



State Water Plan Update Lower Susquehanna Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

April 13, 2022
9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Committee Members in Attendance:

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

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Andrea Danucalov	Byron Ross
Tyler Erb	Thomas Wilson
Craig Robertson	

Others in Attendance:

James Horton – DEP	Monica Gould - Strategic Consulting Partners
Kristina Peacock-Jones	Bob Whitmore - Strategic Consulting Partners
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. Chair Felicia Dell also welcomed all members to the meeting and a roll call was completed.

Minutes

The meeting summary of the January 12, 2022, meeting was approved on an Andy Gavin / Mike Kyle motion.

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.

DEP Update

Kristina Peacock-Jones provided an update of what DEP is working on regarding the State Water Plan 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 later. The draft Marsh and Rock Creek Watersheds CARP is also under review and will be shared with the Potomac regional 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 because 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. A transcript of the hearing is being prepared and will be sent to committee members when completed.

The tenth statewide committee meeting was held on March 16, 2021. The eleventh meeting is scheduled for May 11, 2022.

Regional Priorities and Summary Materials

James Horton shared a cumulative summary of the Lower Susquehanna regional committee work for the past two years. The committee reviewed the document and had no additional comments or changes. The Lower Susquehanna regional component documents were unanimously approved on a Jennifer Fetter / George Pomeroy motion. The regional document follows.

Specific Regional Priorities

The Lower Susquehanna basin is the hydrological gateway to Maryland where the mouth of the river system connects to the Chesapeake Bay. Rapid expansion of logistics centers and a quickly growing population in the region leads to increased risk to waterways. There is a need for the most critical areas to be identified and prioritized to minimize the potential for impact to these resources.

Identify and Target Solutions for Potential Protection Priority Water Resources to Reduce or Prevent Point and Nonpoint Source Pollution with a Focus on Currently Impaired Water Resources

Identify “protection priority” water resources that may be trending towards impairment for any use, through the collection and analysis of data. Priorities may be determined by looking specifically at emerging contaminants, declining water quality and/or quantity, evolving land use impacts, and flooding

issues. Improve the region's protection priority water resources through identified targeted solutions that may include education and outreach, asset management, resource improvement, and others.

Reduce existing point and nonpoint source pollution in the region's significant number of impaired water resources. Focus added attention on currently impaired water resources. Prevent new water pollution throughout the region from all sources. Implement active solutions to reduce pollution by forming public-private partnerships (P3), engaging willing landowners, targeting funding, and others. Broaden support and advocacy for our water resources through enlisting stakeholders, enhancing partnerships, and coordinating efforts. Improved water quality sustains drinking water supplies, preserves a healthy ecosystem that supports recreational use, and enables a viable economy.

Definition of "Protection Priority" - water resources prioritized for protection based on potential threats to water quality, for the purpose of setting long-term priorities for where focused efforts towards restoration, best management practices, and protection would provide the most benefit to the watershed.

Enable Continued Responsible Economic Growth by Ensuring Adequate Water Resources

The challenges associated with this region are water availability, flooding, aging stormwater infrastructure, water quality, and drought. Prioritized resiliency solutions to address increased stormwater and flooding that include restoration and expansion of green infrastructure to capture runoff would be beneficial to the region. Strategies may also include proactively managing land development and land management by expanding programmatic and policy flexibility to watershed boundaries to maximize effectiveness of multi-benefit best management practices. Broad support can be provided to local governments and municipalities through training and model ordinances to manage stormwater and flooding and enlisting the cooperation of non-governmental organizations, watershed groups, and riverkeepers.

Region's Uniqueness

What are the Lower Susquehanna region's unique characteristics that are important considerations in the state's water planning?

