



Susquehanna River Basin Facts

Drainage Area:

- ◆ Total: 27,510 square miles (71,251 square kilometers)
- ◆ In Pennsylvania: 20,960 square miles (54,286 square kilometers)

Length of River:

- ◆ Susquehanna River: 444 miles

Watershed Address from Headwaters to Mouth

- ◆ The Susquehanna flows from Otsego Lake, Cooperstown, New York, to Havre de Grace, Maryland, where it empties into the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.

Major Tributaries in Pennsylvania:

- ◆ Juniata, Lackawanna, Conestoga, and West Branch Susquehanna Rivers

Population

- ◆ Total: 3.9 million people
- ◆ In Pennsylvania: 3.3 million people

Major Cities in Pennsylvania:

- ◆ Altoona, Bedford, Carbondale, Carlisle, Clearfield, Harrisburg, Hollidaysburg, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lewisburg, Lewistown, Lock Haven, State College, Scranton, Sunbury, Wilkes-Barre, Williamsport, York

Who Is Responsible for the Overall Management of the Water Basin?

- ◆ Susquehanna River Basin Commission - an interstate commission that coordinates water resources. There are four appointed commissioners, one each from Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania and the federal government.

Land Cover (in Pennsylvania)

- | | |
|---------------|------|
| ◆ Forest | 64 % |
| ◆ Agriculture | 26 % |
| ◆ Developed | 7 % |
| ◆ Water | 1 % |
| ◆ Wetlands | <1 % |
| ◆ Bare | <1 % |
| ◆ Mining | <1 % |



Water Use (in Pennsylvania)

◆ Thermolectric	79%
◆ Public Water Supply	13%
◆ Industry	5%
◆ Mining	2%
◆ Commercial	<1%
◆ Agriculture	<1%

Economic Importance and Uses:

- ◆ The land and water of the basin sustain the people, farms and industry that are the lifeblood of the economy for over half of Pennsylvania and beyond.
- ◆ The forests and waters attract outdoors enthusiasts from all over the country and the world, thus creating a steadily growing tourism industry.

Industrial Uses:

- ◆ The Susquehanna provides a source of electricity for people within its basin and beyond. The river's water is harnessed for hydroelectric power generation and is used by both nuclear and non-nuclear power plants.
- ◆ The water of the Susquehanna is used in the manufacturing of a variety of products, such as steel and paper.
- ◆ Millions of gallons of water are used daily by food processing facilities located throughout southcentral Pennsylvania.

Public Water Supply:

- ◆ The Susquehanna is a source of drinking water for millions of people. Public water supply uses account for over 400 million gallons per day are withdrawn, with 200 million gallons per day consumed and not being returned to the water system.

Agricultural Uses:

- ◆ Agriculture is a leading industry throughout much of Pennsylvania, and the lands comprising the Susquehanna River Basin are no exception. While a very small percent of the water use in the Susquehanna Basin is directed towards agricultural use (about 1%), a significant portion of land cover in the Basin is agricultural. The Lower Susquehanna Basin holds the majority of the agricultural uses, with 36% of the land cover in the Lower Susquehanna as crops or pasture. Dairy, cattle, chicken, egg, hog, fruit, feed, and vegetable crop production can all be found within the basin. Some of the most fertile agricultural land in the United States is located in Lancaster County. At a consumption rate of 120 million gallons a day, agricultural operations are the fastest growing water use sector.

Historical Uses:

- ◆ People, products, and coal were transported by means of an extensive canal system (river nonnavigable).



- ◆ Coal, washed into the river from mining operations, was commercially dredged and sold.
- ◆ Prior to the construction of several dams on the lower Susquehanna in the 19th century, commercial shad fishing was conducted on the river. These dams, coupled with water pollution from coal mines, tanneries, and saw mills, put an end to the annual shad migrations and the fishing industry.
- ◆ Logs and lumber from the forests and sawmills of northcentral Pennsylvania were “floated” down the river to market. Dams were constructed along the way to control water levels. The logging industry brought wealth to the Williamsport region, by way of the Susquehanna River. During the logging boom of the mid 1800s, more millionaires were created in Williamsport than in any other region at any other time in United States history.

Recreational Uses:

- ◆ Recreational opportunities include bird watching, boating, canoeing, fishing, hunting, and swimming.

Pennsylvania State Parks in the Susquehanna River Basin:

- ◆ 61 state parks are located in the basin:
Archbald Pothole, Bald Eagle, Big Spring, Black Moshannon, Blue Knob, Bucktail, Canoe Creek, Cherry Springs, Codorus, Colonel Denning, Colton Point, Cowans Gap, Denton Hill, Frances Slocum, Fowler’s Hollow, Gifford Pinchot, Greenwood Furnace, Hills Creek, Hyner Run, Hyner View, Kettle Creek, Kings Gap, Lackawanna, Leonard Harrison, Little Pine, Locust Lake, Lyman Run, McCall Dam, Memorial Lake, Milton, Mount Pisgah, Nescopeck, Ole Bull, Parker Dam, Patterson, Penn Roosevelt, Pine Grove Furnace, Poe Paddy, Poe Valley, Prince Gallitzin, Prouty Place, R. B. Winter, Ravensburg, Reeds Gap, Ricketts Glen, S. B. Elliot, Salt Spring, Samuel E. Lewis, Sand Bridge, Shawnee, Shikellamy, Sizerville, Sinnemahoning, Susquehanna, Susquehannock, Swatara, Trough Creek, Upper Pine Bottom, Warrior’s Path, Whipple Dam, Worlds End

Geological Information:

- ◆ Flowing across three physiographic provinces, the river begins in the Appalachian Plateau Province, then curves its way through the Valley and Ridge Province and the Piedmont on its way to the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean.
- ◆ As the Susquehanna travels through the Ridge and Valley province, it cuts through five ridges. The area of five gaps, from Harrisburg north to Liverpool, is a National Natural Landmark. As an outstanding example of river-ridge interaction, it causes geologists to consider which came first: the river or the ridges.

Scenic Rivers

- ◆ There are 110.5 miles of scenic rivers in the Susquehanna River Watershed. Pine Creek, Lick Run, Stony Creek, Yellow Breeches Creek, LeTorte Spring Run, Tucquan Creek and Octoraro Creek



Unique Features:

- ◆ The river is almost a mile wide at Harrisburg.
- ◆ Over 60% of the watershed is forested.
- ◆ The basin comprises 43% of the Chesapeake Bay's drainage area.
- ◆ The Susquehanna is the 16th largest river in the United States.
- ◆ It is the largest commercially nonnavigable river in North America.
- ◆ It is the largest river lying entirely in the United States that drains into the Atlantic Ocean.
- ◆ The basin is one of the most flood prone areas in the United States. Major floods occur every 20 years. The average annual flood damage is \$113 million.
- ◆ The basin contains an operating ferry at Millersburg, Pennsylvania.
- ◆ A portion of the river (North Branch) has been designated as a Heritage River.