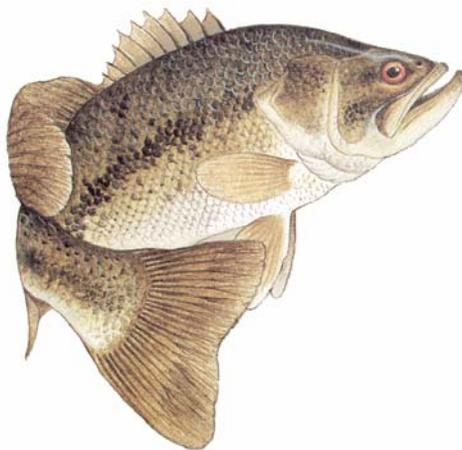


**DIVISION OF WATER QUALITY
AND MONITORING PROGRAMS**

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2000-2005**

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
1721 N. Front St.
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ACRONYMS

Susquehanna River Basin Commission	SRBC and/or Commission
Geographic Information System	GIS
Total Maximum Daily Load	TMDL
Source Water Assessment and Protection	SWAP
Eastern Pa. Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation	EPCAMR
Western Pa. Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation	WPCAMR

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is a focused, organizational planning effort to identify important, long-term goals, and plot a strategy for meeting those goals. A strategic plan can be compared to a road map used to guide an organization to its desired destination. It can help agencies focus on their destination and identify the most efficient way of getting there. Organizations with limited funding and personnel can not afford to waste resources wandering from place to place in order to achieve nebulous goals. Focused, long-term planning and commitment are needed for the continued existence of these organizations.

This plan is a strategy to guide the Susquehanna River Basin Commission's (SRBC's) Division of Water Quality and Monitoring Programs through the next five years. The strategy considers the Division's mission as it relates to the overall mission of the SRBC, the mandates of the Commission's Compact, and the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. The SRBC mission is appended to this Water Quality Division Strategic Plan. The Division's mission is **“to coordinate and assist efforts of federal, state, and local governments and private entities to manage and protect the physical, chemical, and biological quality of the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin to meet the needs of present and future generations.”**

MANDATES OF THE COMPACT

All of the Commission's activities originate from the Susquehanna River Basin Compact, Public Law 91-575, which was signed into law on December 24, 1970. Article 5 of the Compact discusses water quality management and control. Section 5.1 states that the Commission may undertake or contract for investigations, studies, and surveys pertaining to existing water quality, effects of operations on water quality, new compounds and materials, and probable future water quality in the basin. The Commission may also acquire, construct, operate, and maintain projects and facilities for the management and control of water quality.

Section 5.2 states that it shall be the policy of the Commission to encourage and coordinate the efforts of its member jurisdictions to prevent, reduce, control, and eliminate water pollution and to maintain water quality as required by the Comprehensive Plan. It is noteworthy that the Compact predates the federal Clean Water Act, which addresses both the chemical and biological quality of the nation's waters. Section 5.2 of the Compact says that *although the states are to have the primary role* in water quality management and control, the Commission shall recommend to its member jurisdictions the establishment, modification, or amendment of standards of quality for any waters of the basin in relation to their reasonable and necessary use as the Commission shall deem in the public interest. Section 5.2 also states that the Commission shall encourage cooperation and uniform enforcement programs among its member jurisdictions, and that the Commission may assume jurisdiction if required to do so by the Comprehensive Plan.

Article 7 of the Compact discusses watershed management, which is also a Commission responsibility. Section 7.1 states that the Commission shall promote sound practices of watershed management in the basin, including projects and facilities to retard runoff and water flow and prevent soil erosion. Section 7.2 states that the Commission may acquire, sponsor, or

operate facilities and projects to encourage soil conservation, prevent and control erosion, and promote land reclamation and sound land and forest management. Section 7.3 states that the Commission may acquire, sponsor, or operate projects and facilities for the maintenance and improvement of fish and wildlife habitat related to the water resources of the basin.

GOALS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The following goals of the Comprehensive Plan are pertinent to Division activities.

Water Quality Goals:

- a. Compliance with the water quality standards and criteria for intrastate and interstate waters of the basin as established by the member jurisdictions.
- b. Abatement of acid mine drainage pollution, coupled with concerted efforts to correct abandoned mine land problems.
- c. Increased monitoring of the effectiveness and enforcement of established water quality control regulations and programs.
- d. Maintenance of a coordinated, basinwide water quality and biological data collection and monitoring system.
- e. Upgrading and development of needed public and private waste treatment facilities.
- f. Increased control of storm water runoff and nonpoint source pollution.
- g. Fulfillment of the objectives of the Chesapeake Bay Program relating to monitoring and research recommendations, Bay-wide nutrient recommendations and Bay-wide toxicant recommendations as set forth on pages 37, 39, and 44 of a document entitled Chesapeake Bay Program: Findings and Recommendations, dated September 1983, and as contained in Appendix E of the Comprehensive Plan.