- The Susquehanna River is a unique feature of the region, which is shared with the Upper/Middle Susquehanna region.
- The basin is home to one of the [fastest growing populations](#) in Pennsylvania.
- This region has the highest concentration of agricultural land uses in the state, particularly in York and Lancaster Counties. The plain sect communities in Lancaster and York Counties require unique communication strategies.
- Due to the intersection of highways running through the basin and additional cargo shipping coming by land from the recently dredged Delaware ports, the region has experienced much growth and development, resulting in an abundance of logistics centers. This growth and development have facilitated the need to preserve more open space and agricultural land.
- This region hosts a large concentration of manufacturing in Pennsylvania. Manufacturing industries tend to consume more water than logistics and warehousing industries.
- Three large run-of-river hydropower dams exist within the region, as the region is a center for power production. Listed from north to south along the Lower Susquehanna River are the Safe Harbor Dam (1931), Holtwood Dam (1910), and Conowingo Dam (1928).

- There are many historical impacts to the region such as legacy sediments, [mill dams](#), and other water resource impairments linked to past land uses as well as collected sediment from more contemporary dam structures that impact water quality.
- There are [National Heritage Areas](#) in lower York and Lancaster Counties.
- The Susquehanna River contributes one-half of the freshwater flow to the Chesapeake Bay. Being a hydrological gateway into Maryland, the region faces the challenge of coordinating with multiple state entities, stakeholders, legal frameworks, and working to accommodate their differing objectives.

Stormwater and Flood Management

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

- Improvements to stormwater management on a watershed scale could, via groundwater recharge and appropriate direction to surface water sources, increase access to fresh water in higher quantities throughout the region.
- Develop regional or watershed-scale planning of water resources, ensure management of stormwater at the source, enhance groundwater recharge, and work toward a more long-term strategic approach.
- There is a need for regional authorities to assess aging infrastructure for high-frequency storm events through monitoring and inspection. The first step would be to create an inventory of stormwater infrastructure including location and ownership.
- More floodplain restoration and removal of legacy sediment would be beneficial to the region.
- An enhanced water quality monitoring network could drive strategic investment in best management practices. Data sharing coordination could facilitate an enhanced water quality monitoring network throughout the watershed, targeting strategic locations for the most critical metrics.
- Stormwater compliance could be improved at the local level by providing education and outreach and increased financial resources.

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?

- Flooding is the top hazard that municipalities are mitigating in the region. Municipal development of floodplain management ordinances along with providing education and outreach would be beneficial.
- With the potential for increased storm frequency and intensity, encourage enhancement of structural and non-structural strategies to reduce environmental impacts of these storm events.
- Engage stakeholders on the implications of intense rain events, degrading soil health, and increased temperatures and how these conditions not only cause flooding but can also lead to micro-droughts.
- Develop a map of areas most likely to be affected by climate change showing the nature and potential of those impacts.
- Stakeholders should develop a more effective approach to [floodplain restoration](#) projects by emphasizing the benefits of flood mitigation. Some of these strategies may include the removal of obstructions and encroachments such as buildings, legacy sediment or undersized bridges and culverts.

- Drought management for reservoir systems should be enhanced to account for a changing climate and plan for resiliency with an amplified drought of record to facilitate protection and conservation of water resources.
- Encourage continued coordination amongst agencies (state, federal, and local) and non-government organizations to help leverage resources to reduce the impacts of climate change.
- Continue to promote economic incentives in order to be more proactive than reactive, creating long term resiliency. Climate change can cause increased surface water temperatures that can impact the ecosystem (e.g., harmful algal blooms) and destroy habitats, leading to treatment challenges for public water suppliers.

Next Steps

- The approved regional committee documents will be provided to the statewide committee.
- Next statewide committee meeting is Wednesday, May 11.
- Statewide committee will approve the State Water Plan for public review at the July meeting.
- Statewide committee will take a formal vote on the State Water Plan at the September meeting and recommend the Plan to the Secretary for consideration. The Secretary has 90 days to review and provide feedback on the Plan.
- Lower Susquehanna committee meetings are scheduled for the following dates in 2022
 - A July meeting is not scheduled at this time
 - October 12 – The October meeting may potentially be an in-person meeting within the region.
- DEP is developing a plan to continue engaging the regional committees as part of the implementation process of the State Water Plan.

Hearing no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:33 by Chair Felicia Dell.