

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
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**SRBC SEEKS PARTNERS FOR PROPOSED REAL-TIME WATER
QUALITY MONITORING NETWORK FOR SMALL STREAMS**
Water Managers Would Know Quickly When Streams Are Impacted by Pollution

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) is seeking partners to help start up a monitoring network that will constantly record water quality conditions of smaller rivers and streams remotely located in northern tier Pennsylvania and southern tier New York. SRBC, state and federal water management officials and others would receive the real-time data electronically. The network would also help local public water suppliers, local watershed groups and communities stay informed.

“As the demand for water from smaller rivers and streams increases, particularly from the natural gas industry, so does the amount of wastewater that is generated,” said Paul Swartz, SRBC Executive Director. “It is important to monitor these smaller, remote waterways to verify whether or not they are being impacted by certain pollutants.”

Swartz said, “The proposed network would essentially be an early warning mechanism to help environmental protection officials respond more rapidly if streams are polluted. The Commission is well qualified to lead this effort as we have operated and maintained a real-time monitoring network on the mainstem Susquehanna River for about six years. The Commission also has extensive experience conducting various types of monitoring throughout the Susquehanna watershed.”

SRBC’s objectives for this proposed network are:

1. To establish a real-time monitoring network at areas of concern in the Susquehanna River Basin in order to provide monitoring data to resource agencies, the regulated community and the public and monitoring to allow timely response in the case of pollution incidents;
2. To establish baseline water quality conditions in targeted areas of the basin;
3. To verify whether or not the natural gas well industry and/or other activities with the potential to cause pollution incidents are causing adverse impacts on local water quality;
4. To reduce the cost of data collection through the utilization of advanced technologies; to form collaborative partnerships to improve monitoring technology and provide educational opportunities;
5. To enhance protection for water supplies through source water monitoring; and
6. To be responsive to public concerns.

SRBC’s proposal calls for 30 monitoring stations in the targeted regions where drilling in the Marcellus shale for natural gas is most active. In these targeted, remote areas, the terrain is mostly forested and lacks easy access for routine monitoring. This network would provide constant monitoring through instruments sensitive enough to detect subtle changes in water quality.

Each of the 30 monitoring stations would be equipped with a datasonde and data platform powered by a solar panel. The equipment would continuously monitor water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, conductance (ability to conduct electricity) and turbidity (water clarity). The water depth also would be recorded to establish a relationship with stream flows.

“While the Commission has confidence in the value and benefits of this remote monitoring network, we can not do it alone; nor do we assume our proposal is final at this point. We welcome partners from all sectors, private and public, for their financial support and for their feedback and involvement.”

SRBC has been reaching out to and engaging governmental and non-governmental organizations in this effort through meetings and other forms of communication.

For more information on SRBC’s proposed water quality monitoring network, go to SRBC’s web site at www.srbc.net/programs/remotenetwork.htm. This web page contains a project information sheet, power point presentations and other information.

SRBC (www.srbc.net) is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on December 24, 1970 by the federal government and the states of New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland to protect and wisely manage the water resources of the Susquehanna River Basin. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, New York, and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Maryland, where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.

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