



**State Water Plan Update  
Delaware Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting**

April 12, 2022  
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.  
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Kelly Anderson	James McCarthy
Mark Bowen	Susan Myerov
Becky Bradley	Chad Pindar
Carol Collier	Jane Rowan
Kate Harper	Dean Ritter
Irvil Kear	Eliza Walbridge
Gary Kribbs	Nathan Walker

**Committee Members Not in Attendance:**

Ed Boscola	Bill Royer
Patrice Dume	Peter Rykard
Andrew Frankenfield	Elaine Paul Schaefer
Christopher Norris	Christopher Uhland
Mark Nemitz	

**Others in Attendance:**

Kristina Peacock-Jones – DEP	Monica Gould – Strategic Consulting Partners
James Horton – DEP	Bob Whitmore – Strategic Consulting Partners
Mike Hill – DEP	
Brian Chalfant – DEP	

**Visitors:**

None

**Welcome**

James Horton, DEP, welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained the meeting was being recorded, and provided helpful hints on the use of the technology. Chad Pindar, Chair, welcomed all committee members to the meeting. Attendance was recorded through the online participants' log.

**Meeting Summary**

The meeting summary of the January 11, 2022, meeting was approved on an Eliza Walbridge / Carol Collier motion.

## **Public Comment**

Chair Pindar opened the meeting for public comment. An opportunity to express comments verbally or in the chat box was offered. There was no public comment.

## **DEP Update**

Kristina Peacock-Jones presented the DEP update.

The USGS Water Use Data and Research (WUDR) grant data sharing project involving data sharing between agencies (SRBC, DRBC, and USGS) is operational.

The three draft Critical Area Resource Plans (CARPs) are progressing well. The draft Back Creek CARP is complete and has been shared with the Ohio regional committee; the draft Laurel Hill CARP will be shared at a later date. The draft Marsh and Rock Creek Watersheds CARP is still under DEP review and will be shared with the committee when the review is completed. Once the draft CARPs have been reviewed by their respective committee and approved by DEP with any additional edits, they will be sent to a list of stakeholders and planning officials within their watershed for review and comment. Additionally, DEP will host a public hearing specifically to consider the CARP and solicit comments from the public prior to the vote for recommendation. Contingent on not having any edits as a result of the comment period and public testimony, the CARPs will then return to their regional committees to vote on recommendation to the statewide committee.

The final State Water Plan Update report is currently in the process of being drafted by DEP it will include regional components, work group products, an assessment of progress since the last plan update, and a strategic plan going forward. We anticipate sharing this draft with the statewide committee at their May meeting before making the report available for public comment as required by Act 220.

The State Water Plan Atlas from 2009 is being developed into a StoryMap as a Digital Atlas.

A public hearing to solicit comment from interested persons on the regional components was held on March 11, 2022. No public testimony was received from the Delaware region and only one oral testimony was received, and that testimony was from the Ohio region. A transcript of the testimony will soon be available for committee members to review.

The tenth statewide committee meeting was held on March 16, 2022. The eleventh meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2022.

A discussion was held by committee members on the importance of gaining public input on the State Water Plan and how the next public input opportunities could be promoted. Ideas presented included:

- Send a link of the hearing to state associations
  - Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors (PSAT)

- The Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs
- Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association (PMAA)
- County planning commissions
- Watershed associations
- County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP)
- Pennsylvania based planning associations
- Civil engineering professional organizations
- Environmental nonprofit organizations

Kate Harper commented that Pennsylvania will be electing a new Governor who will take office next year. To preserve the hard work of the committees it is important to gain public support for the State Water Plan. Kristina will coordinate with the DEP Office of Communications for expanded social media engagement when additional public input opportunities are available.

### **Regional Water Resources Committee Materials**

Delaware committee members have received the latest version of the regional components for the State Water Plan. Kate Harper and Mark Bowen suggested two slight revisions to the uniqueness of the region section. The two revisions were approved on a Kate Harper / Jim McCarthy motion. Becky Badley suggested an additional revision to the stormwater section to include wording on nature-based solutions and this was accepted on a Kate Harper / Eliza Walbridge motion. A third revision was proposed to amend the bullet on the Philadelphia port in the region's uniqueness section. The revision was approved on a Jane Rowan / Kelly Anderson motion.

A Jim McCarthy / Mark Bowen motion was approved to accept the Delaware Regional Components for the PA State Water Plan as presented with the changes discussed and approved. There were no opposing votes or abstentions from voting. Ed Boscola was unable to attend the meeting but had sent James Horton a message that he approved accepting the region's components.

The Delaware Regional Water Resources Committee Material with all approved changes follows.

