

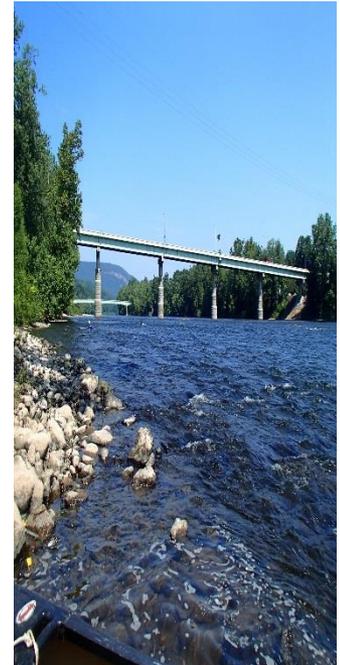
# Delaware River Basin Commission

## Implementation of Antidegradation Policies and Practices in the Delaware River Special Protection Waters

*NJ Water Environment Association  
Annual Conference & Exposition*

*Robert Limbeck, Sr. Aquatic Biologist  
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*May 10, 2017*



# Delaware River Basin Commission

## Topics:

- Background of DRBC Special Protection Waters
- Assessing Measurable Change to Existing Water Quality in Lower Delaware River
- Implementation for DRBC dockets holders and NPDES permittees
- Existing Water Quality Atlas of the Delaware River



**Delaware River Basin Commission**

DELAWARE • NEW JERSEY  
PENNSYLVANIA • NEW YORK  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

# Special Protection Waters Reaches of the Delaware River



Special Protection Waters designated for entire non-tidal Delaware River

SPW rules cover  $\approx 6,780$  of the 13,800 sq. mi. Delaware River Basin watershed area

DRBC/NPS Scenic Rivers Monitoring Program (SRMP)

$\sim 200$  miles of Delaware River + most tributary watersheds

# Special Protection Waters

- \* Regulations effective in 1992 for Upper and Middle Delaware River. Lower Delaware River effective in 2005.
- \* Require projects to demonstrate that they will not measurably change existing water quality (EWQ).
- \* EWQ is currently defined by reach-wide average concentrations in Upper and Middle Delaware portions. ICPs and BCPs in Lower Delaware River.
- \* Monitoring data collected from 2006 to 2011 in Upper and Middle Delaware River, and from 2009 to 2011 in the Lower Delaware River.

# Special Protection Waters Objective: Antidegradation of Existing Water Quality

- It is the policy of the Commission that there be **no measurable change** in **existing water quality** except towards natural conditions in waters considered by the Commission to have exceptionally high scenic, recreational, ecological, and/or water supply values.

