

# Accomplishments and Milestones over the First 50 Years of the DELAWARE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION

## ENVIRONMENTAL MILESTONES

1961: Delaware River Basin Compact    1968: Wild and Scenic Rivers Act    1970: 1st Earth Day; U.S. EPA, DNREC, NJDEP, NYSDEC, PADER created    1972: Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act)    1988: U.S. Congress designates the Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor  
 1962: Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* helps to start the modern environmental movement    1971: Susquehanna River Basin Compact    1981: Lambertville, N.J. holds its 1st annual festival to celebrate the shad's return to the Delaware River    1992: U.S. Congress deauthorizes the Tocks Island Dam project

**1961**  
 The DRBC is created when concurrent compact legislation ratified by Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Congress becomes law. President John F. Kennedy hosts a ceremonial signing of the compact at the White House on November 2. The first meeting of the DRBC takes place a month later on December 13.



**1968**  
 The commission sets national precedent in its water pollution abatement campaign, approving regulations to implement water quality standards it adopted in 1967 for the Delaware Estuary that are tied to an innovative wasteload allocation program.

**1975**  
 In a split vote, DRBC commissioners recommend that Congress not appropriate funds for the construction of the Tocks Island Dam project on the Delaware River.



**1973**  
 The DRBC adopts a regulation requiring metering of customer connections of new, major water supply systems, kicking off a water conservation campaign years before it becomes fashionable with other agencies.



**1981**  
 The Level B Study, part of a planning process to guide the DRBC in revising its long-range master plan in view of the Tocks Island decision, is released. Water conservation is a keystone of the program, which also recommends enlarging existing reservoirs to bolster water supply storage.

**1983**  
 After four years of intense deliberations, the Interstate Water Management ("Good Faith") Report is approved. It makes mid-course corrections to the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decree that apportioned the waters of the Delaware and lays the framework for a drought operating plan. The plan is used successfully during two water supply emergencies in the 1980s.

**1986**  
 The commission's water conservation program hits full stride with adoption of regulations requiring the source metering of large water withdrawals. In the next six years the adoption of additional regulations and programs establish the DRBC as an international leader in the water conservation arena.



**1995**  
 As it has since its creation, the commission plays host to foreign delegations as part of an informal program to help friends overseas solve water-related problems. Delegations from more than 20 nations have toured the basin and visited the DRBC's offices over the years.

**1998**  
 The DRBC amends its regulations originally adopted in 1980 that protect the limited groundwater resources in heavily populated portions of southeastern Pennsylvania by establishing withdrawal limits for 14 watersheds.

**1998**  
 Carol R. Collier is sworn in as the commission's third executive director, becoming the first woman to head an interstate-federal compact agency.



**1995**  
 A DRBC-sponsored project designed to prevent or reduce Delaware River flooding in the Port Jervis, N.Y.-area is completed.

**1992**  
 The DRBC adopts Special Protection Waters (SPW) anti-degradation regulations intended to "keeping the clean water clean" in the 121-mile stretch of the upper and middle Delaware, most of which is federally designated as "Wild and Scenic."

## DRBC MILESTONES

<p><b>1962</b>                  The DRBC approves its first comprehensive plan, with a dozen multi-purpose reservoir projects, including the giant Tocks Island impoundment planned for the main stem Delaware River.</p> <p><b>1962</b>                  James F. Wright is appointed as the DRBC's first executive director.</p>	<p><b>1965</b>                  The DRBC declares a state of water supply emergency and unleashes a fundamental tenet of the compact—to settle water disputes through an administrative process. The DRBC's role is pivotal in negotiating successful, out-of-court policy on emergency water allocations. The basin's "drought of record," which began in 1961, finally eases in 1967.</p>	<p><b>1971</b>                  Construction of Beltzville Reservoir at the headwaters of the Lehigh River is completed at a cost of \$23 million. Releases from this U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' impoundment (plus releases from Blue Marsh Reservoir, then under construction) help improve streamflows, enhance water quality, and protect fisheries.</p>	<p><b>1977</b>                  Gerald M. Hansler is sworn in as the commission's second executive director.</p> <p><b>1977</b>                  DRBC regulations take effect to restrict development in the 100-year floodplain and prohibit development in the floodway. They apply to non-tidal portions of the Delaware River and its tributaries.</p>	<p><b>1981</b>                  Fred Lewis, who operates the only commercial shad fishery on the non-tidal Delaware River, nets 6,392 shad—the biggest catch since 1896. The return of this popular game fish is linked directly to water quality improvement.</p> <p><b>1978</b>                  Two reaches of the Delaware River totaling over 100 miles are added to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System by the U.S. Congress and President Jimmy Carter. The DRBC helps draft the enabling federal legislation.</p>	<p><b>1985</b>                  Construction begins on Merrill Creek Reservoir, designed to provide make-up water for riverbank electric generating plants during low flow conditions on the Delaware. The commission directed in-basin electrical utilities to build the \$217 million impoundment or face cutbacks during droughts. It becomes operational in 1988.</p> <p><b>1985</b>                  The DRBC adopts a basinwide well registration program, an integral component of its rapidly expanding groundwater management campaign.</p>	<p><b>1988</b>                  The Delaware Bay and tidal reach of the Delaware River are added to the National Estuary Program, a project set up to protect estuarine systems of national significance.</p>	<p><b>1993</b>                  Working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the DRBC completes flood stage forecast mapping for a 65-mile reach of the Delaware River from Belvidere, N.J. downstream to Trenton, N.J.</p> <p><b>1993</b>                  The Maurice River and several tributaries (including Menantico and Muskeek Creeks and the Manumuskin River) are added to the National Wild and Scenic River System by the U.S. Congress and President Bill Clinton.</p>	<p><b>1996</b>                  The DRBC adopts regulations governing the discharge of toxic pollutants from wastewater treatment plants to the tidal Delaware River. Numerous toxic substances, some carcinogenic, are covered under the new rules.</p> <p><b>1999</b>                  The commission amends its Groundwater Protected Area Regulations for Southeastern Pennsylvania, placing withdrawal limits on 62 additional watersheds.</p> <p><b>1999</b>                  The four basin state governors sign a resolution directing the commission to develop a visionary blueprint for the watershed's future and calls for a Watershed Advisory Council to help forge this plan. The Governors' Summit, attended by Delaware Gov. Thomas Carper and New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, was the second step in the year-long "Flowing Toward the Future" process that also included workshops held throughout the basin and a watershed-wide conference in Philadelphia.</p>
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## HYDROLOGIC MILESTONES