### **Delaware Regional Committee**

#### **Specific Regional Priorities**

The Delaware region is the most populous region with [over 5.5 million \(43% of Pennsylvania's population\) people calling it home and](#) contains the only estuary in the state, which runs alongside Philadelphia. The large and growing population is going to require holistic coordination between all users to ensure the availability and quality of water as well as addressing stormwater and flooding. These varying and complex needs are partly addressed by entities like the Delaware River Basin Commission and the National Estuaries program but a unified approach to land use and water management is a critical piece of the puzzle.

## Strengthen the Link Between Land Use and Water Resources Management

Linking land use decisions and water resources management to sustain and enhance the quality of life in the Delaware River basin is a top priority of the committee. The development and distribution of water resource information and data will help strengthen the link between land use, soil, and water resources management among multiple stakeholders. These educational initiatives would improve how water resources management, soil and vegetation conservation, flood controls, stormwater management, and sewage management relate to land use decisions, infrastructure funding, construction decisions, and grant decisions. The goal of these efforts is to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance the quality, quantity, and availability of clean, sustainable water supplies for the people, businesses, and ecological needs of the commonwealth.

## Regional Planning and Land Use Coordination and Collaboration

*“Think regionally and act locally”* is a priority for the committee. The committee’s solutions to the region’s water issues focus on developing regional coordination and planning to address stormwater management, climate change, water quality, water availability, water diversion, aquifers, healthy soils and vegetation, protecting fish and wildlife habitats, and protecting recreation areas. Solutions are developed through regional planning efforts, education and outreach with policy makers and the community, along with adequate funding. Water planning should be considered on a holistic watershed basis considering both droughts and floods. A One Water concept can further educate the community and increase collaboration among stakeholders for integrated water resources planning. Growth in rural, urban, and suburban areas continues to place stress on water infrastructure; replacement and retrofitting of existing infrastructure and development of new infrastructure can be a challenge in both urban and suburban communities. Larger scale coordination efforts between local, state, and federal entities can help ensure more of the region’s needs are being accounted for during the planning phase and available resources can be maximized.

## Region’s Uniqueness

What are the Delaware region’s unique characteristics that are important considerations in the state’s water planning?

- This is the most populated region in the commonwealth and features a diverse population living in urban, suburban, and rural locations.
- The Delaware region has a large amount of impervious surfaces, leading to a greater potential for polluted runoff.
- The region boasts abundant and varied natural and recreational resources.
- The main stem of the Delaware River remains undammed.
- The tidal Delaware region is the second largest in the country in terms of power production.
- The Delaware basin discharges into the Atlantic Ocean via the Delaware Estuary, which is comprised of a unique ecosystem and a variety of stakeholders, including federal programs like the National Estuary Program, water suppliers, and industrial

users. This also means that tidal influences are a consideration in planning efforts for the basin.

- The basin is challenged by the demands of four states and multiple jurisdictions. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court entered a Decree that established certain rights and obligations for New York City and New Jersey concerning diversions of water out of the Delaware River Basin. Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and New York City are all parties to the Decree.
- The Delaware River Basin Commission plays a significant role in the management of water resources in the basin.
- County planning commissions play a significant role in land use and should be part of the linkage between land use and water resources.
- Philadelphia's port complex is one of the largest freshwater ports and is an economic hub of great value to the region.

### Stormwater and Flood Management

What are the region's concerns and recommendations for stormwater and flood management to preserve water quality?

- Increased flooding can occur when floodplains are saturated by repeated storms, as well as during acute high intensity events.
- Stormwater management infrastructure often lacks proper maintenance, especially aging infrastructure.
- Strengthen local efforts, regional planning, and watershed-scale planning of water resources to support and enhance recommendations and requirements laid out in the latest Department of Environmental Protection's Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual including an emphasis on nature-based stormwater control measures.
- State authorities should ensure adequate funding for Act 167 plans.
- Regional authorities should ensure that Act 167 plans and resulting model ordinances do not propose to alleviate flooding on tributaries at the expense of main-stem flooding in accordance with the act's provisions.
- Stakeholders should continue to actively support source water projects that minimize impacts downstream. It's vital that the connection between potential sources for pollution upstream and resultant water quality downstream are understood by the public.
- Water should be considered from a holistic perspective as with the "One Water" movement.
- Storm surge may become an issue in the lower Delaware River as winds and long fetches draw higher waters upstream into the Delaware Estuary Coastal Zone.
- Schuylkill headwaters have coal mine refuse piles that need to be properly managed or removed to minimize the potential for coal tailings runoff into the system.
- Encourage projects that enhance stormwater management on previously developed land.

