

# PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

## PURPOSE

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission (Commission) recognizes the challenges facing smaller municipal water supply systems to keep abreast of current regulatory requirements. Through a partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP), the Commission initiated the Public Water Supply Assistance Program (PWSAP) in 2012 to assist small municipal systems in meeting the Commission's regulatory requirements. In addition to targeted system-specific assistance, the Commission is also providing general outreach and education on regulatory requirements, training on the preparation and implementation of aquifer testing plans, groundwater withdrawal application preparation, and other educational programs specifically for public water supply systems.

## WHAT TYPES OF SYSTEM SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE DOES THE COMMISSION PROVIDE?

The Commission assists participating systems in the areas of data collection methods, procedures related to the aquifer testing process, planning for renewal of expiring approvals, or adding new water supply sources. The Commission's assistance may include:

- reviewing existing data, identifying data gaps, recommending data collection methods and developing a schedule for obtaining the missing data prior to submitting renewal applications;
- explaining the Commission's provisions for "grandfathered" sources (those uses that pre-date Commission regulations);
- reviewing projected growth and water demands to determine if current sources can meet those demands and evaluating the need for or impacts of adding new water sources to the system;
- identifying other issues such as unaccounted for water loss, metering, and monitoring that may arise while developing an action plan and recommending ways to address or mitigate those issues;
- assistance in developing metering and groundwater elevation monitoring plans; and
- completing a pre-drill well site review for the addition of new sources.

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE SYSTEM-SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE?

PWSAP is a no-cost assistance program for small municipal public water suppliers (serving up to approximately 10,000 people) that have Commission approvals expiring in the next five to eight years or systems seeking the addition of a new water source.



## HOW DOES A PRE-DRILL WELL SITE REVIEW PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR THE ADDITION OF NEW SOURCES?

The Commission uses the pre-drill well site review process to assist in the selection of appropriate well sites. New source locations should be selected to enhance economic growth while affording appropriate protection to the environment and avoiding conflicts with other users. Through the PWSAP, Commission staff reviews potential well sites, providing guidance on groundwater availability, and potential impacts to surface water features and other ecological concerns, such as rare, threatened, or endangered species. The normal project review fee is waived for eligible participants and the Commission provides a discounted aquifer test plan review fee for well sites with a completed pre-drill well site review (see the Commission's Regulatory Program Fee Schedule for more information).

## WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PROGRAM?

Through this program, Commission staff cannot complete withdrawal applications or aquifer testing plans for public water supply systems. A knowledgeable, competent consultant will be needed to prepare and submit an aquifer testing plan and an application. This program is not intended to replace or eliminate the need for appropriate consulting services, nor will Commission use the funds to cover consulting or contractor costs.

## RECENT PROGRAM ACTIVITY

In the spring of 2016, the Commission offered two day-long workshops on *Developing Aquifer Testing Plans and Groundwater Withdrawal Applications*. The purpose of the workshops was to provide guidance to small public water suppliers and their consultants on how to best evaluate their groundwater resources in accordance with the Commission's aquifer testing process. The workshops contained presentations from both PADEP and Commission staff and were well-attended and received by participants.

In the Fall of 2016, the Commission hosted a workshop titled *Water Resource Management Considerations for Public Water Supply Managers*. This workshop partnered with public water supply systems to conduct routine training sessions to foster understanding between the Commission and public water supply systems, address common misconceptions that exist within the regulated community, clearly communicate the purpose of the regulatory program, and help systems plan for and work through the regulatory process.

For 2017, the Commission is partnering with the PADEP Operator Outreach Assistance Program to present a three-part instructional series on Water Loss Management. In the Fall of 2017, the Commission is planning another workshop in the '*Water Resource Management Considerations for Public Water Supply Managers*' Series in Williamport, PA. The workshop will include the 2017 National Groundwater Association McEllhiney lecturer, Michael Schneiders, P.G., presenting *Defining the Operational Age of a Well: Predicting Mechanical Issues in Advance of Failure*.

To stay up to date on the program and workshop offerings, visit [www.srb.com/programs/pwsap.htm](http://www.srb.com/programs/pwsap.htm).

