination with tribal governments. Working with tribal governments can be complicated, as each tribe has different delegated authorities, programs, permitting requirements, tribal laws, and personnel structures.

# What is the difference between the TCGP issued by the DNR and the NPDES Construction General Permit (CGP) issued by EPA?

Discharge of pollutants to waters of the state are regulated by the DNR through the WPDES program. The TCGP is a specific permit under the WPDES program. The DNR is delegated authority by the EPA to administer the program requirements of the CWA via the WPDES program, and TCGP, in Wisconsin <u>except</u> on tribal lands. Therefore, projects that fall within tribal boundaries are permitted through the EPA under the NPDES program. The CGP is a specific permit under the NPDES program.

Under both types of programs, it is important to determine if the general permit applies to the project. If projects do not meet the eligibility criteria, an individual permit will be necessary. Individual permits can take a long time to acquire, so it is important to communicate with agencies early in the design process to determine project specific requirements. These agencies include but not limited to the EPA, tribal governments, and US Army Corps of Engineers (wetland disturbances).

#### I have a project that is entirely located on tribal lands. Which permit do I need?

Projects that fall entirely within tribal boundaries, and have one acre or more of disturbance, require CGP coverage through EPA. Other requirements may also be enacted by individual tribes through tribal law.

#### I have a project that is on both tribal and non-tribal lands. Which permit do I need?

Projects that fall both on and off tribal lands <u>may</u> require both the TCGP coverage through the DNR and CGP coverage through EPA. Projects that are entirely within tribal boundaries would only need the CGP coverage by EPA and projects that are entirely outside of tribal boundaries would only need the TCGP coverage by the DNR. These permits are required for any project with one acre or more of land disturbing activities.

If my project has one acre or more of land disturbance but the portion in the tribal boundary is less than one acre of land disturbance, do I still need EPA-CGP coverage?

These types of instances require special coordination. Projects with these situations should consult with their EPA representative to determine the project specific requirements. The current contact for EPA Region 5 is Krista McKim (<a href="mailto:mckim.krista@epa.gov">mckim.krista@epa.gov</a>, 312-353-8270).

If my project has one acre or more of land disturbance, but the portion <u>outside</u> of the tribal boundary is less than one acre of land disturbance, do I still need DNR-TCGP coverage?

At no time should there be a project that is one acre or more of total land disturbance and doesn't have either the DNR-TCGP or the EPA-CGP permit issued. These types of projects will require specific coordination with the REC and DNR Transportation Liaison to determine the need for TCGP coverage.

# If I receive coverage under the EPA-CGP, is a separate water quality certification from EPA required?

When a project is covered under the EPA's CGP, the water quality certification is included with the coverage. The EPA may, however, need to grant separate water quality certifications for other permits, such as the 404 permit. A water quality certification under one permit does not necessarily guarantee water quality certification for another permit.

#### If I receive coverage under the EPA-CGP, is consultation with tribes still necessary?

Yes. The EPA-CGP is necessary to meet the requirements of the CWA and NPDES, however this does not replace other requirements that may be enacted by individual tribes through tribal law. Close coordination with the REC, Regional Tribal Liaison, and tribal personnel is necessary to ensure all environmental clearances are obtained for the project.

# I have received water quality certification from the tribe. Do I still need EPA-CGP coverage?

Yes, you still need to apply for coverage under the EPA-CGP permit if the total land disturbance is one acre or more. The EPA grants authority to some tribes to administer some water quality programs, however this is separate from the NPDES requirements. There are no tribes in Wisconsin that have EPA granted authority to provide NPDES permit coverage – this can only be done by the EPA through their CGP.

Tribes that have water quality program authority are listed on the EPA's website at: https://www.epa.gov/tribal/tribes-approved-treatment-state-tas

#### How do I know where the exact tribal boundaries are?

The only definite form of identifying tribal boundaries is through direct communication with the tribes, in conjunction with the Regional Tribal Liaison. There are two recommended websites available for identifying tribal boundaries, which are shown below. As these sites are not always current, these sites should be used as screening tools only. Additionally, be aware that tribal boundaries can also change over time, especially with properties that may go into or out of tribal trust.

https://biamaps.doi.gov/indianlands/ https://tigerweb.geo.census.gov/tigerweb/

#### Are there any tribal lands that the EPA-CGP does not apply to?

The 2022 EPA-CGP is available for use on all federally recognized tribal lands in Wisconsin, as long as the project meets the eligibility criteria for the permit. Prior to the 2022 EPA-CGP, all projects that fell within the boundaries of the Sokaogon Chippewa Community (Mole Lake) required an individual permit; however, this is no longer the case.