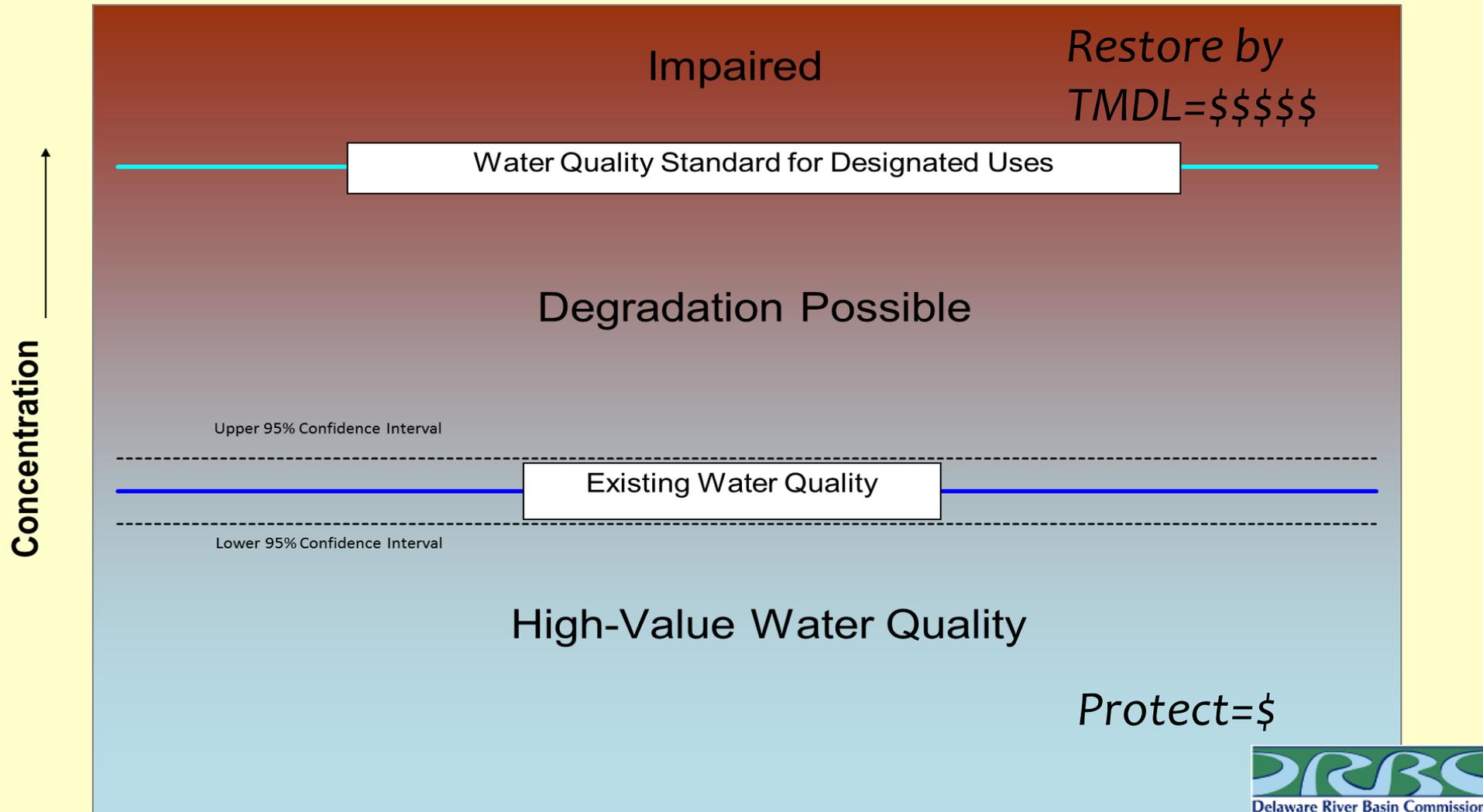
– Sec 3.10.3A.2.

