



Delaware River Watershed

I. Location

- Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey
- Watershed drains into Delaware Bay (Delaware Estuary), which is connected to Chesapeake Bay by the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

II. Main Waterways in Pennsylvania

- Delaware River: Total Length= 326 miles
- Includes both the East and West branches of the Delaware River
- Schuylkill River
- Lehigh River
- Lake Wallenapaupack

III. History

- The Delaware River basin was one of the earliest areas home to Native Americans.
- In 1776, George Washington led his troops across the Delaware River to defeat the British in the Battle of Trenton.
- The Delaware River served as a major avenue of commerce in and out of PA.

IV. Watershed Area and Size

- Total Watershed Area= 13, 539 square miles, including 6,466 square miles in PA.
- 3rd largest watershed in PA
- 48% of watershed is located in PA
- A part of the larger Chesapeake Bay watershed
- Becomes increasingly saline (has a higher salt content) as it approaches the mouth

V. Surrounding Environment

1. Land Use and Land Cover

- Main cities: Philadelphia, Chester, Levittown, Norristown, Doylestown, Pottstown, Reading, Allentown, Bethlehem
- Lower areas of the watershed are highly developed with INTENSE areas of industry. Also areas of high residential activity and concentrated crop and pasture land throughout the entire watershed.
- Upper reaches of the watershed are mainly undeveloped consisting of mixed to deciduous forest land.



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(V. Surrounding Environment Cont.)

- Northern Hardwood Forests and Appalachian Oak Forest: including birch, beech, hemlock, ash, hickory, maple, pine
- Agriculture- especially dairy farming near the headwaters
- Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area located in areas of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey in close proximity to New York City

VI. Population

- In PA: 5,000,000 people
- Most populated watershed in PA

VII. Bedrock and Soil Types

- Ridge and valley areas rich in limestone, shale, and sandstone
- Areas of intense metamorphic and igneous concentration
- Diverse geographic area
- Glacial till from early glacier deposits in upper reaches of watershed
- Soils high in iron

VIII. Emissions into Water

- Lead
- Nutrients
- Fecal Coliform
- Phosphorus- in high levels

IX. Regulations Concerning Watershed

- No watershed specific regulations at this time.

X. Water Usage

- Public, commercial, domestic, industrial, mining, livestock , hydroelectric, wastewater treatment, reservoir
- Hydroelectric power
- Large ocean vessels use it for transportation as far inland as Philadelphia
- Tourism
- Irrigation
- Joining of three reservoirs transfer water out of the basin into New York City
- Drinking water
- Recreation (especially fishing)



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XI. Threats

- Biological Impairment: problems of habitat destruction, low dissolved oxygen levels and other parameters that cause adverse living conditions for aquatic life
- Low summertime dissolved oxygen levels in the Delaware Bay due to its saline (salty) conditions.

XII. Action in the Watershed

- Brodhead Watershed Association- protection of resources- www.brodheadwatershed.org/bwa
- Brodhead Forest and Stream Association
- Darby Creek Valley Association- www.dcvva.org
- Delaware and Lehigh Navigation Canal
- Delaware Canal State Park- www.dcnr.state.pa/stateparks/parks/d-canal.htm
- Delaware River Greenway Partnership Program- www.lenapeculture.org/greenway.html
- Delaware Water Gap National Park- www.nps.gov/dewa
- Friends of the Delaware Canal- www.fodc.org
- Heritage Conservancy- www.heritageconservancy.org
- Neshaminy Watershed Association- www.amrivers.org/groups
- Tohickon Creek Watershed Association – www.amrivers.org/groups
- Water Resources Association of Delaware River Basin- advocates need for water supply through sustainable use of Delaware River Basin. – www.wrbrb.org
- Delaware River and Bay Shoreline Council
- Delaware River Basin Commission- www.state.nj.us/drbc/drbc.htm
- Delaware Riverkeeper Network- www.delawareriverkeeper.org