Some tribes have special requirements within the EPA-CGP that need to be adhered to. These can be found in Section 9 of the EPA-CGP. As stated above, however, projects need to ensure they meet the eligibility criteria for the EPA-CGP, otherwise an individual permit from EPA will be required.

#### How do I apply for coverage under the EPA-CGP?

The process and information needed to apply for EPA-CGP coverage is very similar to TCGP coverage through the DNR, although some of the requirements may be different. The EPA uses their NPDES eReporting Tool (NeT) for all process related to applying for and terminating the NPDES-CGP.

The EPA's NPDES eReporting Tool (NeT) can be accessed at the below link: https://npdes-ereporting.epa.gov/net-cgp/action/login

EPA has a User Guide that will answer most questions related to the electronic process: EPA's CGP NeT User Guide

The EPA permitting site and additional guidance can be found at: https://www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater-discharges-construction-activities

#### How long do I need to plan for EPA processing the NPDES CGP coverage?

Coverage begins 14 calendar days after EPA confirms that it has received a completed Notice of Intent (NOI) unless the EPA notifies you that your authorization is delayed or denied. It is important to review the requirements of the EPA-CGP with the REC to ensure the project meets the eligibility criteria. Projects that do not meet eligibility under the CGP will be required to apply for an individual permit, which can take more than 6 months to acquire.

#### What other permitting and tribal coordination is required?

This section is intended to specifically address questions related to DNR-TCGP and EPA-CGP processes. There may be other permits and tribal coordination necessary, such as wetland permitting and permits that are more specific to the individual tribes. Please coordinate with the REC and regional tribal liaison for determining the project specific needs for these items.

#### How does the contractor know that the project includes NPDES-CGP Coverage?

WisDOT applies for NPDES-CGP coverage and is responsible for administering the permit conditions. The contractor should be notified that the project has NPDES-CGP permit coverage by including STSP #107-057 "Information to Bidders, NPDES Construction General Permit for Storm Water Discharge Permit within Tribal Lands" into the contract special provisions. Note that there are conditions in the NPDES-CGP that differ from the TCGP and standard WisDOT practices, so project staff and contractors will need to understand those provisions to ensure compliance with the permit conditions.

# **Frequently Asked Questions**

This section is to provide answers to frequently asked questions regarding the TCGP that are not covered elsewhere in this guidance document.

#### What about projects that are less than one acre of land disturbance?

Coverage under the TCGP is not required. WisDOT is responsible to either keep the disturbance to less than one acre, or when determined that disturbance will be one acre or more, submit a NOI for TCGP coverage.

#### When does WisDOT need to apply for an individual permit, rather than the TCGP?

If a project would not meet the applicability criteria listed in the general permit (TCGP) then an individual permit would be required. An individual permit has never been used for WisDOT projects and it is not anticipated an individual permit would ever be necessary if the DNR/DOT Cooperative Agreement Process is followed.

#### Who signs the NOI and NOT?

The signatory should be an employee of WisDOT with a classification of Project Manager or higher. This is not to be delegated to a lower classification or personnel outside of WisDOT, even if acting in an equivalent role under contract with WisDOT. Since the project's responsible charge is the WisDOT Project Manager, it is recommended that the permit documents are signed by that individual.

#### How does the contractor know that the project includes TCGP Coverage?

WisDOT applies for TCGP coverage and is responsible for administering the permit conditions. The contractor should be notified that the project has TCGP permit coverage by including STSP #107-056 "Information to Bidders, WPDES Transportation Construction General Permit (TCGP) for Storm Water Discharges" into the contract special provisions.

The contractor does not need to submit for separate WPDES permit coverage unless using selected sites or temporary support activities that WisDOT determines will not be covered under the project TCGP permit coverage or DNR determines is ineligible for coverage under the TCGP permit.

#### Does the Cooperative Agreement still apply with TCGP projects?

Yes, the Cooperative Agreement remains intact for all WisDOT directed and supervised projects, including those covered under the TCGP.

#### How do the requirements of Trans 401 change with the TCGP?

The requirements of Trans 401 remain intact regardless of whether or not the project is covered under the TCGP. The TCGP permit, however, typically uses references to codes under the purview of the DNR such as NR 151 and NR 216. While WisDOT strives to be as closely aligned as possible with DNR codes, at times these may not coincide. When there is a discrepancy between Trans 401 and the TCGP permit, the TCGP permit conditions will take precedence in accordance with the DNR/DOT Cooperative Agreement.

