



State Water Plan Update Potomac Water Resources Regional Committee Meeting

April 14, 2022
1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Virtual Microsoft Teams Meeting

Committee Members in Attendance:

Charles Bennett	Dr. Sarah Principato
Pat Bowling	Brent Ramsey
Mark Guise	Coleen Reamer
Adam McClain	

Committee Members Not in Attendance:

Barry Best	Kevin Moore
Andre Blosser	Pat Naugle
Russell McLucas	Donald Schwartz
Heidi Moltz	

Others in Attendance:

Kristina Peacock-Jones - DEP	Monica Gould - Strategic Consulting Partners
James Horton – DEP	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.

Committee chair Charlie Bennett welcomed committee members to the meeting and completed a roll call for attendance. Chair Bennett informed committee members that Dr. Ron Stanley has recently passed away. Dr. Stanley was a long-term committee member. Chair Bennett also offered condolences to member Coleen Reamer on the passing of her husband.

Public Comment

Chair Bennett 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 January 13, 2022, meeting was approved on an Adam McClain / Brent Ramsey motion.

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. 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 still under review and will be shared with the committee upon review. The CARPs will be sent to a list of stakeholders and planning officials within their watershed for review and comment after the regional committee review. 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. Only one comment was given at the hearings from the Ohio region. No other public comments were received.

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

Final Review of Regional Materials

James Horton provided summary materials developed by the committee over the past two years. The committee reviewed the summary materials. Although the Potomac regional committee lacked a quorum of members needed to formally approve the regional components for the State Water Plan, a vote was taken of the members present and an Adam McClain / Sarah Principato motion was unanimously approved to recommend the

completed summary materials to the statewide committee for consideration. The Potomac regional committee value their ideas and the importance to the State Water Plan. The finalized Potomac regional summary components follow:

Specific Regional Priorities

The Potomac region is comparatively small and each county in the region is split with at least one other watershed. Being composed of mostly smaller watersheds, the region is at risk from changing precipitation patterns due to climate change and groundwater recharge issues related to land use practices; these issues represent a primary focus of the regional committee.

Promote Programs and Practices that Protect Water Quality and Quantity and Preserve the Ecological Integrity of Groundwater and Surface Water

A major priority of the regional committee is to develop land use programs that protect water quality and quantity while preserving the ecological integrity of groundwater and surface water, including springs, streams, lakes, and wetlands. To ensure adequate water resources for present and future generations in the Potomac basin, the committee recommends an approach that encourages municipal programs to collaborate and plan regionally, address land use planning and growth, provide domestic water well construction standards, and implement best management practices to protect water quality and quantity. Completing Countywide Action Plans to support Pennsylvania's Phase 3 Watershed Implementation Plan is also a high priority under this objective.

Climate Change Resiliency Especially with Regard to Stormwater Management, Flooding, and Drought

From a water resources perspective, climate change impacts stormwater management, flooding, and drought. Large intense precipitation events and longer duration storms are increasing stormwater runoff and creating or exacerbating erosion issues. Areas in this region have low infiltration rates, leading to less groundwater recharge and increased flooding. Varied storm frequencies may also lead to an increase in droughts. Promoting stormwater management with the use of riparian buffers, rain gardens, and stream restoration will reduce erosion and improve groundwater recharge.

As they would specifically relate to documented climate change, 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 declining water quality and/or quantity, and flooding issues. Improve the potential protection priority water resources through identified targeted solutions that may include education and outreach, asset management, resource improvement, and others.

Region's Uniqueness

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

- This region forms the headwaters to the Potomac River, which makes interstate coordination crucial, as the majority of the basin is located within Maryland.

- This region borders the Susquehanna and Delaware River basins. Each county in this region is split between at least two planning regions.
- Local geology and topography limits groundwater storage and recharge; water does not infiltrate into the soil well and may lead to flooding.
- Unique location along the I-81 corridor with a high amount of development, particularly warehouse expansion.
- The geography is unique in that it is predominantly farmland that is densely populated, but also has rugged mountains that are more sparsely populated.
- There has been increased residential growth throughout the basin as a result of urban sprawl from the Baltimore, Harrisburg, and Washington DC metropolitan areas, which will change the dynamics of water needs.
- Adams County within the region has, in conjunction with local well drilling contractors, developed a set of standards for well construction. They are the only county in the region to have accomplished this thus far.

Stormwater and Flood Management

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

- Promote countywide action plans which are beneficial for facilitating coordination and addressing stormwater.
- Consider water quantity and quality when performing cost/benefit analysis for land development and infrastructure.
- Regional authorities should assess aging stormwater infrastructure for high frequency, as opposed to high intensity storm events. Retrofitting aging best management practices and providing groundwater recharge areas for large impervious areas such as parking lots from vacant shopping malls would be beneficial.
- The region's unique geology that limits groundwater recharge and storage should be taken into account for regional planning of stormwater and flooding events.

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?

- With the potential for increased storm frequency and storm intensity, stakeholders should find ways to reduce safety risks, environmental impacts, and generally be more prepared for these types of storm events.
- Increasing resiliency for flash flooding events should be considered in regional planning. Riparian buffers and conveyance structures can help reduce the effects of flash flooding and promote groundwater recharge.
- Extremes in water availability requires regional authorities to plan for both flooding and drought, which creates difficulty in planning and coordination. Integrated water resource planning (IWRP) can help coordinate these efforts.

- Since there is increased risk of more severe droughts brought on by climate change, there needs to be greater resilience of water resources. Protection and conservation of groundwater sources can be accomplished through increased infiltration and aquifer maintenance.
- Stakeholders should investigate climate change implications on water supply and water quality. This can be accomplished by collecting data on both the high and low precipitation events.
- Stakeholders should explore ways to communicate climate change that will not alienate potential allies.
- Where possible, use 'on the ground' data collection, science, and regional data as opposed to global datasets. This data will provide more accurate forecasting, attract more stakeholders, and help with localized decisions. Additional types of data and sources would be beneficial in finding the best way to analyze and track local changes ([CoCoRaHS network](#)).

Next Steps

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

- The recommended regional committee documents will be provided to the statewide committee.
- Next statewide committee meeting is Wednesday, May 11.
- Statewide committee will review the Potomac Region Summary Plan Components at the July meeting.
- 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 comment on the Plan.
- Potomac regional 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 1:30 pm by Chair Charlie Bennett.