

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
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**SRBC RELEASED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MANAGING
GROUNDWATER SUPPLIES IN NORTHERN LANCASTER COUNTY**
With proper planning and management, water supplies will be adequate to sustain growth

WARWICK TOWNSHIP, PA – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) held a public meeting today to release its findings and recommendations from a 3-year groundwater quantity study, *Northern Lancaster County Groundwater Study: A Resource Evaluation of the Manheim-Lititz and Ephrata Area Groundwater Basins*. In the study, SRBC concluded that with proper planning and management, the area’s water supplies can sustain projected growth and development, based on currently approved allocations. In those findings, however, the agency emphasized that due to the unique geology combined with the increasing water demands in that area, water supplies are potentially stressed, requiring good and vigilant water resources management to ensure sustainable supplies. The public meeting was held at the Warwick Township Municipal Building, Lititz.

The 70-square-mile study area includes parts of 8 townships and 5 boroughs, whose water supply needs are met almost entirely by groundwater. The population in 2000 was about 61,000 with projected growth to 76,905 by 2025. The water use in 2000 was about 3.4 billion gallons per year and is projected to increase to 4.3 billion gallons per year by 2025. Within the study area, SRBC delineated and detailed two distinct groundwater basins:

- (1) Manheim-Lititz groundwater basin – 21.8 square miles and covers parts of Rapho, Penn, Warwick, and Elizabeth Townships, and Manheim and Lititz Boroughs; and
- (2) Ephrata area groundwater basin – 48.4 square miles and covers parts of Elizabeth, Clay, Ephrata, Warwick, West Cocalico, and East Cocalico Townships, and parts of Akron, Ephrata, and Denver Boroughs.

Paul Swartz, SRBC Executive Director said, “The purpose of the study was to determine if the area’s water supplies are adequate to meet current and projected water demands, and to provide management tools to local and county officials for their planning purposes. Despite our findings of adequate supplies, given the accelerated growth and development experienced in several municipalities within this study area, we cannot underscore enough how important it is for proper management to be applied to ensure continued economic development and environmental protection.”

SRBC developed a series of 12 management recommendations to address the water resource problems in the study area. The recommendations cover a range of issues, including how to

prevent the loss of recharge areas, what additional actions are needed in potentially groundwater stressed areas, the importance of promoting other non-traditional sources of water, and the importance of increasing public awareness.

The recommendations (listed in part below) were established by SRBC based on: (1) the review of existing water-related ordinances, regulations, plans and water resource initiatives; (2) the significant input from members of a local advisory committee that was established to help guide the study process; and (3) the findings of the study, including the current and projected water availability and use.

- To prevent the loss of critical aquifer recharge areas from future growth and development, municipalities should maintain or enhance the unique hydraulic characteristics of these important recharge areas.
- To reduce the effect of impervious surfaces, municipalities should encourage developers to implement technologies that increase the infiltration capability of that cover.
- To increase infiltration and recharge through stormwater runoff, county and local governments should complete Act 167 stormwater management plans for the areas where they do not currently exist. They should also implement the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's new comprehensive stormwater policy.
- To better ensure that the water withdrawals within the study area remain sustainable, SRBC should continue to require and review groundwater availability analyses for new water withdrawal projects and detailed water budgets in potentially groundwater stressed areas.
- To increase public awareness regarding the limits of groundwater resources, water resource management agencies should work to educate students, elected officials, a wide-range of organizations and associations and the general public through various activities.
- To minimize water loss due to inefficient use or lack of conservation measures, water authorities and purveyors, in partnership with municipalities, should offer free residential water surveys.
- To take advantage of the water that is discharged from mining operations, SRBC should encourage cooperative efforts to promote such alternative water supplies for public drinking water, commercial operations, and industrial supplies.

A final report on the study will be available on SRBC's web site at www.srbc.net on September 26, 2005, or on CD-Rom. To request a CD-Rom, contact Patricia Adams at (717) 238-0423, ext 302 or by e-mail at srbc@srbc.net.

SRBC 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, N.Y., and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Md., where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.

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