



State Water Plan Update Delaware Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

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

Committee Members in Attendance:

Kelly Anderson	James McCarthy
Ed Boscola	Susan Myerov
Mark Bowen	Mark Nemitz
Becky Bradley	Christopher Norris
Joseph Buczynski	Chad Pindar
Carol Collier	Bill Royer
Andrew Frankenfield	Jane Rowan
Kate Harper	Elaine Paul Schaefer
Irvil Kear	Eliza Walbridge
Gary Kribbs	Nathan Walker

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Patrice Dume
Peter Rykard
Christopher Uhland

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	
Summer Kunkel - DEP	
Brian Chalfont - DEP	

Visitors:

Annie Polkowski
Alex Ridyard
Geoff Reese

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. Chad Pindar,

Committee Chair, welcomed all committee members to the meeting. Attendance was recorded through the online participants' log.

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.

Minutes

The minutes of the October 13, 2020 meeting were unanimously approved as presented on a Irvil Kear / Carol Collier motion.

DEP Update

Kristina Peacock-Jones, 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 6th 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 20th at RA-StateWaterPlan@pa.gov. DEP staff will summarize the comments provided at the public hearing 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. Regional Planning and land use 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, water quality, water availability, water diversion, protection fish and wildlife habitats, and protecting recreation areas. Solutions are developed through regional planning efforts, education and outreach with policy makers and the community and adequate funding. Growth in rural and suburban areas are placing stress on water infrastructure. Decisions are not always made to benefit the entire region. Regional planning can help reduce these issues.

Overarching themes for the committee in water resources planning are climate change, environmental justice, land use decisions, and funding to implement initiatives. These themes provide a lens for developing and implementing solutions to water issues in the region.

- 2. Link land use decisions 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 implementation of water resource initiatives should require decision-makers at local, county, regional, and Commonwealth levels to recognize the link between land use and water resource management. Initiatives should require consideration of water resources management, flood controls, storm water management and sewage management in 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.

Region's Uniqueness

What are the Delaware regions unique characteristics that are important considerations in the state water planning?

- This is the most populated region featuring many diverse modes of living including urban, suburban, and rural populations.
- The water quality of the basin is impacted by the demands of 4 states and multiple jurisdictions.
- The region boasts abundant and varied natural and recreation resources.
- The Delaware has more developed land, more impervious surfaces, more people, and more pollution.
- Urban sprawl in the basin puts pressure on water resources.
- Delaware Estuary
- Tidal withdrawals in the region

Stormwater and Flood Management

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

- Create standards for asset management. Design standards should incorporate changes to the environment.
- There should be regional planning or watershed-scale planning of water resources. Where possible stop stormwater at the source.
- The storm event frequencies, duration and return frequencies for BMPs (Storm Water Control measures is the new term) ought to be updated to accommodate the changing climate.
- Regional authorities should consider adopting a policy that ACT 167 plans do not alleviate flooding on tributaries at the expense of main-stem flooding.
- Stakeholders should improve source water projects impacting downstream use recognizing that agriculture projects have a downstream/upstream connection.
- Build relationships with New Jersey and New York to better coordinate water planning efforts.
- Investigate how industrial and residential growth may impact water quantity and water quality.
- Water should be considered from a holistic perspective as with the "One Water" movement.
- More education of the public about stormwater impact is needed.
- Schuylkill head waters have slush dams that need to be taken care of, so the coal tailings do not flush down the Delaware. Projects that enhance stormwater projects for previously developed land (environmental justice).
- Difference in localized flooding vs. regional flooding that the stormwater authorities are addressing.

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?

- Assess the ability of infrastructure to handle high-intensity storm events.
- Infrastructure maintenance should be conducted to mitigate flooding impacts.
- There is a risk that droughts will impact more deeply and as a result we must promote groundwater infiltration to maintain aquifers and manage reservoir systems to abate these effects. Healthy soil absorbs more water to both reduce runoff and mitigate the effects of drought.
- Mitigate impacts of sea-levels rising; impact on port facilities and the economic benefit provided to the region, and protection of drinking water sources from salt front intrusion.
- Significant areas of flooding and new types of flooding that are affecting watersheds outside of the region - spot flooding – in rivers and streams.
- Develop scenario models so municipalities can proactively plan for potential outcomes of climate change.
- The Delaware [Advisory Committee on Climate Change](#) (ACCC) recently formed to develop tools and ideas.
- Language is important and can dissuade some potential allies or stakeholders from engaging for example some people not comfortable with the term climate change.

Some potential language choices include suggestions include: “climate resiliency” “storms intensifying” “changes in rain frequency and intensity”. The increased precipitation and storm frequency effects land use planning

- Water quality impacts:
 - warming with effect on DO and water use designations,
 - invasive species, increase both terrestrial and aquatic,
 - increased erosion due to higher intense storms resulting in higher turbidity,
 - changes in vegetation type, affecting stream buffers.