- Delaware River at Trenton, N.J. crests over Flood Stage
- DRBC-Declared Drought Action
- Drought of Record



(From left to right) New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller, Pennsylvania Gov. David Lawrence, Interior Secretary Stewart Udall (President Kennedy's appointed federal representative), New Jersey Gov. Robert Meyner, and Norman Lack (Delaware's alternate commissioner) attending the DRBC's first meeting in Princeton, N.J. on Dec. 13, 1961.



(From left to right) New Jersey Gov. Brendan Byrne, Delaware Gov. Sherman Tribbitt, Pennsylvania Gov. Milton Shapp, and Ogden Reid (New York's alternate commissioner) at the July 31, 1975 meeting where the DRBC votes 3 to 1 against the construction of Tocks Island Dam. Pennsylvania dissented and the United States, as sponsor of the project, abstained.



New Jersey Gov. Thomas Kean (second from right) heads up the Merrill Creek Reservoir ground-breaking ceremonies on Sept. 23, 1985. Also digging in (from left to right) are Robert Touhey (Delaware's alternate commissioner), R. Timothy Weston (Pennsylvania's alternate commissioner), DRBC Executive Director Gerald Hansler, and Dirk Hofman (New Jersey's alternate commissioner). Storage in this reservoir, located near Phillipsburg, N.J., is used to replace evaporative water losses caused by power generation when the basin is under DRBC drought operations.



Delaware Gov. Thomas Carper signs the resolution calling for a new comprehensive water resources plan for the basin as New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman looks on. The signing ceremony took place during the Governors' Summit held on Sept. 29, 1999 at the New Jersey State Aquarium (now known as Adventure Aquarium) in Camden.

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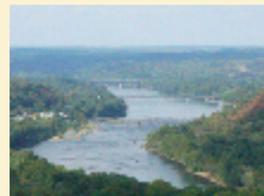
## ENVIRONMENTAL MILESTONES

2000: U.S. Congress designates the Schuylkill River National Heritage Area

2004: 50th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court Decree that apportioned the waters of the Delaware River

2007: Bald eagle's population recovery allows it to be removed from the federal list of endangered and threatened wildlife

2011: While the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System protects less than one-quarter of one percent of all U.S. rivers, 75 percent of the non-tidal Delaware is now included



**2000**  
The "Lower Delaware Wild and Scenic Rivers Act" and the "White Clay Creek Wild and Scenic Rivers System Act" are signed into law by President Bill Clinton. The White Clay Creek's designation marks the first time that virtually an entire watershed, not just a section of river, is added to the national system.

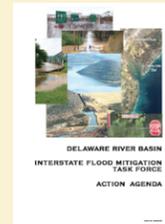
**2003**  
Updated Schuylkill River recreation maps prepared by the DRBC in partnership with the Schuylkill River Greenway Association and Pennsylvania's Department of Conservation and Natural Resources are released for sale to the public.

**2003**  
On behalf of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, and based on work conducted by the DRBC, U.S. EPA establishes total maximum daily loads (TMDLs or "pollution budgets") for the tidal Delaware River from Trenton downstream to the head of the Delaware Bay near Liston Point, Del. to address the presence of PCBs.

**2003**  
The Christina Basin Clean Water Partnership, of which the DRBC is a member, is one of only 20 community-based groups (out of 176 applications) selected to receive \$1 million from a national program to support efforts to preserve and protect this interstate subbasin of the Delaware River.



**2004**  
Elected and environmental leaders from the basin states and the federal government, along with other interested watershed stakeholders, meet in Wilmington to celebrate the completion of the Water Resources Plan for the Delaware River Basin ("basin plan"). The event also includes a ceremonial signing of a resolution supporting the plan's implementation. The plan is a 30-year, goal-based framework that will serve as a guide for all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders whose actions affect water resources in the basin.



