

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION
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**REAL-TIME WATER QUALITY DATA FOR LITTLE MEHOOPANY
CREEK AVAILABLE ONLINE FOR WATER MANAGERS, PUBLIC**
Monitoring Station Tracks if Creek Is Impacted from Natural Gas Drilling Activities

HARRISBURG, Pa. – The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) today announced that real-time data from a remote water quality monitoring station installed on Little Mehoopany Creek, Wyoming County, Pennsylvania, are available on SRBC’s web site at www.srbc.net/programs/remotenetwork.htm. A user-friendly map, graphs and charts are key features for viewing and understanding the data.

The Little Mehoopany Creek monitoring station, which SRBC installed on September 8, is part of a larger monitoring network that SRBC initiated in January 2010 to monitor water quality conditions in smaller watersheds generally of 30 to 60 square miles in size. The purpose of the monitoring is to help determine whether streams are or are not being impacted by natural gas drilling activities.

The Little Mehoopany monitoring station is equipped with water quality sensors and a transmitter to continuously report water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, turbidity (water clarity), water depth and conductance (ability to conduct electricity). Elevated levels of conductance in water can be a leading indicator of impacts from natural gas activities if they occur.

“Working in partnership with local interests was among the Commission’s goals when we launched this monitoring program,” said SRBC Executive Director Paul Swartz. “When the Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association asked us to consider installing a station in Little Mehoopany, our technical staff assessed the area and agreed that it would be an ideal location.”

Swartz said, “Local groups often are aware of specific water resource conditions and needs that the Commission can factor in when deciding where to locate monitoring stations. Also, as in the case of the Mehoopany watershed association, local interests have helped us encourage private landowners or municipal officials to host a monitoring station.”

SRBC receives the data from the monitoring stations and makes it available to other resource agencies and the public via its web site at www.srbc.net/programs/remotenetwork.htm. The data help environmental protection officials track existing water quality conditions and any changes in them on an ongoing, real-time basis. The data also help local public water suppliers, watershed groups and communities stay informed.

“Because of environmental impact concerns, the Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association is focused on maintaining the environmental integrity within the watershed,” said association member Emily Krafjack. “To strengthen the association’s efforts in that regard, we were very interested in obtaining a remote monitor in our watershed. We are very pleased to have been able to work with SRBC to obtain this monitor for our community, and in particular, the Little Mehoopany Creek.”

SRBC has to date installed 25 monitoring stations primarily in northern tier Pennsylvania where natural gas drilling in the Marcellus shale is most active. SRBC anticipates having a total of 40 stations installed by December 2010 (30 in Pennsylvania and 10 in New York).

Funding for the Pennsylvania stations was made possible by a \$750,000 contribution in 2009 from East Resources, Inc., a natural gas company based in Warrendale, Pennsylvania. Financial support of \$200,000 from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority is covering the 10 stations in New York State.

In addition to monitoring locations where natural gas drilling is most active, SRBC is installing some of the stations where no drilling activities are planned so SRBC can collect control-data.

Swartz said, “The Commission clearly understands that citizens are concerned about natural gas drilling activities occurring in the Susquehanna basin. Data collection efforts such as this monitoring network are critically important to establish existing background conditions and monitor changes in water quality.”

SRBC’s overarching objective of this monitoring network is to apply good science in order to track changes in water quality conditions over time and to allow for timely responses in the case of pollution events. Other objectives are to reduce the cost of data collection by using advanced technologies, enhance water supply protection through source water monitoring and be responsive to public concerns.

SRBC continues to reach out to local government officials, colleges and universities and watershed organizations to seek their input regarding placement of the monitoring stations.

SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION (SRBC)

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, a 27,510-square-mile watershed. The Susquehanna River starts in Cooperstown, New York, and flows 444 miles to Havre de Grace, Maryland, where the river meets the Chesapeake Bay.

MEHOOPANY CREEK WATERSHED ASSOCIATION

The Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association is very active in monitoring and improving stream quality. The association’s main efforts and projects include: the installation and monitoring of water quality sampling sites; liming of the South Branch Mehoopany Creek several times over the years; completion of a stream restoration project on North Branch Mehoopany Creek; and a stream restoration project on the South Branch Mehoopany Creek. The association holds monthly meetings and invites all those interested to attend. The monthly meetings are held on the third Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at the Mehoopany Township Building, Mehoopany, Pa.

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