***Assess to confirm this***

***Define this***

# What is EWQ? Policy, Not Criteria

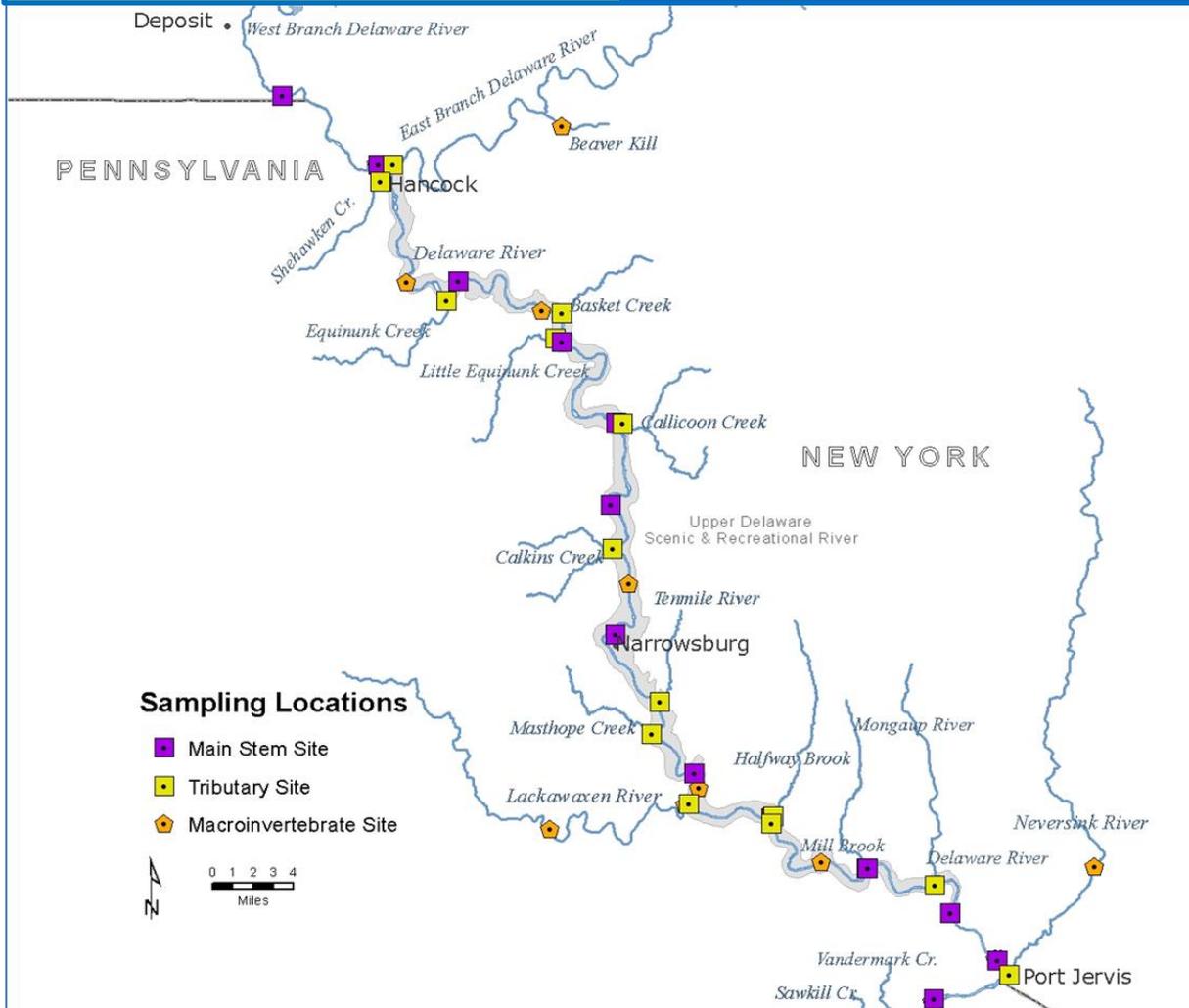
## Comparison of Existing Water Quality versus Standards



Boundary Control Points (BCP) are located on tributaries near park boundary or near confluence with river

Interstate Control Points (ICP) are located on interstate river sites at accessible locations between tributaries

# Upper Delaware (UPDE) Sites



SPW Rules 1992: Reach-wide Only, EWQ for Tributaries was not Described

29 sites: Site-Specific EWQ 2006-2011 (n=30-50) + state/USGS data

Designated as Outstanding Basin Waters

Assessment 1 Planned: 2019-2021

# Lower Delaware (LDEL) Sites

EWQ established 2000-2004 (n=40-50)