#### How will disagreements or conflicts between the agencies be handled?

This process is no different for non-TCGP projects or TCGP covered projects. The conflict resolution process to resolve conflicts between WisDOT and DNR is covered in the Cooperative Agreement, Part Four. Each agency should strive to resolve conflict at the lowest possible level before elevating the conflict.

#### Does the enforcement process change?

This process is no different for non-TCGP projects or TCGP covered projects. The enforcement process outlined in Trans 401.11 and the Cooperative Agreement Section 2.5 will be followed when necessary. Liability for prohibited discharges will be determined in accordance with Trans 401.12. WisDOT will also use contract administration and contract enforcement mechanisms to achieve compliance. WisDOT will proactively address and remediate discharges or other environmental degradation to the extent practical.

#### Will ECIPs continue to be submitted?

Yes, there is no change to the ECIP submittal, review, and approval process. If WisDOT or DNR determine that an amendment to the TCGP coverage is necessary, the ECIP process will be used to document the changes. See additional information under the TCGP Amendment section of this guidance document.

#### Does WisDOT use the DNR Technical Standards?

Technical standards are guidance from DNR and WisDOT chooses to use these standards on a case by case basis. There is no requirement that WisDOT use DNR technical standards, however we do need to ensure that WisDOT processes meet the intent of the permit conditions. In most cases, WisDOT specifications are aligned with the technical standards but more specific to the work that WisDOT encounters on our projects. WisDOT will continue to use existing specifications, details, and processes to meet the permit conditions and, where appropriate, include references to DNR technical standards. WisDOT and DNR will continue to work together to ensure the contract provisions meet "equivalent methodology" to the technical standards.

#### How do WisDOT projects meet the soil loss requirements in the TCGP?

At this time, WisDOT has not developed a process for meeting the soil loss sediment performance standard of 5 tons/acre/year. DNR is currently working on a new technical standard for soil loss that will address linear construction projects. WisDOT and DNR will be collaborating on that effort. Once the new technical standard is complete, WisDOT will develop and implement guidance.

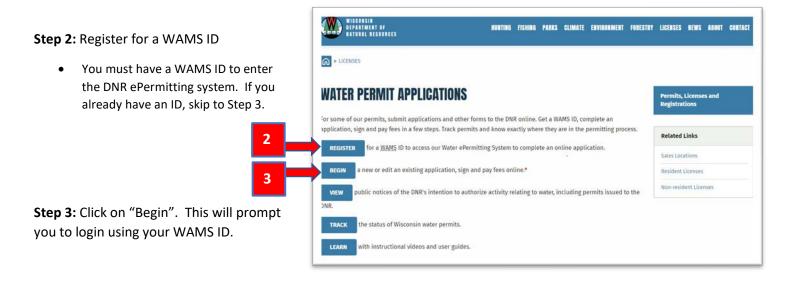
Until these processes are complete, designers should continue to use best management practices for the construction site through the erosion control matrices in FDM Chapter 10. Construction should follow the BMP's in the plans; modify the BMP's as necessary for the site, staging, and contractor means and methods; and complete grading and restoration activities in the shortest practicable timeframe.

# Will farm fields used for selected sites or temporary support activity sites need to meet the final stabilization requirements?

The contractor will need to coordinate this with the needs of the landowner. The landowner can decide if they want to return the farm field to conditions suitable for cultivation, or to have the field revegetated to meet the final stabilization requirements. Regardless, the site cannot be terminated for permit coverage until either the field is being actively used for agricultural purposes or the site meets final stabilization requirements. When submitting the ECIP for the site, the contractor should designate how the final site restoration will occur.

# Appendix A: Submitting the Notice of Intent (NOI)

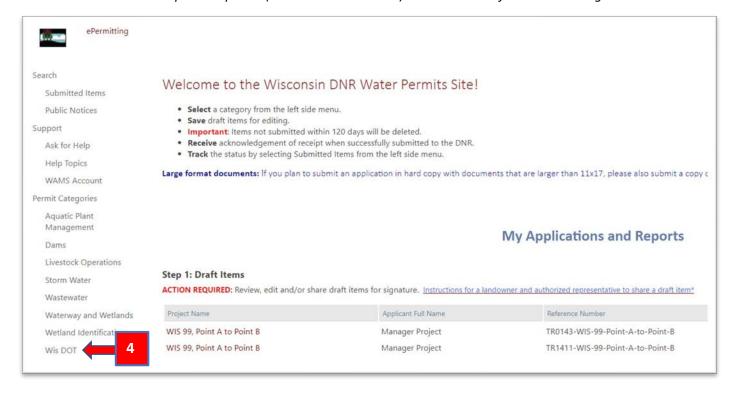
Step 1: Go to DNR ePermitting Website at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/permits/water.



