



**State Water Plan Update
Upper Middle Susquehanna Water Resources Regional Committee
Meeting**

October 27, 2022
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members in Attendance:

Stephen Barondeau	Rhonda Manning
Patrick Burke	Shannon Rossman
Jared Dressler	Robert Shannon
Andrew Gavin	Jerry Walls
Todd Giddings	Doug Weikel
Andrew Gutshall	Jennifer Whisner
Dennis Hameister	Cathy Yeakel
Kurt Hausammann	

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Russell James	Wendy Walter
Beth Kern	Jim Weaver
Tony Maury	

Others in Attendance:

James Horton – DEP	Bob Whitmore - Strategic Consulting Partners
Susan Weaver - DEP	
Mike Hill – 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. Shannon Rossman, Committee Chair, welcomed committee members to the meeting and completed a roll call for attendance.

Public Comment

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

Meeting Summary

The meeting summary of the April 28, 2022, meeting was approved on a Doug Weikel / Dennis Hameister motion.

DEP State Water Plan Update

Susan Weaver provided an update of what DEP is working on regarding the State Water Plan Update.

The three draft Critical Area Resource Plans (CARPs) are progressing. The draft Back Creek CARP is complete and has been shared with the Ohio regional committee; it was approved by the committee to enter public comment and the 45-day agency review phase followed by a hearing to receive testimony from the public. This review time has ended, DEP staff and the Critical Area Advisory Committee have addressed the comments and suggested edits and anticipate sharing this CARP along with a comment/response document with the Ohio regional committee later this month. The draft Laurel Hill CARP will be shared at a later date. The Marsh and Rock Creek CARP is still under review, but we anticipate it will be released shortly. 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 public hearings specifically to consider each CARP and solicit comments from the public prior to the vote for recommendation. Once the CARPs have been edited in accordance with public and planning agency feedback, the CARPs will return to their regional committees to vote on their recommendation to the statewide committee.

The final State Water Plan Update report has been drafted and was shared with the public in accordance with Act 220 requirements. This document was concurrently reviewed by members of the statewide committee's Final Report Workgroup who submitted edits of their own. Both a comment/response document and the final report are currently being internally reviewed by DEP staff and will be shared with the statewide committee at their November 16 meeting. The final report includes regional components, work group products, an assessment of progress since the last plan update, and a strategic plan going forward. You have received a link to the draft document shortly after the public comment period went active on August 20. We will be discussing this document with you today.

The draft Marsh and Rock Creek CARP has been updated and is being reviewed by DEP staff. The CARP should be available for the committee to review in spring of 2023.

The State Water Plan Atlas from 2009 has been developed into a StoryMap as a Digital Atlas. We plan to share this with you today.

The thirteenth statewide committee meeting was held on October 19th. The next meeting is scheduled for November 16.

Debrief on the State Water Plan Process

Committee members were asked to provide feedback on the two-year process to develop the current draft state water plan and the Upper Middle Susquehanna Regional priorities. Committee members provided the following comments:

- Process for developing the plan has gone well
- Would like to meet in person, maybe once a year
- There needs to be a crossover working relationship with other state agencies and conservation districts on the plan implementation.
- Water quality considerations must be paramount in the implementation plan
- The committee members worked well together
- Commend DEP for coordinating the process to develop the plan
- Should enhance the coordination between the regional committees and the statewide committee
- A visual Gantt chart or flow chart to track progress would be helpful.

Story Map – Water Atlas

Mike Hill, DEP Geologist, presented the Digital Water Atlas StoryMap. In 2009 a coffee table book was developed describing the State Water Plan and current information. The original book has been updated into a digital StoryMap. The current digital version contains much of the original coffee table book information with updated information and maps that can be updated in real time.

The link for the digital water atlas follows:

[The Digital Water Atlas \(arcgis.com\)](http://arcgis.com)

The digital water atlas has the following topical tabs for the visitor's use:

- Introduction
- Regional committees and planning regions
- Map tour
- Watershed and subbasins, how watershed is delineated
- Water resources – ground water, and drinking water
- Climate – climate change data, average annual precipitation
- Drought data
- Water use and planning
- Recreation and managed lands
- Population changes
- Geology of the regions
- Stormwater and flooding
- Land cover

Committee members feedback on the digital story map:

- Digital story map will be great for universities to use as a teaching tool

- Good aggregate of data from different sources
- Links to additional information is great
- Can the digital story map be accessible both by desktop and mobile applications?

Final Report Overview

Committee members were asked to provide feedback on the draft State Water Plan report they have received. Several sections of the draft have been enhanced since the draft committee members reviewed. These sections are the executive summary and path forward. Committee members feedback on the current draft included:

- Like the report
- A list of references to legislation could be added as an appendix
- A list of acronyms at the beginning of the report would be helpful

Path Forward

The committee discussed the path forward for the state water planning committees and the proposed ideas in the draft State Water Plan. James Horton, DEP, provided the following ideas for committee activities in the path forward.

- Carry on meetings of the regional committees on a regular basis, perhaps twice each year in April and October.
- Phase 1 of the path forward activities will include clarifying and organizing the information contained in the State Water Plan, public outreach, and providing information in the Clean Water Academy.
- Phase 2 of the path forward activities will identify metrics for measuring progress on the initiatives identified in the State Water Plan.
- Phase 3 of the path forward activities will include measuring progress on initiatives.
- It is planned to begin working on the next update to the State Water Plan within three years with the fifth year being the integration of all regional committees and the statewide committee.

Committee members offered the following suggestions for a path forward.

- Like the idea of two meetings per year, reduces the learning curve and can update information as the process moves along
- Involve more local organizations
- Committee members could support local efforts and sending information to local organizations and providing the link to the plan and digital story map
- Educate state elected officials, Representatives and Senators on the plan
- Engage DCED
- Provide training for local officials through the state organizations for each group (PSATS, Borough Association, PMMA, PA Municipal League)
- Outreach to water resources organizations – PA Rural Water, Municipalities, American Water Works
- DEP develop a paper of important talking points about the State Water Plan that could be used locally and regionally – a one page summary document

- Keep the committee engaged
- News organizations should be included in outreach – Spot Light PA
- Colleges and Universities host annual water meetings and conferences

Recruitment for Committee Members

The Upper / Middle Susquehanna Regional Committee currently has two openings for members. Members suggested reaching out to the northern tier counties for possible future members.

- Local government other than county

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 on a Doug Weikel / Jerry Wall motion.