

Susquehanna River Basin Commission

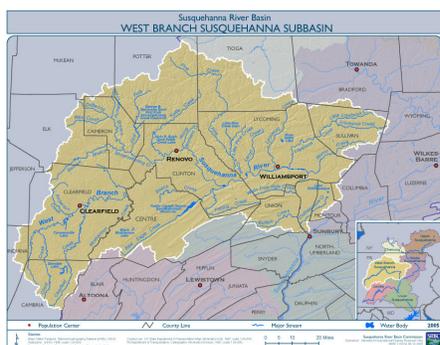
Information Sheet

ABANDONED MINE DRAINAGE REMEDIATION STRATEGY FOR THE WEST BRANCH SUSQUEHANNA WATERSHED



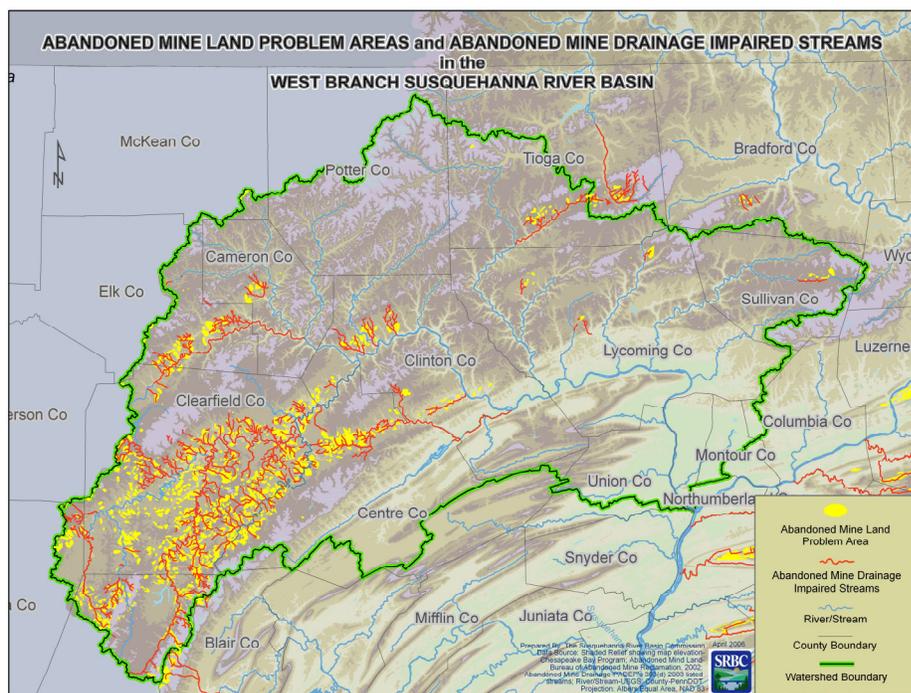
Overview

The West Branch Susquehanna River Watershed drains an area of approximately 7,000 miles in north-central Pennsylvania, and contains some of the most scenic forestland in the state. However, the watershed also includes the most stream miles impaired by abandoned mine drainage (AMD) in the entire Susquehanna River Basin. With funding from Pennsylvania and Trout Unlimited (TU), the Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) is developing a remediation strategy for areas in the West Branch Susquehanna River Watershed (West Branch) affected by AMD.



While numerous remediation projects have already been completed and others are underway, it will take decades at current funding

levels until many of the problem areas are addressed. To achieve regional-scale environmental results with limited funds, formulating a comprehensive AMD remediation strategy is essential.



The remediation strategy is not intended to duplicate the problem identification and prioritization efforts of other agencies and entities, but rather apply pre-existing efforts into a watershed-specific remediation strategy.

Additionally, SRBC is currently developing the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) assessment for West Branch AMD impairments, and will coordinate these activities closely to maximize resources.

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Major Work Categories

The AMD remediation strategy outlined below focuses only on water quality conditions, and is divided into three major work categories.

1. Formulate scope of work

Use input from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), TU, and the West Branch Task Force and Citizens Committees to formulate a scope of work for the West Branch remediation strategy. Information is being gathered through meetings with agency/TU technical staff and citizen representatives. The input will be used to develop the database/model and prioritization scheme.

2. Inventory and analyze water quality data

Compile pre-existing information related to water quality using both instream data and AMD discharge data. The Bureaus of Abandoned Mine Reclamation and District Mining Operations are the two predominant sources of information; however, other relevant datasets are being incorporated when certain data standards are met.

3. Develop a database, model, and final report

Carry out the following activities to complete this third work category:

- Develop an integrated database and model that uses the compiled information to determine existing water quality conditions and select a number of potential water quality improvement scenarios.
- Provide a final report detailing the prioritization assessment.
- Develop and implement a process for maintaining/updating the database and model as conditions change in the watershed.

SRBC is working directly with DEP, DCNR, and TU, as well as through existing committees such as the West Branch Task Force. Staff will solicit input throughout the process and provide opportunities to review draft materials associated with task objectives. Special emphasis is being placed on ensuring the strategy addresses core elements needed to obtain funding for restoration activities.

Development of Recommendations



The water quality work outlined under the Major Work Categories above can be expanded to consider additional factors in determining remediation priorities. Those factors could include criteria such as socio-economic and recreational benefits, existing/planned activities, as well as probability for successful implementation. Overall, priorities will differ when considering different goals (i.e., water quality standards, protection/development of a water supply, fishery restoration, commercial/industrial water use). Recommendations made concerning the potential

management options and the associated costs will differ as well (i.e., source reduction, passive/active treatment, economic incentives for innovative reuse or treatments). Future work could be designed to assess these different combinations of factors/considerations and their effect on implementation scenarios and outcomes, both locally and regionally.