**Step 4:** Once you log in, your Dashboard will appear. If you save an NOI in progress, you will return to this page and click on the appropriate document under the "Draft Items". Do not restart a new NOI for the same project.

New NOI: On the left part of the screen will be a list of permit categories. Click on "WisDOT" at the bottom of the list.

Note: Do not use the other permit options (such as "Stormwater") – these are not for TCGP coverage.

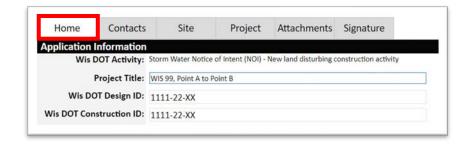


**Step 5:** Click on "Transportation Construction General Permit Application". This will initiate the NOI process.



#### Step 6 (Home Tab):

- Enter the Project Title Use the highway name and project limits
- Enter the WisDOT Design ID
- Enter the WisDOT Construction ID



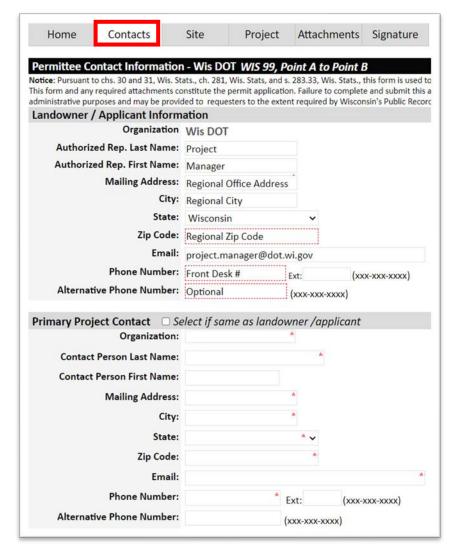
#### Step 7 (Contacts Tab):

Landowner/Applicant Information

- This is always a WisDOT contact, even for local projects. The name and phone number that is listed here will appear on the Certificate of Permit Coverage that gets posted at the construction site.
- It is recommended that this is the Construction Project Manager, if known, otherwise the Design Project Manager.
- The phone number is recommended to be the regional office front desk number to avoid "dead ends" for any inquiries.

#### **Primary Project Contact**

 Typically, select the box that says "Select if same as landowner/applicant". If you would like a different contact listed, enter that information here.



#### Step 8 (Site Tab):

#### Site Map -

 There are three options listed for the site map. Most often, the "Create Map" will be used.
 This can only be used if the entire location can be drawn with a single polygon. If not, one of the other options should be used.

#### Site Location -

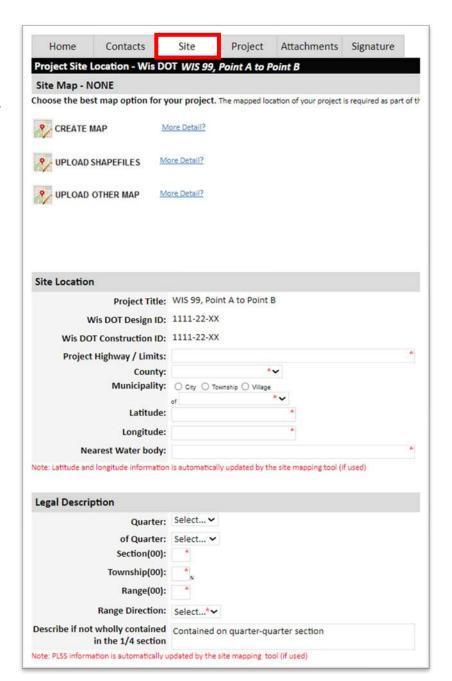
- Project Highway/Limits Use the highway name and limits from the plan title sheet. For airport projects, use the airport name and work description from the plan title sheet.
- County/Municipality List the county and municipality. If the project spans multiple counties or municipalities, list the one near the center of the project. Only list one of each.
- Latitude/Longitude If the "Create Map" tool was used above, this will automatically populate. If not, then fill in the blanks manually, in decimal degree format (ex. 44.474, -89.457). Use the X,Y point near the center of the project. Sites such as Google Maps or Google Earth are easy to use sources to obtain this information.
- Nearest Waterbody Use the WDNR Surface Water Data Viewer to identify water bodies that cross the project. If no waterbodies cross the project, pick the nearest downstream waterbody the project drains to.