SPW Rules passed 2008

Designated as Significant Resource Waters

Assessment 1:  
2009-2011

Assessment 2 planned  
2019-2021

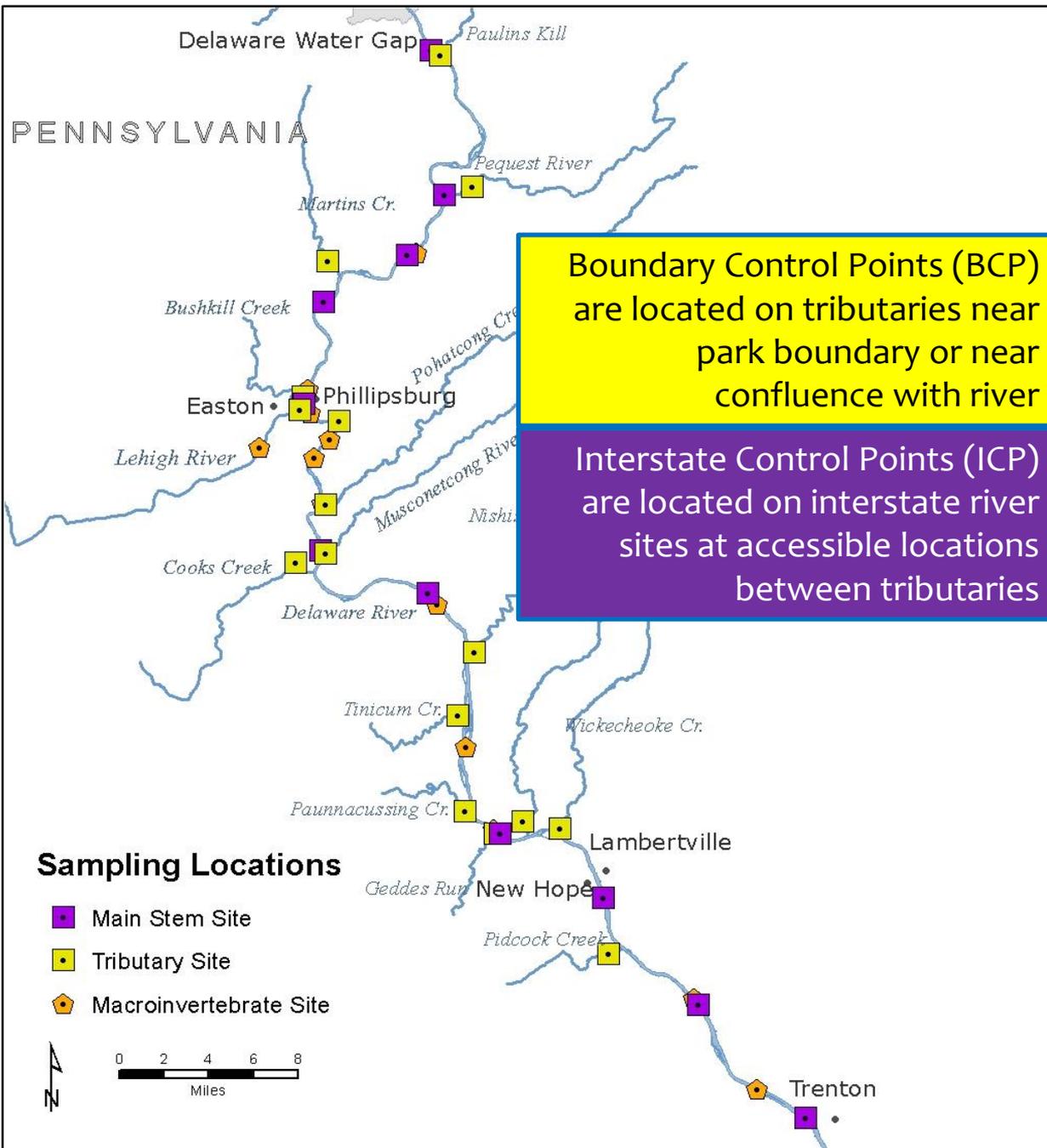


TABLE 2I. Definition of Existing Water Quality: Easton ICP

Delaware River at Northampton Street Bridge, Easton-Phillipsburg, PA/NJ, River Mile 183.82

