

## **HISTORY OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF POLLUTION CONTROL**

The state agency that was predecessor to the Office of Pollution Control was originally known as the Mississippi Air & Water Pollution Control Commission. This agency operated from approximately 1966 until the state legislature in 1978 decided to consolidate a number of agencies related to the state's natural resources. Consequently, the Commission on Natural Resources came into existence July 1, 1978. At the time of this transition, the Air & Water Pollution Control Commission had three organizational divisions: Air Division, Water Division, and Field Services Division. The legislature left the details of reorganization to the new Commission on Natural Resources, and the process took more than a year to complete.

By 1979, consolidation and reorganization of the Air & Water Pollution Control Commission resulted in it being named as the Bureau of Pollution Control, operating as one of several bureaus within the newly organized Mississippi Department of Natural Resources. The divisions operating within the Bureau of Pollution Control remained unchanged (i.e., Air Division, Water Division, and Field Services Division).

Effective July 1, 1981, the state's solid waste regulatory program was transferred by the legislature from the Mississippi Board of Health to the Department of Natural Resources. Administration of the program was assigned to the Bureau of Pollution Control, and a new division, the Solid/Hazardous Waste Division, was added to the bureau.

In July, 1985, the Bureau of Pollution Control split its Water Division into two divisions: the Surface Water Division and the Groundwater Division. The Solid/Hazardous Waste Division was also eliminated and incorporated into the responsibilities of the Groundwater Division.<sup>1</sup> Two years later, in 1987, the Groundwater Division split into two divisions: the Groundwater & Solid Waste Division and the Hazardous Waste Division. Consequently, at this point in time, the Bureau of Pollution Control consisted of the Air Division, Surface Water Division, Groundwater & Solid Waste Division, Hazardous Waste Division, and Field Services Division.

Effective July 1, 1989, the Governor's Reorganization Plan changed the name of the Commission on Natural Resources to the Commission on Environmental Quality, and the Department of Natural Resources became known as the Department of Environmental Quality.

In July, 1997, the Bureau of Pollution Control (now called the Office of Pollution Control) underwent its most extensive internal reorganization in its history. Major functions of the existing divisions were transferred to two new divisions: the Environmental Permits Division and the Environmental Compliance & Enforcement Division. The five existing divisions - Air, Surface Water, Groundwater & Solid Waste, Hazardous Waste, and Field Services - remained in existence, but in most cases with revised roles.

In 2003, the Groundwater & Solid Waste Division and the Hazardous Waste Division merged into one division called the Groundwater Assessment & Remediation Division. This change gave the Office of Pollution Control its latest and current organizational structure, consisting of six primary divisions: Air Division, Surface Water Division, Groundwater Assessment & Remediation Division, Environmental Permits Division, Environmental Compliance & Enforcement Division, and Field Services Division.<sup>2</sup>

Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup>During this period of the agency, correspondence can be found with various other names for these divisions, such as, the Groundwater Protection Branch, the Surface Water Quality Branch, the Air Quality Division, etc. Some inconsistencies existed as to whether to call the various divisional units branches or divisions, although eventually the term 'Division' prevailed, with the term "Branch" relegated to lower organizational units.

<sup>2</sup>Two other relatively small divisions of the agency have not been mentioned, but have existed in one form or another for several decades. The division currently known as the Data Integration Division supports the other office divisions in computer and data services, while the Emergency Services Division responds to environmental incidents such as train derailments, chemical spills on state and interstate highways, chemical explosions, natural disasters, etc.