DNR Surface Water Data Viewer:

https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/SurfaceWater/swdv

#### **Legal Description**

• If the "Create Map" tool was used above, this information will automatically populate. If not, then fill in the blanks manually. Use information for near the center of the project. Resources such as USGS quadrangle maps, plat books, DotView PLSS boundary layer can be used to obtain this information. There is no requirement to add text in the box for "Describe if not wholly contained in the ¼ section".



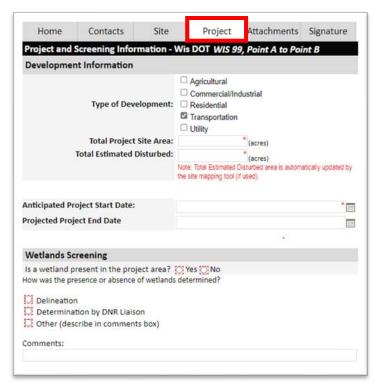
#### Step 9 (Project Tab)

#### **Development Information:**

- Type of Development "Transportation" should be the default setting.
- Total Project Site Area This is an approximate area of the project site. Most projects can be calculated by multiplying the length of the project by the approximate right of way width (ex: 5 miles x 100' wide = 61 acres).
- Total Estimated Disturbed See guidance under the "Land Disturbing Construction Activity" section of this document for calculating this area. If the "Create Map" option was used earlier, the calculation from that polygon will automatically populate in this box – this should be replaced with the calculated area.
- Anticipated Project Start Date List the date when the project will begin construction. If project has possibility of being advanced, enter the earlier start date.
- Projected Project End Date List the date that the
  project is anticipated to meet final stabilization criteria and the project can be submitted for NOT. If project has possibility of
  being advanced, enter the latest scheduled end date.

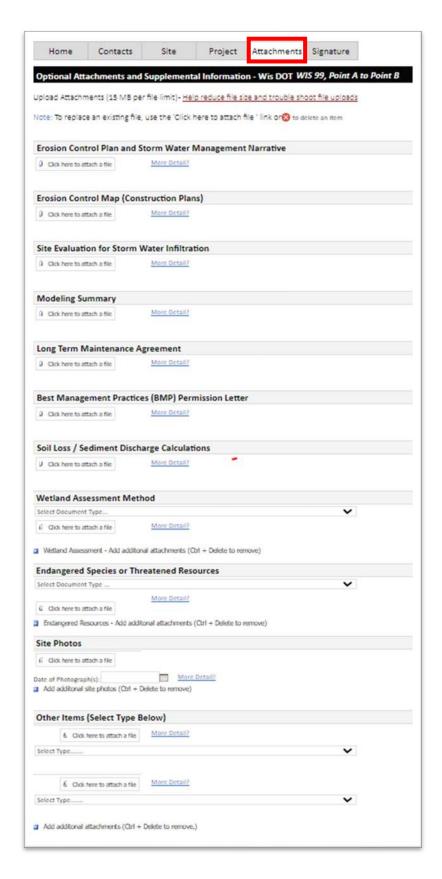
#### Wetland Screening:

• Check with the Regional Environmental Coordinator (REC) to verify which option was used for the project.



#### Step 10 (Attachments Tab)

The designer should submit the NOI concurrently with the final concurrence request. All items necessary for project review should be submitted prior to or with the final concurrence request; therefore, the attachments page is optional.



#### Step 11 (Signature Tab)

Once all required fields are filled out, the signature page will become available. The signature process will be completed using the WAMS ID that initially signed into the e-Permitting site.

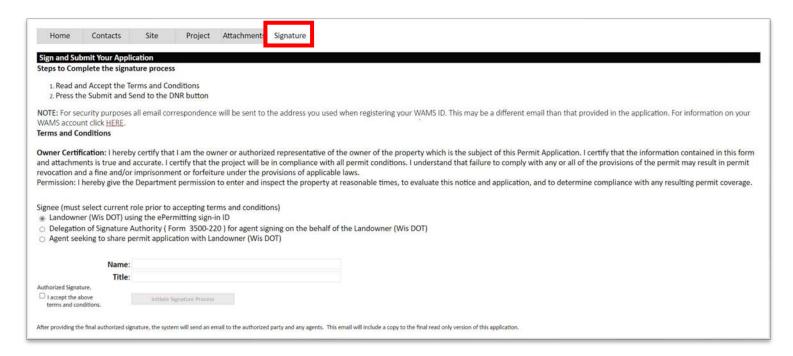
There are three options for signature of the NOI:

