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**ASSESSMENT OF INTERSTATE  
STREAMS IN THE  
SUSQUEHANNA RIVER BASIN**

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## Introduction

The Susquehanna River Basin is the largest river basin on the Atlantic Coast of the United States, draining 27,510 square miles. The Susquehanna River originates at the outlet of Otsego Lake near Cooperstown, N.Y. From there the river flows 444 miles through New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland before emptying into the Chesapeake Bay at Havre de Grace, Md. Eighty-three streams cross state lines in the basin. Several streams traverse the state borders at multiple points, contributing to 91 total crossings. Of those 91 crossings, 45 streams flow from New York into Pennsylvania, 22 from Pennsylvania into New York, 15 from Pennsylvania into Maryland, and nine from Maryland into Pennsylvania. Many streams are small, and 32 are unnamed.

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC) reviews projects that may have interstate impacts on water resources in the Susquehanna River Basin. Established in 1986, SRBC's Interstate Streams Monitoring Program provides data from border streams that are not routinely assessed by state agencies in New York, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. Currently, the state agencies do not monitor all of the interstate streams and do not produce comparable data needed to determine potential impacts on the water quality of interstate streams. SRBC's ongoing interstate monitoring program is partially funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

The interstate water quality monitoring program includes periodic collection of water and biological samples from interstate streams, as well as assessments of physical habitat. Water quality data are used to: (1) assess compliance with water quality standards, (2) characterize stream quality and seasonal variations, (3) build a database for assessment of water quality trends, (4) identify streams for reporting to USEPA under Section 305(b) of the Clean Water Act, (5) provide information to signatory states for Integrated List purposes and possible Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) development, and (6) identify areas for restoration and protection. Biological conditions are assessed using representative benthic macroinvertebrate and fish populations, which provide an indication of the biological health of a stream and serve as indicators of water quality.

SRBC's interstate monitoring program began in April 1986. For the first five years, results were reported based on water-year (from October to the following September). In 1991, SRBC changed the reporting periods to correspond with its fiscal year (from July to the following June). In 2008, SRBC transitioned to a reporting period based on the calendar year (from January to that December). Reports are typically completed the summer of the year following the collection period. Therefore, this report includes data collected between January 1 and December 31, 2011. Beginning in 2007, a web-based format was initiated to provide a more user-friendly product that is easily accessible to government agencies as well as any individuals or groups that may be interested in the condition of these streams and rivers. Recent reports are available on SRBC's web site at <http://www.srbc.net/programs/monitoringprotection.htm>.