Parameter (Y)	Definition of Existing Water Quality			
	Median	Lower 95%CI	Upper 95%CI	Flow Relationships Site specific regression equation.
Ammonia NH3-N (mg/l) *	<.05	<.05	<0.05	
Chloride (mg/l)	16	14	17	$Y = -0.00022184 Q + 16.751$
Chlorophyll a (mg/m <sup>3</sup> )	1.45	1.07	2.14	
Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l) mid-day*	8.10	7.90	8.58	
Dissolved Oxygen Saturation (%)	95%	92%	96%	
E. coli (colonies/100 ml)	31	24	64	$Y = \text{antilog}(0.00004425 Q + 1.273)$
Enterococcus (colonies/100 ml)	145	80	250	
Fecal coliform (colonies/100 ml) *	100	64	130	
Nitrate NO3-N (mg/l) *	0.85	0.70	0.90	
Orthophosphate (mg/l)	0.02	0.01	0.02	
pH	7.55	7.41	7.70	
Specific Conductance (umhos/cm)	142	127	155	$Y = -0.0024666 Q + 158.76$
Total Dissolved Solids (mg/l)	110	103	120	
Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (mg/l)	0.35	0.26	0.46	
Total Nitrogen (mg/l) *	1.19	1.01	1.35	
Total Phosphorus (mg/l) *	0.05	0.04	0.06	
Total Suspended Solids (mg/l) *	4.0	3.0	5.0	$Y = 0.00177536 Q - 4.8027$
Turbidity (NTU)	2.6	1.8	4.0	$Y = \text{antilog}(0.00003836 Q + 0.1845)$
Alkalinity (mg/l)	34	30	39	$Y = -0.00073929 Q + 39.867$
Hardness (mg/l)	48	45	52	

Existing Water Quality Definitions are contained in our Water Quality Regulations and in the new EWQ Atlas

# SPW Program Advancements Since the Delaware Riverkeeper Petitions to DRBC and Initial Rulemaking

- First Assessment of Measurable Change was successfully completed
  - See Lower Delaware Measurable Change Assessment 2016
- Site-Specific Existing Water Quality is complete for 85 sites and growing
  - See Existing Water Quality Atlas of Delaware Basin SPW 2016
- Cumulative Watershed Assessment of Discharges with Models
  - Occurs during No Measurable Change Evaluation step of permitting
- Outreach is improving
  - Interactive Story Map service using ARC-MAP
  - Building R code, Shiny Apps, Dashboards to view water quality information
- USGS tools and studies have contributed greatly to SRMP success
- SRMP is integrated and complimentary with State monitoring
- U.S. EPA and NPS support have been critical to SRMP capabilities

# Lower Delaware Measurable Change Assessment 2009-2011

2016



## Lower Delaware River Special Protection Waters

ASSESSMENT OF MEASURABLE CHANGES TO EXISTING WATER QUALITY,  
ROUND 1: BASELINE EWQ (2000-2004) VS. POST-EWQ (2009-2011)  
DELAWARE RIVER BASIN COMMISSION, SCENIC RIVERS MONITORING PROGRAM



DRBC | West Trenton, NJ

DRBC Publication is Available

Released (pdf) July 2016

Executive Summary,

24 Chapters (one per site):

Within-site measurable changes

3 Appendices:

New ICP/BCP sites

Statistical Guide

Flow Estimation Methods



[http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/home/newsroom/news/approved/20160808\\_LDSPW-EWQrpt.html](http://www.state.nj.us/drbc/home/newsroom/news/approved/20160808_LDSPW-EWQrpt.html)