- 1. <u>Landowner (WisDOT) using the ePermitting sign-in ID</u>: If the DOT Project Manager (PM), or higher signatory level, is submitting the NOI, this option should be used for signature.
- 2. <u>Delegation of Signature Authority (Form 3500-220) for agent signing on the behalf of the landowner (WisDOT)</u>: If the DOT PM wants the Agent to complete and submit the NOI, this option should be used. Agent could be a municipality, consultant, DOT employee, etc. This option requires the DOT PM to fill out an additional form (DNR form 3400-220), which the Agent would attach at the bottom of the signature page. Note: The landowner is always WisDOT (even on local projects).
- 3. <u>Agent seeking to share permit application with Landowner (WisDOT)</u>: This option is similar to option 2, except the Agent filling out the NOI routes the application to the DOT PM for review, signature, and submittal. Selecting this option will take the Agent to the "Welcome Dashboard" screen where there are instructions on how to route to the landowner for signature. The landowner is always WisDOT (even on local projects).

Click on the appropriate option and fill in the remaining information.

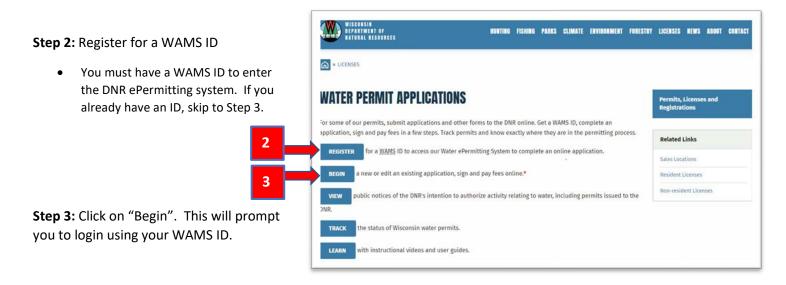
Click on "Initiate Signature Process" after all required information has been provided.

\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*: After the signature process is initiated, you will be sent an email to validate the signature. The NOI process is not complete until that validation step is completed.



# Appendix B: Submitting the Notice of Termination (NOT)

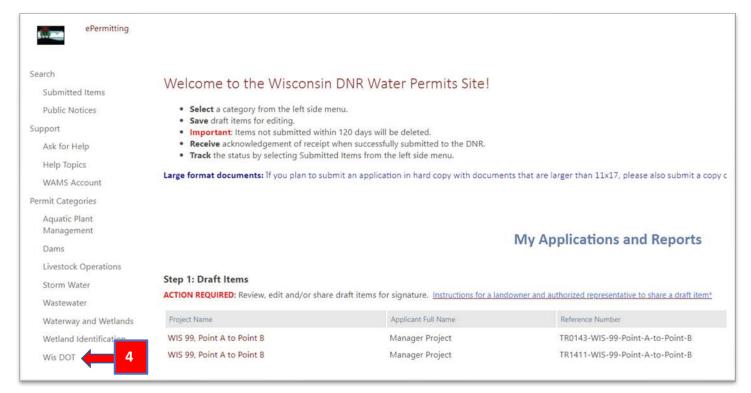
**Step 1:** Go to DNR ePermitting Website at <a href="https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/permits/water">https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/permits/water</a>.



**Step 4:** Once you log in, your Dashboard will appear. If you save a NOT in progress, you will return to this page and click on the appropriate document under the "Draft Items". Do not restart a new NOT for the same project.

New NOT: On the left part of the screen will be a list of permit categories. Click on "WisDOT' at the bottom of the list.

Note: Do not use the other permit options (such as "Stormwater") – these are not for TCGP coverage.

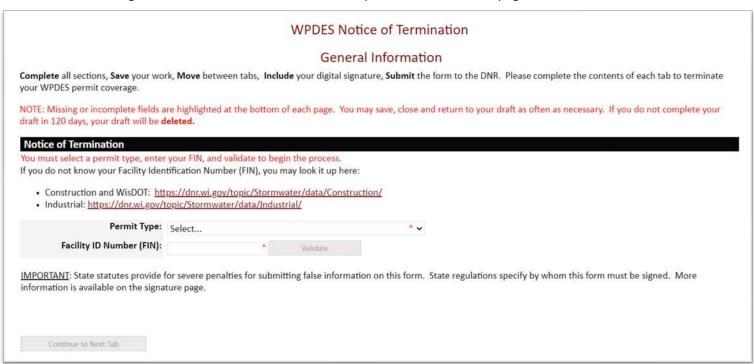


Step 5: Click on "Notice of Termination".



