



State Water Plan Update Lower Susquehanna Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

January 13, 2021
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members in Attendance:

Andrea Blosser	Sean Kenny
Felicia Dell	Mike Kyle
Tyler Erb	Joe McNally
Jennifer Fetter	George Pomeroy
Lincoln Kauffman	Justin Spangler
Andrew Gavin	Warren Weaver
Jeff Hines	Jenni Woodworth

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Silis Chamberlin	Craig Robertson
Andrea Danucalov	Byron Ross
Ruth Hocker	Thomas Wilson

Others in Attendance:

Kristina Peacock-Jones - DEP	Monica Gould - Strategic Consulting Partners
Mark Matlock - DEP	Bob Whitmore - Strategic Consulting Partners
Mike Hill - DEP	
James Horton - DEP	
Brian Chalfont - DEP	
Summer Kunkel - DEP	

Visitors:

Josie Gaskey
Curtis Schreffler

Welcome

Mark Matlock, DEP, welcomed everyone to the meeting, explained the meeting was being recorded, and provided helpful hints on the use of the technology. Felicia Dell, Chair of the committee, welcomed committee members to the meeting and completed a roll call for attendance.

Public Comment

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

Minutes

The minutes of the October 14, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved on a Jeff Hines / Mike Kyle motion.

DEP Update

Mark Matlock, DEP, provided an update on DEP activities. The USGS Water Use Data and Research (WUDR) Grants data sharing projects are progressing well. The project for improving Chapter 110 data input is complete and should go live during the first quarter of 2021. The project involving data sharing between agencies (SRBC, DRBC, and USGS) has been initiated with the IT architecture and data sharing protocols in place. Testing of the data sharing has begun and the project should be fully operational during the first quarter of 2021.

Another one of our data sharing tools, Power BI, has been completed. This data sharing tool will display water use data to the public in a more user-friendly way.

A virtual public hearing was conducted on January 6, 2021 to solicit comments from interested persons on water resources planning issues related to the preparation of the regional component of the State water plan. Written testimony is being accepted until January 20, 2021 at RA-StateWaterPlan@pa.gov. DEP staff will be summarizing the public hearing comments and will provide this information to committee members as soon as completed.

Regional Components and Action Plans

The DEP staff presented summarized points from previous committee meetings on the region's priorities, uniqueness, stormwater management, climate change, and regional projects showcase. The committee discussed the summarized points and provided feedback, recommended changes, and additional ideas. The discussion produced the following key points for the committee's future discussions.

Specific Regional Priorities

1. Climate resiliency, data collection and use are cross cutting themes impacting all water issues and priorities
2. Identify at risk water resources and protect potential "at risk" water resources. Use data to identify priorities, emerging contaminants, water quality, water quantity, flooding issues, water quantity, and water quality. Provide education and descriptions on factors to distinguish the reasons why they are potentially at risk. This region has a significant number of impaired streams (approximately 3,400 miles,

20% of total stream miles) caused by various point and nonpoint sources of pollution. A major priority of this committee is to reduce or prevent this pollution and to focus added attention on “at-risk” water resources. It will be necessary to identify, protect and restore key, at-risk, water resources, minimize the effect of various land-use activities on ground and surface water resources and implement comprehensive pollution prevention measures to decrease nutrient and sediment loading.

3. Reduce and prevent point and non-point source pollution with a focus on impaired streams.
4. Education and outreach, support and advocate for resources, public and stakeholder support.

Region’s Uniqueness - What are the Lower Susquehanna region’s unique characteristics that are important considerations in the state water planning?

- The Susquehanna River itself is a unique feature of the region though it is shared with the Upper/Middle region.
- The region has experienced much growth and development and plays host to over 90 logistics centers. Building footprints impact pervious area effecting stormwater runoff. Older buildings do not consider stormwater. Additional dredging is required to accommodate these logistic centers.
- There is a need to preserve open space and agriculture land.
- Highest concentration of agricultural land uses in the state.
- The Susquehanna river feeds into the broader Chesapeake Bay watershed. Three runs of the river dams are within the region and used for power production.
- Gateway into Maryland highlights a lot of the water quality goals and differences that need to be met and adds additional pressure for compliance.
- York and Lancaster Counties are two of the agricultural heavy counties in the state and creates additional focus.
- Home to one of the fastest growing populations in PA, Lancaster is the fastest growing in raw numbers and Cumberland is the fastest growing per capita. <https://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/Data/Visualizations>
- Long list of historical impacts to the region, legacy sediments, mill dams, water resource impairments linked to the past land uses.
- Second largest concentration of manufacturing in Pennsylvania. Manufacturing utilizes more water consumption than warehousing. Depending where the products come from and where they go will impact other areas throughout the region.
- National Heritage Area - Recreational areas in lower York and Lancaster Counties. https://www.bayjournal.com/news/people/new-national-heritage-area-to-highlight-susquehanna/article_ec6491fb-ac31-5f53-8f9b-33f9d5dc01a8.html
- Amish concentration in Lancaster and York counties prefer traditional ways of communication.

Stormwater and Flood Management - What are the region's priorities for stormwater and flood management and preserving water quality?

- Funding for counties to complete Act 167 plans.