Recreation, Fish and Wildlife Goals:

- a. Optimum utilization of existing water resources for purposes including recreation, and fish and wildlife pursuits.
- b. Inclusion of appropriate public recreation and fish and wildlife programs at existing and proposed water resources projects to the extent compatible with the primary project purpose.
- c. Delineation of certain water and adjoining land areas, including wetlands, to be retained in a natural state, wherein development and use are closely controlled.
- d. General improvement of fish and wildlife habitat related to the water resources of the basin.
- e. Increased public access to streams, reservoirs, lakes, and ponds as appropriate.
- f. Restoration of migratory fishery resources (American shad, hickory shad, blueback herring, alewife, striped bass, American eel) to the Susquehanna River system.

Note: Other goals relate to instream flow needs and consumptive water use.

Watershed Protection and Management Goals:

- a. Protection and enhancement of the water resources potential of the basin through consonance of urban and rural land uses and water resources interests.
- b. Development of priorities for uses of land areas particularly critical to water resources interests.
- c. Coordination of planning regarding future urban and rural land development, as it relates to water supply, water quality, and wastewater management needs.
- d. Use of land in keeping with its conservation and natural resource capabilities.
- e. Establishment and maintenance of programs designed to prevent or reduce erosion and sedimentation.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: Collect, organize, and distribute information needed to protect the physical, chemical, and biological quality of water in the basin.

Objective 1: Perform field investigations in cooperation with the member jurisdictions and the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Actions:

- Continue subbasin and interstate stream surveys.
- Continue Chesapeake Bay Program sediment and nutrient monitoring.
- Continue the assessment of unassessed streams in Pennsylvania.
- Pursue additional stream assessment work and field investigations needed by the member jurisdictions and the SRBC to meet the water resource management needs of the basin.
- Explore use of new technologies and apply them if they provide useful, reliable data in a cost-effective manner.

Objective 2: Collect and organize data needed for effective water resource management.

Actions:

- Collect pertinent GIS, water quality, habitat, and biological data from others and where possible, organize it using electronic media.
- Evaluate internal SRBC data management issues and processing procedures to develop a data management plan.
- Develop a database that will address quality assurance issues, and facilitate the collection and management of data.
- Add value to existing information by assembling it in a more usable format and by integrating physical, chemical, and biological data.
- With assistance from others, prepare an atlas as a companion document to the Comprehensive Plan.

Objective 3: Distribute information needed by others for water resource management.

Actions:

- Provide public access to SRBC data through the internet using the SRBC homepage.
- Link SRBC and other water resource agency home pages.
- Use the database cited above under Objective 2 to streamline the process for distributing data to others.
- Participate on SRBC homepage and computer committees.

GOAL 2: Encourage and support plans for the remediation and enhancement of water quality, biological resources, recreational opportunities, aesthetics, and cultural resources associated with the basin's water resources.

Objective 1: Conduct subbasin planning as part of the Division's efforts to revise the Commission's Comprehensive Plan.

Actions:

- Identify important resources in each subbasin.
- Target key problems and opportunities for resource remediation and enhancement.
- Identify potential partnerships and coordinate efforts of local watershed and conservation groups.

Objective 2: Encourage development of local watershed management plans.

Actions:

- Promote and encourage development of local watershed management plans through SRBC Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), Source Water Assessment and Protection (SWAP), and subbasin survey activities.
- Participate in other local watershed management efforts.
- Help publicize federal, state, and local programs that provide opportunities for local groups to receive project planning and implementation assistance.

Objective 3: Provide technical assistance for remediation and enhancement plans.

Actions:

- Assist the member jurisdictions with TMDL development.
- Assist the member jurisdictions with SWAP activities.
- Provide data, GIS products, and other assistance to the member jurisdictions and local groups.

GOAL 3: Identify and promote consistent and sound water quality and watershed management practices in the basin.

Objective 1: Encourage cooperation and compatible management practices among the member jurisdictions.

Actions:

- Coordinate with the member jurisdictions to ensure compatible procedures for water quality assessment, TMDL development, SWAP resource protection, and compliance with water quality standards and criteria for both interstate and intrastate streams.
- Promote data compatibility across state lines.
- Review appropriate state and federal registers to identify and comment on proposed changes in agency regulations and water quality standards and criteria as appropriate.
- Examine water quality programs on a state-by-state basis to identify strengths, weaknesses, and potential gaps in program areas.
- Promote consistent management practices among the member jurisdictions through the SRBC Water Quality Advisory Committee, interagency meetings, conferences, and/or forums.

Objective 2: Conduct studies to identify and promote sound water quality and watershed management practices.

Actions:

- Perform technical demonstration studies such as those related to streambank fencing, artificial wetlands, and riparian buffer protection.
- Inform the public of pertinent study results.

GOAL 4: Maintain and improve staff capability to respond to water quality, watershed management, and related resource issues in the basin.

Objective 1: Provide staff with the resources needed to meet the above goal.