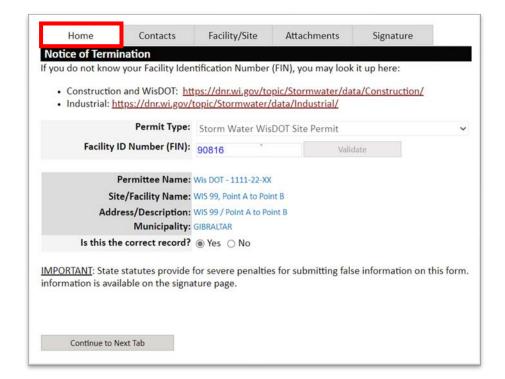
#### Step 6:

- Permit Type: Select the "Stormwater WisDOT Site Permit" option.
- Enter the Facility ID Number (FIN) for the site. This will be on the Certificate of Coverage. The FIN can also be found using the "Construction and WisDOT" lookup link included on this page.



#### Step 7 (Home Tab):

- Once the FIN is entered, the "Validate" Box will be active. Click on "Validate".
- The project information will populate on the screen.
- The question "Is this the correct record" will also populate. If this is correct, click the "Yes" Box. If this is not the correct project information, click "No" to allow the system to re-enter the FIN.
- Once the information is correct, the different tabs will appear on the top and you will be on the "Home" Tab.
- Click on the "Continue to Next Tab" box at the bottom of the screen.



#### Step 8 (Contacts):

#### Permittee Information

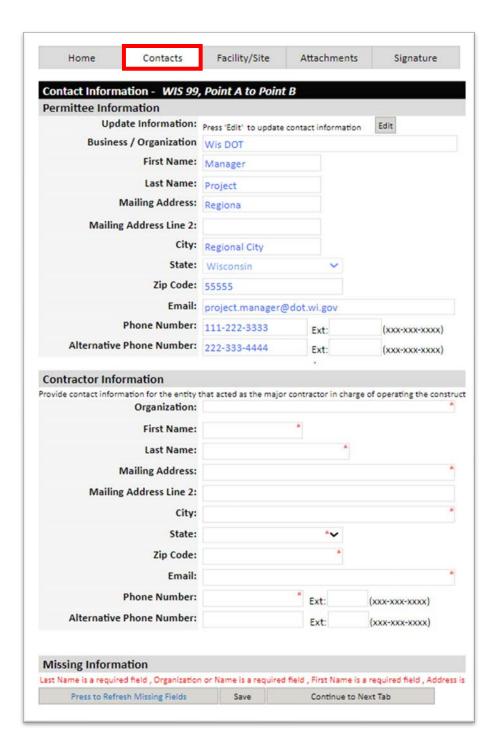
- This section will auto-populate from the NOI information. If this has changed or is incorrect, click on the edit button at the top of this section and enter in the new information. If correct, no action required.
- NOTE: The person listed in this section, along with the person entering the information (if different), will be the individuals that are emailed the termination confirmation email once the NOT request is validated by the DNR TL.

#### **Contractor Information**

 Enter in the information for the prime contractor. Use the main point of contact for the contractor, such as a superintendent or project manager.

Click on "Save".

Click on "Continue to Next Tab".



#### Step 9 (Facility/Site Tab):

Facility/Site Information

This section will auto-populate.

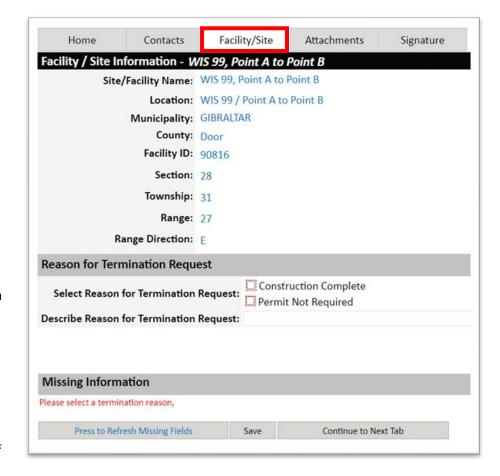
**Reason for Termination Request** 

Select the appropriate box.

Construction Complete – Project has met all the requirements for final stabilization. Check the box and go to Step 9A.

Permit not Required – Use this if a permit was applied for but was later determined to be unnecessary.

Describe Reason for Termination Request – this is only required if one of the other two checkboxes are not applicable. An example of this is if a project applied for



permit coverage and then the project was cancelled and not constructed. Describe the reason in the box.

Click "Save".

Click "Continue to Next Tab".

