

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Environmental Protection
Office of Water Management

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SUBJECT: Water Resources Planning Process Status and Update

TO: Statewide Committee Members

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As a follow up action to the December meeting of the Statewide Committee, we respectfully submit the following current activities update report.

1. Public Information (Marketing) Document

(See Pennsylvania Water Atlas below)

2. Pennsylvania Water Atlas

The Department is moving forward with an RFP for production of the Public Information Document and the Pennsylvania Water Atlas. Five proposals were received in response to the RFP. Staff is currently reviewing proposals and we anticipate selecting a consultant in the next several weeks.

3. Action Agenda for the Future (Setting the Course)

The Regional Committees have been working to develop regional action agendas for the past several meetings. They will continue with their work for at least one more round of meetings.

4. Resources Inventory and Assessment

USGS Screening Tool

The water budget screening process has been completed on the two pilot watersheds- the Wissahickon Creek by DEP Staff and the Codorus Creek by the USGS. Draft reports are being prepared. The results of the pilot process has enabled the Department to prepare a draft work plan for preparing screenings on a selection of 22 watersheds by the end of August 2007 for inclusion into the state water plan. The work plan also extends the water budget screening beyond August 2007 through the end of June 2009 for as many watersheds as current funds (environmental stewardship (ES) and river basin commission legislative funds) will allow. The draft plan calls for the Department to take the lead in overall project management, and will perform refinement of demand projection methodologies for statewide application, receive and review individual screening reports, perform statewide analyses, update Water Use Data System records and provide recommendations for initiating the process to identify screened watersheds as critical water planning areas.

The DRBC will perform screenings on watersheds within the Delaware Basin using the DRBC State Water Plan legislative funds. The ICPRB will perform screenings for the Potomac Basin watersheds using ES funds from DEP. The USGS will be responsible for screenings in the Ohio and Great Lakes Basins using ES funds from DEP and USGS funding. USGS will also conduct screenings on the Susquehanna (upper/middle and lower) Basin on behalf of the SRBC using the SRBC State Water Plan legislative funds.

Staff is currently working with all parties in finalizing the list of initial watersheds and developing contractual agreements.

Yield Analysis Tool (YAT)

Work has continued on the development of the Yield Analysis Tool although has experienced delays due to contractor availability issues. The tool is scheduled for completion later in 2007.

Data Management

DEP has made significant progress in the processing of annual reporting forms. For the 2004 reporting year, DEP has received and processed reports from approximately 88% of all public water suppliers. For 2005, 73% of public water supply reports have been processed along with a number of recent 2006 reports.

While the reports from public water suppliers has been encouraging, the number of voluntary reports received from those other than public water suppliers has been disappointing. For 2004, only 28% of registrants provided reports on any of their sources with 29% providing reports for 2005. An upcoming mailing is set to go out in the next few weeks to those other than public water supply requesting voluntary reporting for 2006 withdrawals.

Discharge Monitoring Reports (DMRs)- DMR collection is complete for the Great Lakes, Potomac, Delaware, and Susquehanna Basins. The SRBC has continued to collect reports for the Ohio basin and is scheduled for completion in April 2007.

5. Issues Analysis (White Papers)

Integrated Water Resources Initiative

DEP has begun developing a white paper on Integrated Water Resources. The current approach to Water Resources Management in Pennsylvania has evolved around individual programs with distinct interests and funding opportunities. A consolidated process for these programs would combine water resources management programs into an integrated system of direction and funding driven by watershed interests.

An Assessment of Floodplain and Stormwater Management Problems

The Policy and Integration Subcommittee reviewed a preliminary draft in February 2006. The document underwent substantial revisions based upon those comments. Another draft was distributed to the P&I Subcommittee for comment in February 2007 and a few minor comments were returned.

Review and Evaluation of Statutes

The review and evaluation of statutes, regulations, policies, and institutional arrangements is continuing, both within DEP and with other state agencies. The Pennsylvania Management Associate (PMA) team project, which entails the review and evaluation of the statutes, regulations, and policies of other state agencies, has moved into Phase 2. The PMAs will be conducting interviews with representatives in program areas that may be impacted by the State Water Plan.

6. Supporting Resources

Regulations

On January 2, the review period ended for public comment on the proposed rulemaking on 25 Pa. Code Chapters 109 and 110, relating to the water use registration and reporting requirements under Act 220. Prior to presentation to the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) for their consideration, the draft regulations were reviewed by the Act 220 Statewide Committee and six Regional Water Resource Committees, so considerable public review had already occurred via those forums. Consequently, the proposed rulemaking drew only seven commentators. Comments were fairly consistent among most commentators, including the most prevalent comment that water users who obtain their water from public water supply agencies should not be required to register and report. The Independent Regulatory Review Commission (IRRC) had an additional 30-days for review and subsequently submitted comments on February 2. The Division of Water Use Planning is reviewing all of the comments and preparing appropriate revisions to the rulemaking, along with a Comment and Response Document.

Guidelines for Identification of Critical Water Planning Areas (Document ID #392-2130-014)

Published as a final guidance document on Sept. 30, 2006

Guidelines for Development of Critical Area Resource Plans (Document ID #392-2130-015)

The Statewide Committee discussed this document at the September meeting and took action to direct DEP to move forward with the next step. The document is undergoing internal review.

State Water Plan Website

We are currently working on the conversion of existing State Water Plan web pages to a new template version that is required for all DEP programs. A mock-up of a new site was presented and discussed at the Dec. 21, 2006 Statewide Committee Meeting. The Department will continue to keep the Committees informed of the development of the website.