Actions:

- Subject to budget constraints, provide some training to each division member annually to enhance staff expertise and efficiency in performing work assignments.
- Allocate time for staff to remain current in their fields of expertise and to investigate new technologies.
- Attend conferences related to Division work activities.
- Encourage membership in professional societies and organizations.
- Provide adequate computer software and hardware, as well as the needed technical support to use it.
- Provide additional support staff when needed.

Objective 2: Share staff expertise, experience, and ideas.

Actions:

- Conduct periodic training/orientation sessions to ensure uniform data collection and management practices in the Division.
- Continue to hold monthly Division meetings to update staff on current SRBC events and share staff ideas and information.
- Conduct periodic meetings to review division projects and share ideas for problem resolution.

Objective 3: Prioritize long-range planning activities.

Actions:

- Help support revisions and updates to the Commission's Comprehensive Plan.
- Help implement the Commission's Comprehensive and Strategic Plans, as well as the Division's strategic plan.

GOAL 5: Develop stronger interdivisional partnerships at SRBC.

Objective 1: Work with the Public Information and Education Division to expand coordination and public outreach regarding water quality, biological resources, recreation, and watershed conservation.

Actions:

- Meet with local groups and make presentations to help educate the public regarding water resources issues, as well as the value and diversity of the basin's water resources.
- Assist in preparing news releases and articles for the *Susquehanna Guardian* and other publications.
- Help promote the concept of advocacy groups in local areas of the basin.
- Keep the Public Information and Education Division aware of new reports, projects, and initiatives undertaken by Division staff.

Objective 2: Assist the Water Management Division in solving problems related to aquatic habitat, water chemistry, and biological resources.

Actions:

- Provide biological support for IFIM studies.
- Evaluate water quality and biological impacts resulting from reduced flows, as well as benefits associated with flow augmentation.
- Provide water quality and biological support for project review activities.

Objective 3: Support Administrative Division and other Commission activities.

Actions:

- Work in partnership with Administrative Division to develop annual workplans and budgets for grant proposals.
- Provide timely quarterly reports for grant billings and input for annual Commission budgets.
- Provide Commission-wide GIS support.

GOAL 6: Coordinate with others and build partnerships to better serve the water resource interests of the basin.

Objective 1: Participate in interagency committees, work groups, and task forces.

Actions:

- Maintain active membership in Chesapeake Bay Program subcommittees and workgroups.
- Participate in other committees related to Commission activities such as the Susquehanna River Anadromous Fish Restoration Committee, the Chesapeake Bay Advisory Committee to the State Conservation Commission, the SRBC Water Resource Management Advisory Committee, the SRBC Instream Flow Subcommittee, and associated work groups.
- Participate in state workgroups such as the Pennsylvania Nonpoint Source Liaison Workgroup and the Maryland Source Water Assessment Program Technical Advisory Group.
- Continue the work of the SRBC Water Quality Advisory Committee.
- Coordinate with the Eastern and Western Pennsylvania Coalitions for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR and WPCAMR) regarding acid mine drainage issues in the basin.
- Continue to coordinate with other river basin commissions regarding water quality issues.

Objective 2: Provide appropriate comments and input regarding new regulations, initiatives, and water resource problems.

Actions:

- Review state and federal registers and provide appropriate comments on new regulations, initiatives, and programs that are pertinent to Division activities.
- With appropriate SRBC management approval, provide comments at public hearings, public meetings, media events, and other appropriate forums.

APPENDIX
Susquehanna River Basin Commission
Statement of Mission

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

STATEMENT OF MISSION

The mission of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) is defined in the compact signed by New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and the federal government. The essence of the mission is to enhance the public welfare in the signatory states through comprehensive planning, allocation and management of the water resources of the Susquehanna River basin.

To accomplish this mission, the SRBC acts to reduce damages caused by floods; provide for the reasonable and sustained development and use of surface and ground water for municipal, agricultural, recreational, commercial and industrial purposes; protect and restore fisheries, wetlands and aquatic habitat; protect water quality and instream uses; and insure future availability of flows to the Chesapeake Bay.

The SRBC is uniquely qualified to carry out this mission because, as a federal-interstate compact commission, its focus is defined by the natural boundaries of the river basin rather than the political boundaries of the states. As such, the SRBC serves as a forum to provide coordinated management, promote communication among the signatory parties, and resolve water resource issues and controversies within the basin.

The Goals of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission are:

1. To be responsive to water resource management needs of SRBC's signatory members;
2. To provide excellent service to the public;
3. To coordinate management of interstate water resources and serve as an effective forum for resolution of water resource issues and controversies within the basin;
4. To be a leader in issues concerning the conservation, utilization, allocation, development and management of water resources within the Susquehanna River basin;
5. To encourage excellence in SRBC staff by affording opportunities for professional growth and development and by providing a stimulating work environment for all Commission employees.
6. To provide public information and education about the water resources of the basin.