Regional Projects Showcase

- Philadelphia - Green Streets Program - A Green Street uses green stormwater infrastructure to capture and manage rain or melting snow (runoff) directly from the street. Green Streets allow runoff to soak into soil, filtering out pollutants like oil, and reduce the amount of stormwater making its way into Philadelphia’s combined sewer pipes, which reduces the combined sewer overflows that degrade waterways.
- Schuylkill Action Network (SAN) - SAN has worked to improve the water resources of the Schuylkill River watershed by transcending regulatory and jurisdictional boundaries in the strategic implementation of partnership-based protection measures. SAN has supported projects ranging from the installation of stormwater BMPs to the promotion of education and outreach activities aimed at connecting residents to water quality concerns and solutions.
- Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI) - Involved over 60 NGO’s for nutrient and sediment reduction working with agriculture and suburban landowners. Works with local communities for strengthening ordinances. Over 100 million in funding.
- Schuylkill Headwaters Association - has completed the Porter Project (\$2.1 million) on a section of the Schuylkill River. It was an awesome task that is now completed. We are presently seeking funds to address the Kaska Slush Dam further up-river. Both projects relate to the coal silt that flowed down stream because of the coal mining industry in the county.
- The Delaware River Program - is dedicated to restoring the fish and wildlife habitats and water quality of the Delaware River and its tributaries. The Delaware River Program currently awards grants through two competitive funding opportunities - the Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund and Delaware River Restoration Fund. <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program>
- The Schuylkill River Restoration Fund grants <https://schuylkillriver.org/conservation/the-restoration-fund/>
- Growing Greener grants
- Stormwater Authorities - Local municipalities charging fees to implement stormwater projects. Additionally, communities have had to put together pollution reduction plans to reduce 10% of pollution. PWEA is sponsoring Wilkes University to provide a clearinghouse of resources to municipalities that want to know more about what it would take to develop a stormwater authority.

- The creation of the Coalition for the Delaware River Watersheds (CDRW) - an umbrella group for NGOs - very influential in obtaining the US Fish & Wildlife funding. over 150 NGOs in the basin, formed in 2012. Advocating for federal funding for the Basin. <http://www.delriverwatershed.org/>
- Philadelphia Stormwater Regulations <https://www.pwdplanreview.org/manual/chapter-1/1.2-stormwater-regulations/>
- DRBC's Special Protection Waters Program for the main stem.
- DRBC - program and regulations for cleaning up PCBs and reducing fish consumption advisories
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Revised Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, updated in 2019 <https://www.delawareestuary.org/our-plan-2/>
- The Alternative to a TMDL for the Wissahickon Creek involving multiple municipalities
- Significant increase in monitoring and modeling from DRBC, USGS, ANS, Stroud and other partners
- Southeastern Pennsylvania Ground Water Protected Area GWPA Map <https://evankwityn.shinyapps.io/SEPA-GWPA/>
- DRBC's Water Audit Program <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/programs/supply/water-audit-program.html>
- Wastewater projects, sewer separation projects, CSO long-term control plans, treatment upgrades.
- Sanofi Pasteur advance wastewater treatment project in the headwaters of the Broadhead Creek watershed.
- Falls township in Bucks county, waste management leachate system
- There is a current plan underway among 15 municipal governments in the Wissahickon Creek to meet TMDL requirements for the Wissahickon Creek Watershed for DEP and EPA that is close to acceptance. that might be a project to include. I think DEP SE office should have details.
- Source Water Assessment Summaries are available online: <http://www.depgreenport.state.pa.us/elibrary/GetFolder?FolderID=4490>
- Fracking ban
- Flood Mitigation projects – Army Corps Prompton flood control structure – flood control arena Chester County that have been rehabilitated or getting ready to, old NRCS structures.
- Potable water storage — Aqua PA may have some reservoirs
- Wissahickon Act 167 planning, Chester Water Resource Authority working on Act 167 update
- <https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Darby-Cobbs-Watershed-Assessment/>
- Agriculture success stories – SAN has agricultural subgroup
- Kutztown municipal water system reduced levels of nitrogen in their groundwater

- NRCS Awards \$2.2 Million To Berks Conservation District to Install Agricultural Best Management Practices
- <http://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2020/04/nrcs-awards-22-million-to-berks-county.html>
- <https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Factsheets/Pennsylvania-Factsheets/>

Resources provided in the chat

- DRBC's 2019 State of the Basin;
<https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/about/public/SOTB2019.html>
- DELEP's TREB: <https://www.delawareestuary.org/data-and-reports/state-of-the-estuary-report/>
- <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/delaware-river-program>
- <https://schuylkillriver.org/conservation/the-restoration-fund/>
- Philadelphia's Stormwater Regulations
<https://www.pwdplanreview.org/manual/chapter-1/1.2-stormwater-regulations/>
- Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed - The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed represents non-governmental organizations working throughout the northeast to restore and protect the Delaware River Watershed.
www.delriverwatershed.org
- Partnership for the Delaware Estuary Revised Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, updated in 2019 <https://www.delawareestuary.org/our-plan-2/>
- <https://evankwityn.shinyapps.io/SEPA-GWPA/>
- <https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/programs/supply/water-audit-program.html>
- Source Water Assessment Summaries are available online:
<http://www.depgreenport.state.pa.us/elibrary/GetFolder?FolderID=4490>
- <https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Darby-Cobbs-Watershed-Assessment/>
- <http://paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com/2020/04/nrcs-awards-22-million-to-berks-county.html>
- <https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Missions/Factsheets/Pennsylvania-Factsheets/>
- Philadelphia Water Department's website summarizing our LTCU, Green Stormwater Management efforts, Climate Change Adaptation Program, Watershed Protection, and Resource Recovery and Energy Management Programs <https://www.phila.gov/water/sustainability/Pages/default.aspx>
- <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-actions-protect-and-restore-delaware-river-basin>

Next Steps

Chair Pindar 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 and March 17, 2021.
- At the next regional committee meeting the committee must elect/re-elect the Committee chair and Vice-Chair as required by the Committee Bylaws and Act 220.
- The next Delaware Regional meeting will be held on April 13, 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 Delaware Regional Committee will be held on April 13, 2021. It will be a virtual meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 am on a Kate Harper / Becky Bradley motion.