

**SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION**  
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**SWATARA WATERSHED MAY FACE WATER SHORTAGES DURING DROUGHTS**  
**Swatara Creek Water Supply Planning Study Released, Six Alternatives Offered**

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) today announced the release of the final report for the Swatara Creek Watershed Water Supply Study. The purpose of the planning study was to identify current and projected water supply needs through the year 2030 for the Swatara Creek Watershed, and develop and evaluate alternatives to address potential shortfalls. The 2-year planning effort was led by the Baltimore District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), in partnership with SRBC, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Capital Region Water Board.

The study team evaluated the watershed's current surface- and ground-water supplies by considering the watershed's historical precipitation averages, geology and land cover, which are contributing factors to ground- and surface-water recharge. By projecting population and growth trends from census data against current water supplies, the team was able to identify the potential outlook for future supplies.

SRBC Water Resources Management Chief Glen DeWillie said, "Based on our projections, the study team determined that water supplies are adequate to meet current demands and those in the foreseeable future during years of average precipitation, except during extensive drought periods when additional supplies may be needed."

The water supply study identifies the Lebanon Municipal Water Authority as the water purveyor that could be affected the most by water shortages under record drought conditions, if additional water supplies are not developed. To address projected shortages in the watershed during extended drought periods, the study team developed and evaluated six alternatives for consideration by policymakers, planners and other watershed entities:

- Water conservation
- Infrastructure improvements
- Groundwater augmentation
- Existing surface water augmentation
- Reservoir augmentation
- Regulatory or operational changes

Robert Gore, Chief, Planning and Environmental Services Branch, Corps, said, "Our job was to identify and present the alternatives, not to make recommendations. I believe we clearly met that objective and have provided an excellent tool for the watershed's decision-makers and the public."

Gore said, “It is now up to the officials and the people of the watershed to apply the information and make the recommendations that will impact their short-term and long-term planning and implementation activities.”

The Swatara Creek Watershed is about 571 square miles in size and covers most of Lebanon County and portions of Berks, Dauphin and Schuylkill Counties. The estimated population is 214,000 (in 2000) with a projected increase to 244,000 by 2030.

According to Betty Conner, Chairman of the Capital Region Water Board (CRWB), there was a significant public participation component built into the study process, including three workshops and public comment periods on preliminary and draft reports.

“The Swatara watershed is fortunate to have a committed and involved citizenry,” said Conner. “The study team afforded the public many levels of participation, and we are glad people took advantage of these opportunities and contributed significantly to the process.”

State Senator David Brightbill (R-48) said “The Swatara watershed, undoubtedly, has water supply issues, and I want to make sure we sustain the momentum started by this study project until we find truly viable solutions for this watershed.”

The executive summary of the final report is available on the internet at [www.crwbo.org](http://www.crwbo.org) or [www.srbc.net](http://www.srbc.net). The full report is available on CD by contacting SRBC by e-mail at [srbc@srbc.net](mailto:srbc@srbc.net) or 717-238-0423.

Funding for the multi-year Swatara Creek Watershed Water Supply Study was provided by the Corps (50 percent), DEP, private water purveyors located in the watershed and SRBC, which also served as the non-federal sponsor and coordinated the public participation component.

SRBC is the governing agency established under a 100-year compact signed on Dec. 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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