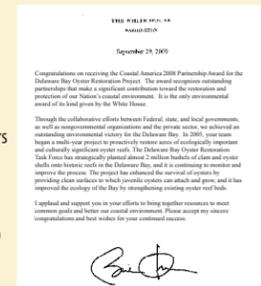
**2007**  
The Delaware River Basin Interstate Flood Mitigation Task Force forwards to the four governors its action agenda with 45 recommendations for a more proactive, sustainable, and systematic approach to flood damage reduction. The formation of the task force was requested by the governors in September 2006 following three major main stem floods that took place between September 2004 and June 2006.

**2007**  
The first phase of a demonstration project is completed at the DRBC headquarters property to show how an older site can be retrofitted to properly handle stormwater.



**2009**  
Building upon its previous water conservation program accomplishments, the DRBC implements an updated water audit approach to identify and control water loss. Commission staff and its Water Management Advisory Committee help to develop the software being used here and nationwide to implement the new methodology.

**2009**  
The Delaware Bay Oyster Restoration Project, an ongoing effort by DRBC and its task force partners to revitalize Eastern oysters in the bay, receives the Coastal America Partnership Award given by the White House.



**2011**  
The DRBC celebrates its 50th anniversary.

**2011**  
The Delaware River is selected over five other finalists in an online voting contest to be designated as Pennsylvania's "River of the Year."

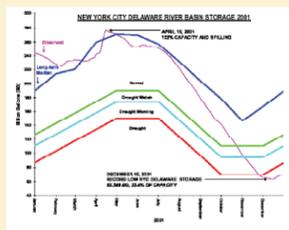


## DRBC MILESTONES

2000



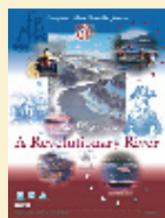
**2001**  
The DRBC declares a basinwide drought emergency for only the third time since 1980. By December 15, the combined storage in the three New York City-Delaware Basin reservoirs drops to a record-low level of 63.348 billion gallons, or 23.4% of capacity. This emergency will remain in effect until November 2002.



2001

2002

**2002**  
Pennsylvania recognizes the Delaware as its "Feature River of the Year" and creates an attractive poster with the help of DRBC staff using the theme, "The Delaware: A Revolutionary River."



2005

**2005**  
The DRBC unanimously adopts a rule to establish pollutant minimization plan (PMP) requirements for point (end-of-pipe) and non-point (runoff) discharges of PCBs in the Delaware Estuary. This innovative approach embodies the principle of adaptive management, which encourages experimentation, measurement, and readjustment depending on the results of the actions taken. The commissioners set a goal of reducing PCB loadings by 50% in five years.

2005

2006



**2006**  
The Musconetcong Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is signed into law by President George W. Bush adding yet another stretch of a Delaware River tributary to the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

**2006**  
On behalf of Delaware and New Jersey, and based on work conducted by the DRBC, U.S. EPA establishes a TMDL for PCBs in the Delaware Bay. It is built upon the TMDLs developed in 2003 for the 85-mile tidal section of the Delaware River.

2006

**2008**  
The DRBC issues the first State of the Basin Report, which serves as a benchmark for current conditions and provides a platform for measuring and reporting future progress.

**2008**  
The DRBC expands coverage of its SPW regulations by permanently adding the 76-mile-long stretch of the Lower Delaware. SPW designation now includes the entire non-tidal Delaware River from Hancock, N.Y. south to Trenton.



2008

2010

**2010**  
The DRBC announces that it will postpone consideration of natural gas well pad applications until regulations are adopted. Draft natural gas development regulations are published in December for public review. Approximately 69,000 submissions commenting on the draft rules will be received by the end of the public comment period four months later.

**2010**  
The third DRBC Federal Coordination Summit is held in October bringing together participants from 20 different federal, state, and other agencies to foster relationships and share information. Similar summits were held in 2006 and 2008.

**2010**  
The DRBC updates water quality criteria for human health and aquatic life for toxic pollutants in the Delaware Estuary and extends the criteria to include the bay.



2010

2011

## HYDROLOGIC MILESTONES



American patriotism was unfurled on the Delaware River shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks against the United States. The rowboat displaying the flag appeared one morning at the spot where George Washington and his Continental Army crossed the ice-choked river on Christmas night in 1776, en route to a decisive victory over the British Crown.



Delaware Gov. Ruth Ann Minner addresses elected and environmental leaders along with other interested watershed stakeholders at an event held in Wilmington on Sept. 13, 2004 to celebrate the completion of the "basin plan." Joining her (from left to right) are Brig. Gen. Meredith Temple (DRBC's federal representative), Bradley Campbell (New Jersey's alternate commissioner), Lt. Gov. Catherine Baker Knoll (Pennsylvania), and Fred Nuffer (New York's alternate commissioner). (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)



Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell (right) and Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) John Paul Woodley, Jr. at the May 15, 2008 DRBC Federal Coordination Summit in Philadelphia. (Photo courtesy of Khaalid Walls/U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

