



GRAND TRAVERSE COUNTY Administration/Board of Commissioners

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Grand Traverse County provides mandated and necessary services that ensure safety and add value to our community.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DEQ Reviews County's Soil Erosion Program

January 12, 2016

Traverse City – In July 2015, the state's Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) performed a compliance audit of the county's Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control program and the county's enforcing office. Per state law, the DEQ oversees local enforcing agencies to ensure compliance with the county's approved ordinance.

On January 8, 2016, Grand Traverse County received a letter from the DEQ stating that the county's program is not in compliance. The DEQ recommends a probationary period to bring the program back into compliance. County officials are reviewing the report and, meanwhile, changes to the Soil Erosion program have been made to more effectively manage operations.

According to County Administrator Tom Menzel, the county was "ahead of the compliance findings" and has been proactive in its effort to ensure corrective measures. "Even before we were aware that the DEQ compliance review meetings were taking place, we took action," he said.

Prior to receiving the audit results, Grand Traverse County officials examined the current Soil Erosion program, identified potential compliance issues, and developed a strategy for more efficient operations. A corrective plan to be shared during a meeting between county and DEQ representatives includes:

- recommending a new ordinance, currently under review by the DEQ
- reorganizing the Soil and Erosion Department and its budget
- oversight of the program by the county's Planning and Development Department
- developing a matrix for compliance review
- identifying measures to assure future program compliance

Menzel is optimistic about the outcome of the DEQ's recommendations and the county's corrective actions to ensure future compliance of the Soil Erosion program. "Sometimes an outside look can help achieve needed improvements to make effective change," he said.

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