# Summary Matrix of Measurable Changes: 440 Within-Site Comparisons at a Glance

Good News:  
88% of water quality tests showed no degradation

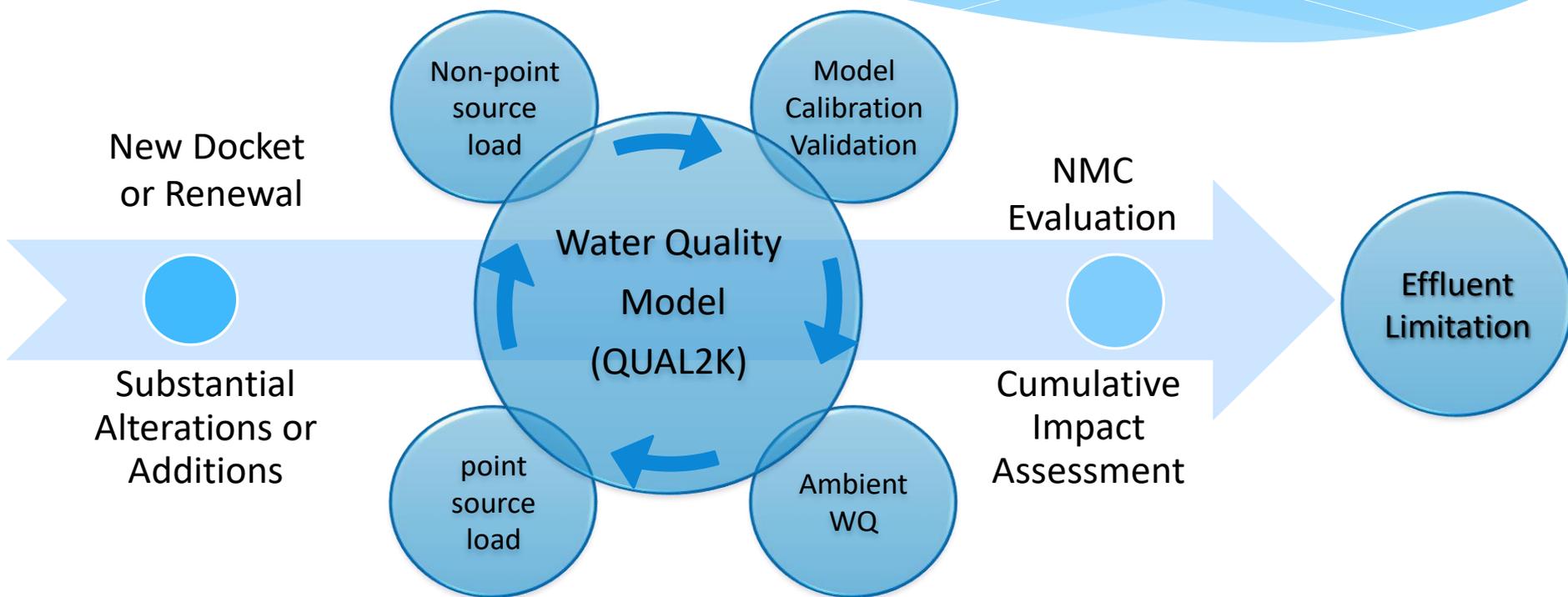
Site Color Key		Dark Blue = Interstate Control Point (ICP)										Dark Red = Pennsylvania Tributary Boundary Control Point (BCP)					Dark Green = New Jersey Tributary Boundary Control Point (BCP)								
Site Color Key		Del. River at Trenton	Del. River at Washngtn Crossing	Pidcock Creek, PA	Delaware River at Lambrtvile	Wicke-cheokee Creek, NJ	Lockatong Creek, NJ	Delaware River at Bulls Island	Pauna-coussing Creek, PA	Tohickon Creek, PA	Tinicum Creek, PA	Nishi-sakawick Creek, NJ	Del. River at Milford	Cooks Creek, PA	Musco-netcong River, NJ	Del. River at Rieglsvll	Pohat-cong Creek, NJ	Lehigh River, PA	Del. River at Easton	Bushkill Creek, PA	Martins Creek, PA	Pequest River, NJ	Del. River at Belvidere	Paulins Kill River, NJ	Del. River at Portland
Parameter	Site-->	1343 ICP	1418 ICP	1463 BCP	1487 ICP	1525 BCP	1540 BCP	1554 ICP	1556 BCP	1570 BCP	1616 BCP	1641 BCP	1677 ICP	1737 BCP	1746 BCP	1748 ICP	1774 BCP	1837 BCP	1838 ICP	1841 BCP	1907 BCP	1978 BCP	1978 ICP	2070 BCP	2074 ICP
Field	Dissolved Oxygen (DO) mg/l										~														
	Dissolved Oxygen Saturation %										~														
	pH, units																								
	Water Temperature, degrees C																								
Nutrients	Ammonia Nitrogen as N, Total mg/l																								
	Nitrate + Nitrite as N, Total mg/l																**								
	Nitrogen as N, Total (TN) mg/l																**								
	Nitrogen, Kjeldahl, Total (TKN) mg/l																								
	Orthophosphate as P, Total mg/l																								
	Phosphorus as P, Total (TP) mg/l																								
Bacteria	Enterococcus colonies/100 ml	~			~																				
	Escherichia coli colonies/100 ml	**	**	**	**	**	**		**	**	**														
	Fecal coliform colonies/100 ml																								
Conventionals	Alkalinity as CaCO3, Total mg/l																								
	Hardness as CaCO3, Total mg/l											~													
	Chloride, Total mg/l			**		**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	~	**	**	**	**	**
	Specific Conductance µmho/cm			**		**	**	~	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	~	**	**	~	~	~	**	~		
	Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) mg/l																								
	Total Suspended Solids (TSS) mg/l																								
Turbidity NTU																									
KEY		= No indication of measurable change to EWQ							** = Indication of measurable water quality change toward more degraded status					~ = Weak indication of measurable water quality change toward more degraded status											