#### Step 9A (Facility/Site Tab):

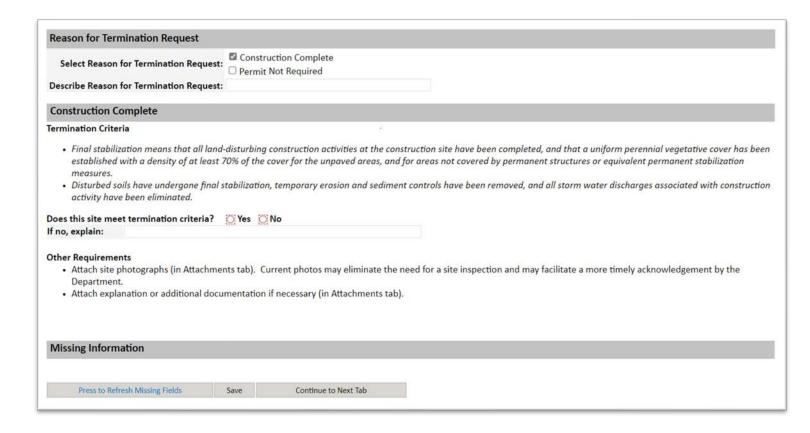
Once the "Construction Complete" box is checked, additional information will populate on the screen.

Answer the question for "Does this site meet termination criteria":

- Yes This would be checked if all land disturbances meet the final stabilization criteria.
- No Use this if some areas of land disturbances were allowed to remain without meeting final stabilization criteria.
   An example of this would be if DNR TL agrees to allow less than 70% vegetation based on surrounding vegetation assessment or a selected site that will be actively used for agricultural cropping or tillage. Enter supporting information in the "If no, explain:" box.

Click "Save".

Click "Continue to Next Tab"



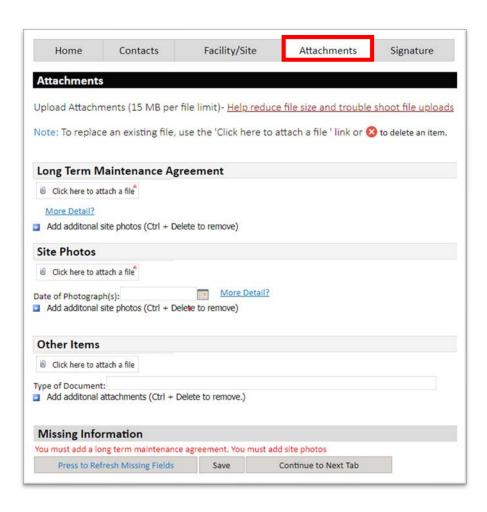
#### Step 10 (Attachments Tab)

Long Term Maintenance Agreement

- This is a required attachment.
   Attach any maintenance agreements in this section.
- If the project does not have a maintenance agreement, attach a page that indicates that long term maintenance agreements do not apply to this project.

#### Site Photos

- This is required. Attach photos of the project site. Photos should be representative of the entire site and include enough photos to show the different stages of construction have all met final stabilization requirements.
- Projects with selected sites and temporary support activities covered under the TCGP for the project should also include photos of each of those sites.
- Enter the date for the photographs.



#### Other Items:

Use this to add in any other documentation that may be necessary to support the NOT request.

Supporting Documentation:

• If "Permit not Required" was selected on the Facility/Site Tab, this screen will also require supporting documentation and rationale as to why permit coverage is not required.

Click "Save".

Click "Continue to Next Tab".

#### Step 11 (Signature Tab):

Once all required fields are filled out, the signature page will become available. The signature process will be completed using the WAMS ID that initially signed into the e-Permitting site.

There are three options for signature of the NOI:

- 1. <u>Authorized Representative using the ePermitting sign-in ID</u>: If the DOT Project Manager (PM), or higher signatory level, is submitting the NOI, this option should be used for signature.
- 2. <u>Delegation of Signature Authority (Form 3500-220) for agent signing on the behalf of the authorized representative:</u> If the DOT PM wants the Agent to complete and submit the NOI, this option should be used. Agent could be a municipality, consultant, DOT employee, etc. This option requires the DOT PM to fill out an additional form (DNR form 3400-220), which the Agent would attach at the bottom of the signature page. Note: The landowner is always WisDOT (even on local projects).
- 3. <u>Agent seeking to share permit application with an authorized representative:</u> This option is similar to option 2, except the Agent filling out the NOI routes the application to the DOT PM for review, signature, and submittal. Selecting this option will take the Agent to the "Welcome Dashboard" screen where there are instructions on how to route to the landowner for signature. The landowner is always WisDOT (even on local projects).

Click on the appropriate option and fill in the remaining information.

Click on "Initiate Signature Process" after all required information has been provided.

\*\*IMPORTANT\*\*: After the signature process is initiated, you will be sent an email to validate the signature. The NOT process is not complete until that validation step is completed.

