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DRBC's Toxics Research & Planning

Toxics Advisory Committee

January 21st, 2026

Jeremy L. Conkle, Ph.D.
Sr. Chemist/Toxicologist
jeremy.conkle@drbc.gov



DRBC Toxics Information

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Water Quality & Monitoring Programs

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Introduction



DRBC Water Quality Mandate

Article 5 of the Delaware River Basin Compact defines the Commission's water quality mandates and directs the DRBC to take the lead on water quality matters pertaining to the Basin by adopting regulations:

"...to control such future pollution and abate existing pollution, and to require such treatment of sewage, industrial or other waste....as may be required to protect the public health or to preserve the waters of the Basin for uses in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan." (Compact, §5.2)

The DRBC uses a multi-faceted strategy to water quality regulation that provides a rational approach

to protecting and restoring water quality in the basin.

DRBC Water Quality Regulations

The Commission's first [Water Quality Regulations](#) (pdf 885 KB) were adopted in March 1967. They are divided into two main sections: Article 3 - Water Quality Standards for the Delaware River Basin and Article 4 - Application of Standards.

In 1968, Stewart Udall, Secretary of the U.S. Dept. of the Interior from 1961-1969, said, "Only the Delaware among the nation's river basins is moving into high gear in its program to combat water

▶ **Aquatic Life Designated Use Study**

▶ **Bacteria Monitoring**

▶ **Biomonitoring Program**

▶ **Chlorides Monitoring**

▶ **Contaminants of Emerging Concern**

▶ **Delaware Estuary Water Quality Monitoring Program**

▶ **Dissolved Oxygen and Nutrients**

▶ **Modeling**

▶ **Other Monitoring Programs & Studies (e.g., Fish Tissue, Microplastics, Metals)**

▶ **PCBs and PMPs**

▶ **Special Protection Waters (SPW)**

▶ **Water Resource Data Sets**

<https://www.nj.gov/drbc/programs/quality/>



Recently Finished Projects

- **PACZM Yr 2** – Characterization of PFAS in Surface Water, Sediment and Fish in the Pennsylvania Coastal Zone
- **PDE BIL** – Enhanced Monitoring for Toxics and Emerging Contaminants in Delaware Estuary Tributaries
- **USEPA/URI PFAS** – Exchanging air & water passive samplers at 4 sites.