- Educate the public about stormwater impacts, including the difference between localized flooding versus regional flooding.

### Climate Change Adaptation for Water Resources

How are water resources within the region being impacted by climate change and what could we do to adapt?

- Encourage regional authorities to assess the ability of aging infrastructure to handle high-intensity storm events, which are increasingly likely to occur in face of a changing climate, and implement infrastructure maintenance, as necessary, to mitigate flooding impacts.
- There is an increased risk that changing rainfall patterns and increasing temperature will likely lower the water table and damage upper soil layers; as a result, we must continue to promote healthy soil and groundwater infiltration to maintain aquifers and manage reservoir systems to abate these potential effects on water quality and quantity. Healthy soils absorb more water and are critical to reducing runoff and mitigating the effects of drought.
- Encourage stakeholders to mitigate impacts of sea-level rise, including the impact on port facilities' economic benefit provided to the region, and protect drinking water sources and infrastructure from salt front intrusion in the Delaware Estuary.
- Encourage development of additional scenario models so municipalities can proactively plan for potential outcomes of climate change, which is resulting in significant amounts of riverine and localized flooding. Promote data showing changes in rain frequency and intensity and focus on climate resiliency. Recognize that the increased precipitation and storm frequency will have effects on land use planning.
- Stakeholders should make use of all potential bodies of research and resources such as the Delaware Advisory Committee on Climate Change, which recently formed to develop ideas and tools.
- Climate change can have a number of water quality impacts including thermal impacts affecting dissolved oxygen and water use designations, an increase in both terrestrial and aquatic invasive species, increased erosion due to higher intensity storms resulting in higher turbidity, and changes in vegetation types affecting stream buffers.

### Comments in the Chat

- Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin, the Philadelphia Metro Section of the American Water Resources Association, the PA Section of the AWRA.
- I'm happy to connect you to the County Planning Director's Association and County Commissioners Association – Becky Bradley.
- Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed is very effective in messaging to its members across the basin.
- I can make the connection to CDRW – Susan Myerov.

- WeConserve.org is the PA land trust association which has many watershed groups as members.
- Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers; PA Department of Environmental Protection; Delaware River Basin Commission; William Penn Foundation; The National Estuary Program in the Delaware River Estuary – Partnership for the Delaware Estuary – Jane Rowan.
- [https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/library/documents/BasinPlan\\_Sept04.pdf](https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/library/documents/BasinPlan_Sept04.pdf)
- Example of a social marketing campaign graphic in the Chesapeake Bay asking the public to reduce lawn fertilizers and subsequent water quality degradation
- Integrated green and gray solutions use naturally occurring processes to bind and convert nutrient-rich water, suspended solids, and trace metals. Construct nature-based solutions to manage water quantity and quality to improve biodiversity, polish stormwater and enhance aesthetics and other multiple benefits.
- <https://www.timesherald.com/2022/04/01/rep-webster-pennsylvania-must-do-better-to-address-stormwater-flooding/> - Rep. Webster: Pennsylvania must do better to address stormwater flooding. We are now less than 100 days away from the 2022 hurricane season and Pennsylvania is no more prepared for the onslaught of storms and flooding we are sure to see this summer than we were before.
- <https://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/billinfo/billinfo.cfm?syear=2021&sind=0&body=H&type=R&bn=0170> – Bill Information
- Philadelphia’s port is a large freshwater port that serves as an economic hub of great value and presents challenges to water resources that should continue to be balanced for the benefit of the commonwealth and Delaware Estuary.
- Rachel Carson said: The real wealth of the Nation lies in the resources of the earth soil, water, forests, minerals, and wildlife. To utilize them for present needs while ensuring their preservation for future generations requires a delicately balanced and continuing program, based on the most extensive research.
- <https://www.philaport.com/wolf-administration-announces-additional-246-million-investment-at-port-of-philadelphia/>
- [https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/WMAC/031621/thompson\\_DRB\\_PGprojections.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/drbc/library/documents/WMAC/031621/thompson_DRB_PGprojections.pdf)

### **Next Steps**

Chair Pindar thanked all committee members for their attendance, participation, and ideas.

James Horton, DEP, provided an overview of the plan’s next steps.

- The approved regional committee documents will be provided to the statewide committee at the May 11 meeting.
- Public comment will be received in July.
- The statewide committee will finalize the plan and recommend to the Secretary of DEP for approval in September.

- The updated State Water Plan will be published by January 2023.
- Delaware regional committee meetings are scheduled for the following dates in 2022:
  - A July meeting is not scheduled at this time.
  - October 11 – The October meeting will be held as an in-person meeting within the region.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 on a Kate Harper / Mark Bowen motion.

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