# Lower Delaware Assessment Findings: Measurable Changes 2000-2011

88% of tests revealed no evidence of water quality degradation; many revealed water quality improvement.

- Nutrients improved at many sites since 2000. Only Pohatcong Creek increased.
- Chlorides and Specific Conductance increased at almost all locations (winter road salting is most likely cause). Further continuous monitoring underway; we want to work with co-regulators on issue.
- E. Coli concentrations increased from Frenchtown southward.
- DRBC/NPS data compare well with USGS and State data. 30+ samples provide best resolution to detect measurable change. Detection limits now low enough to measure conc. in high quality streams.

# No Measurable Change Evaluation for Docket holders



To date, of >150 SPW dockets, 33 had NMC evaluations for wastewater permits. Of these, 21 have resulted in effluent limitations maintain EWQ. (Namsu Suk, personal communication 9/12/16).

# Two Key Aspects of No Measurable Change Evaluations

1. Implementation to preserve NMC
  - Establishes wasteload allocations among sources to maintain EWQ utilizing WQ models where possible
  - Sets effluent limitations in a docket and/or permit
  - Not a TMDL
  - Manages water quality before exceedances occur
2. Assessment of NMC
  - Set multi-year instream monitoring program

Designed to preserve existing high water quality

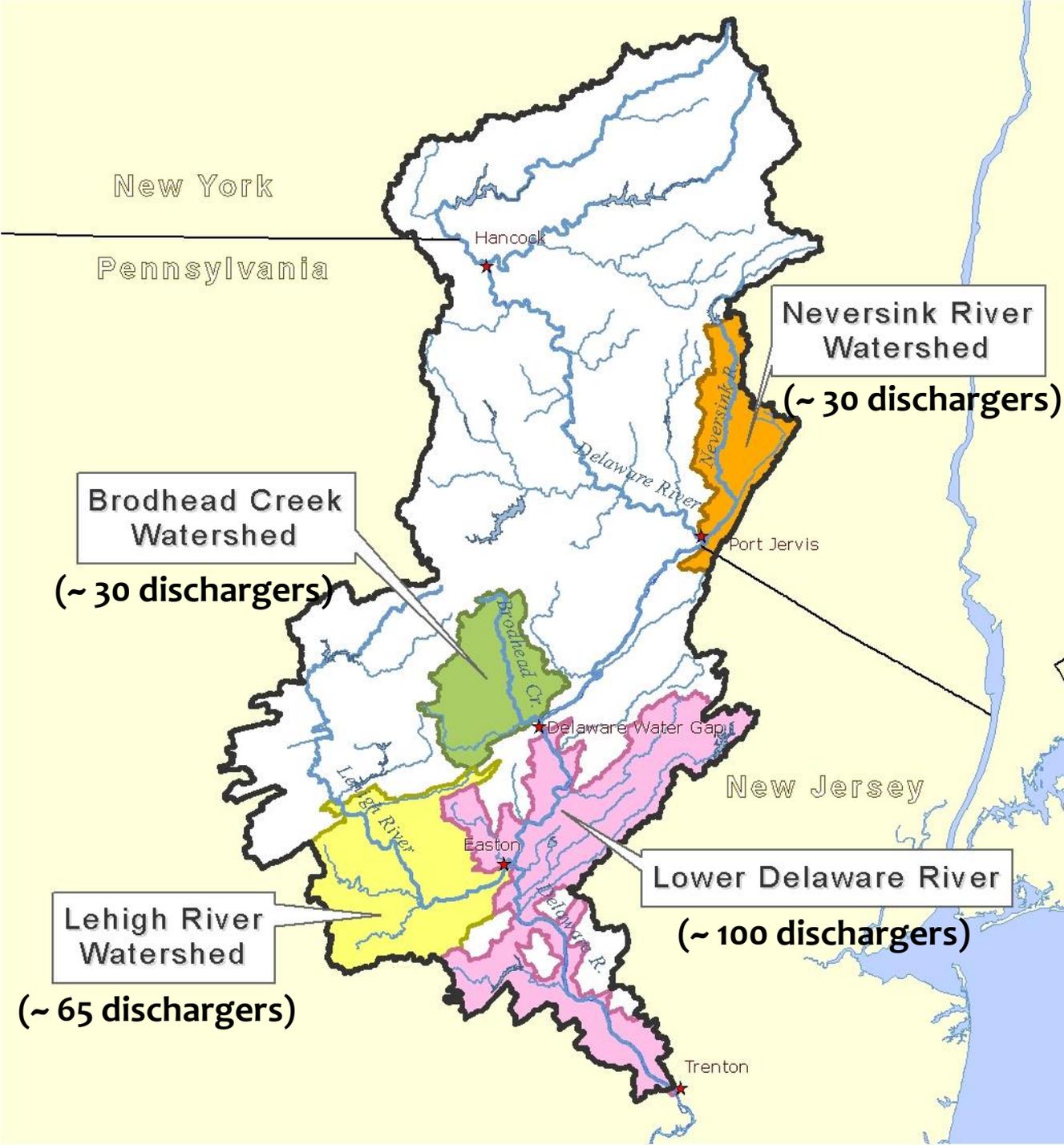
# Water Quality Models

**Neversink River Watershed (NY)**

**Brodhead Creek Watershed (PA)**

**Lehigh River Watershed (PA)**

**Lower Delaware River (PA/NJ)**  
**Multiple BCPs/ICPs**



# Existing Water Quality Atlas of the Delaware River Special Protection Waters

## Delaware River Basin Commission

### Existing Water Quality Atlas of the Delaware River Special Protection Waters



DRBC Special Protection Waters Program

September 2016 – Edition 1.0



Maps, Watershed Population, Land Use & Flow Statistics, and Site-Specific Existing Water Quality Tables from West Branch Delaware River to Trenton

85 River Reaches & Watersheds → 88 by 2018  
Upper Delaware: 11 ICP's, 19 BCP tribs.  
Middle Delaware: 7 ICP's, 20 BCP tribs.  
Lower Delaware: 10 ICP's, 18 BCP tribs.  
(28 DR sites & 57 tributary watersheds)

Best existing scientific knowledge of water quality, flow and characteristics of the Delaware River and its tributaries.

Planned Annual Updates and Additions including discharge inventory, new sites and parameters, updated population and land use, improved flow estimation.

# Contacts

**We are available to meet about more detailed discussion of these products.  
There are many more slides and details: see me for more or request a  
presentation tailored to your organization!**

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