Reports

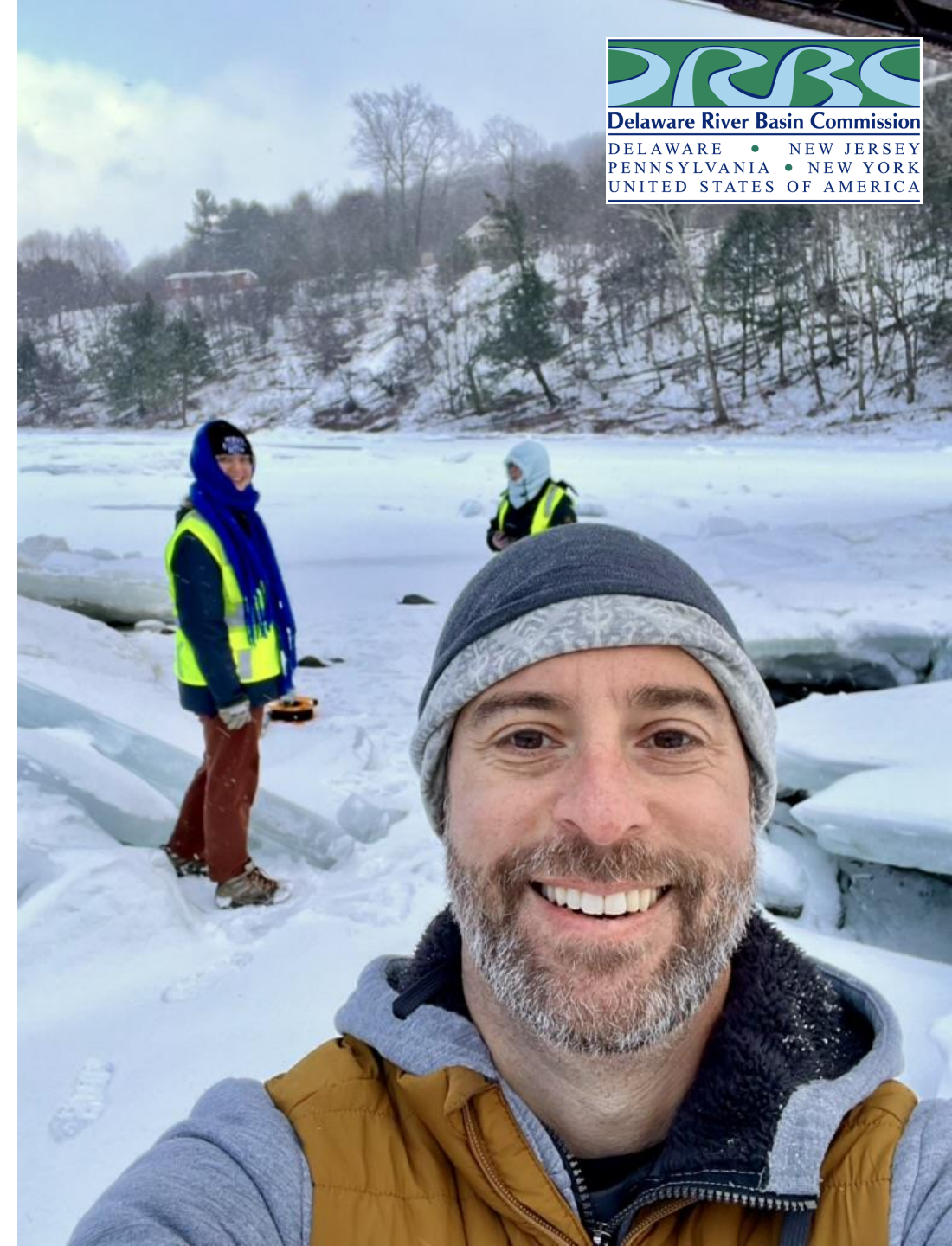


Nearly Complete Projects

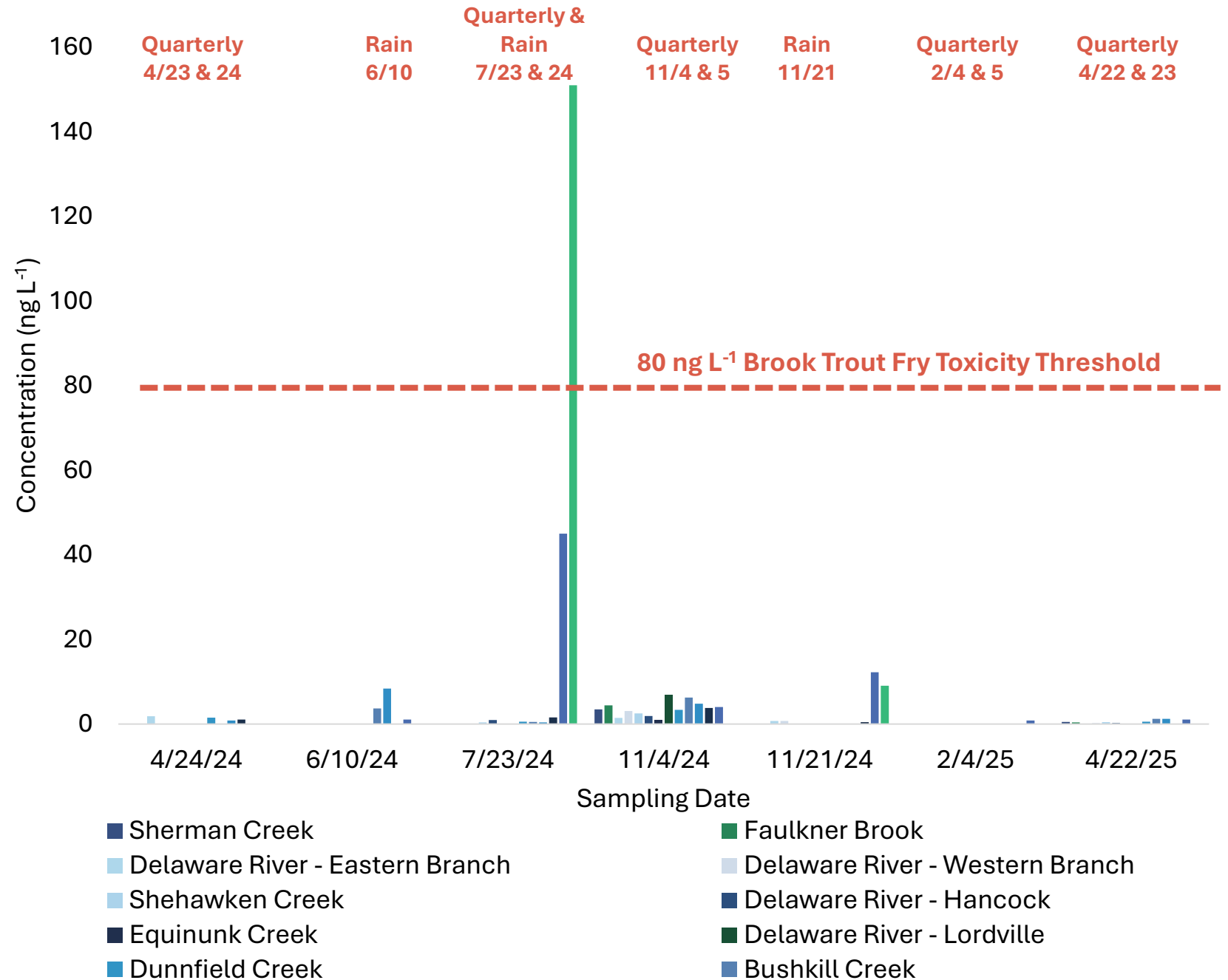
- NFWF Yr 3
 - Report drafted for submission soon
- D&R Canal PFAS
 - Field work and data are complete
 - Data uploaded to WQP
 - Final report is in draft form with NJWSA

Nearly Complete Projects

- NFWF 6-PPDq
 - All sampling and data are complete
 - Processing data now
 - Report writing in Spring 2026



A photograph taken from a bridge, looking down at a river. The bridge's metal truss structure is prominent on the left side of the frame. The river water is a murky brown color and appears to be in motion, with some white foam visible. The river is flanked by a dense forest of green trees and bushes. A black cable or wire runs across the upper part of the image, slightly above the river. The overall scene is a natural, somewhat overgrown landscape.



Additional Points & Future Efforts

- During November drought, 6PPD-Q detected at every site
- Sublethal toxicity thresholds are not well known
- Future
 - Planning a study for additional streams using a USGS tool that scores watersheds based on 6PPD-Q threat



<https://geonarrative.usgs.gov/6ppdq sourcedashboard/>

Ongoing & Upcoming Projects

- PACZM PFAS Tributary Track Down - PROPOSAL
 - Sampling of 5 tributaries with known PFAS
 - Attempt to narrow source locations
 - IF Funded, would begin in Spring 2027
- 106 Grant PFAS Data Synthesis
 - All publicly available data is synthesized
 - A web app has been developed to visualize all of this data
- Boat Run PFAS Sampling
 - Make PFAS a regular analysis with the annual Boat Run program



Delaware River Basin Commission

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Questions?

Jeremy L. Conkle, Ph.D.
Sr. Chemist/Toxicologist
jeremy.conkle@drbc.gov

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