- Develop regional planning or watershed-scale planning of water resources, stop stormwater at the source and enhance groundwater recharge, and work toward a more strategic approach.
- Change in storm event frequencies, duration, and return frequencies for BMP (storm water control measures are new terms) design standards.
- More complete water quality monitoring network to drive strategic investment in BMPs.
- Assess aging infrastructure for high-frequency storm events. Inventory our stormwater assets and make sure all are located and who the owners are.
- Restoration of floodplains, removal of legacy sediment.
- Water quality management through better data gathering and coordination of data sharing. A more improved water quality monitoring system throughout the watershed in strategic locations. Make sure we are monitoring for what we are being graded on.
- 70% of development is occurring outside of MS4 designated areas; stormwater management areas should not be based on population. We can change how we manage the areas at the local level.
- Stormwater compliance at the local level. Stormwater ordinances implemented at the local level will get a better handle on stormwater management.
- Assess the performance of the stormwater infrastructure through monitoring and inspection.

Climate Change Adaptation for Water Resources

What are the impacts of climate the region is experiencing now and how do we manage these events in the future?

- With the potential for increased storm frequency and intensity, develop new methods that allow storms to be handled to reduce damage and environmental impact.
- Better inform stakeholders on the implications of flash flooding and decreased groundwater recharge. Increasing temperatures dry out the soil faster and create different challenges for groundwater recharge. Micro droughts may become more prevalent, could increase localized flooding.
- Prepare a map of areas most likely to be affected by climate change, show the nature of those impacts.
- More strategic approach to floodplain restoration projects, find the benefit to mitigate flooding.
- Plan for resiliency with an amplified drought of record to provide protection and conservation.
- Enhance drought management for reservoir systems for a changing climate.
- Flooding is the top hazard municipalities are mitigating.
- Pennsylvania is trending wetter and warmer with more frequent, intense, short-duration events that are increasing flooding.
- Smaller systems and on-lot water wells are not preparing for water quantity needs.
- Prepare modeling visuals to show potential climate impacts.
- Coordination between agencies (state, federal, and local) and non-government organizations (NGOs) to address climate change. Will help leverage resources to provide a solution and reduce the impacts of climate change.

- Adaptation strategies to help manage flooding and droughts from severe weather events.
- Floodplain management ordinance compliance at the local level. Resources are not always available and education and outreach at the local level can go a long way. Maintain wetlands.
- Promote economic incentives so we are more proactive vs. reactive.
- Increased surface water temperatures impact the ecosystem and public water supply and can lead to Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) and various water treatment challenges. This can impact water supply, water quality, and habitat destruction.

Regional Projects Showcase

- The Conewago Creek Initiative - The Conewago Watershed Community has envisioned a future that establishes the restored Conewago and its tributaries as a centerpiece of pride and a treasured asset in a rural landscape. This vision includes a strong agricultural community and productive farmland, community recreation areas and vibrant, well planned communities. Pristine landscapes will be protected while providing sustainable uses of natural resources, clean water and streams, and educational opportunities for generations to come.
- Big Spring Run Restoration Project - The Big Spring Run Floodplain Restoration Project in Willow Street, PA (Lancaster County) has been intensively monitored for water quality/biological/ecological responses of an ecosystem when the legacy sediment impairment has been removed. Long term pre/post relationships have been conducted by independent researchers & government agencies and published in peer reviewed journal articles.
- Water Monitoring Network York County - A combined effort between The York County Conservation District and USGS several monitoring wells were combined into a single network that provides 24/7 water quality data for nitrate, phosphorus and sediment accounting for 90% of the runoff from York County.
- York County IWRP Tool: www.paiwrp.com
- Lancaster Clean Water Partners – Collaboration network: <https://lancastercleanwaterpartners.com/>
- Creation of the National Heritage Area (Susquehanna Heritage Area): <https://www.susquehannaheritage.org/>
- Capital Region Water to showcase the land protection efforts they completed around Dehart Dam in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy, Fort Indiantown Gap, and the Game Commission: <https://capitalregionwater.com/conservingdehart/>
- Stormwater Authority formation.
- Burd Run - a small educational project adjacent to campus: https://www.ship.edu/academics/colleges/cas/programs/geo-ess/geo_student_resources/burd-run-watershed/

Resources from the Chat

- State Water plan resource account: RA-StateWaterPlan@pa.gov

- State population changes: <https://pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/Data/Visualizations>
- <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=17EpZQ-jBPpPaPhdPAy--Ouqp-mI&ll=40.835057702821295%2C-78.06982745727544&z=8>
- Lancaster Clean Water Partners: <https://lancastercleanwaterpartners.com/>
- Capital Region Water land protection efforts around Dehart Dam in collaboration with the Nature Conservancy, Fort Indiantown Gap and the Game Commission: <https://capitalregionwater.com/conservingdehart/>
- <https://www.susquehannaheritage.org/>
- https://www.ship.edu/academics/colleges/cas/programs/geo-ess/geo_student_resources/burd-run-watershed/

Next Steps

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

Mark Matlock, DEP staff, provided an overview of the committee's future work.

- Summary notes from today's discussion will be provided to committee members.
- Statewide Committee will be meeting on January 21, 2021.
- At the next regional committee meeting the committee must elect/re-elect the committee chair and vice-chair as required by the committee's bylaws and Act 220.
- The next Lower Susquehanna Regional meeting will be held on April 14, 2021. At this meeting DEP staff are planning to share a story map of water projects completed or in operation since the last State Water Plan update.

The next meeting of the Lower Susquehanna Regional Committee will be held on April 14, 2021. It will be a virtual meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am by Chair Dell.