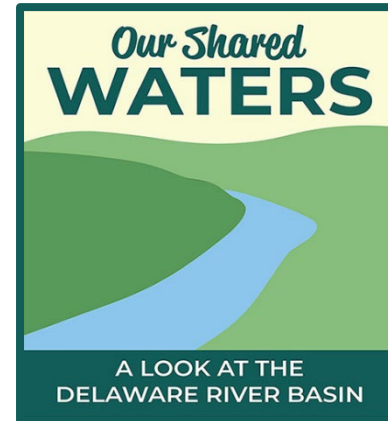


# Delaware River Basin Commission

## Our Shared Waters: A History of Improving Water Quality through Partnership

*Elizabeth Koniers Brown*  
*Director of External Affairs*

*January 18, 2023*



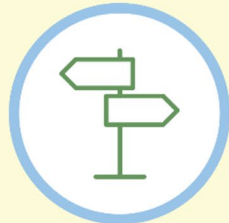
Credit: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers



# Our Delaware River Basin



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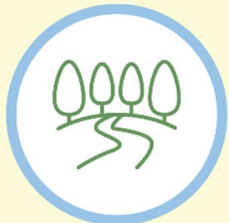
**13,300,000** people served

**13,539** square miles

**2,000** tributaries

**868** municipalities

+



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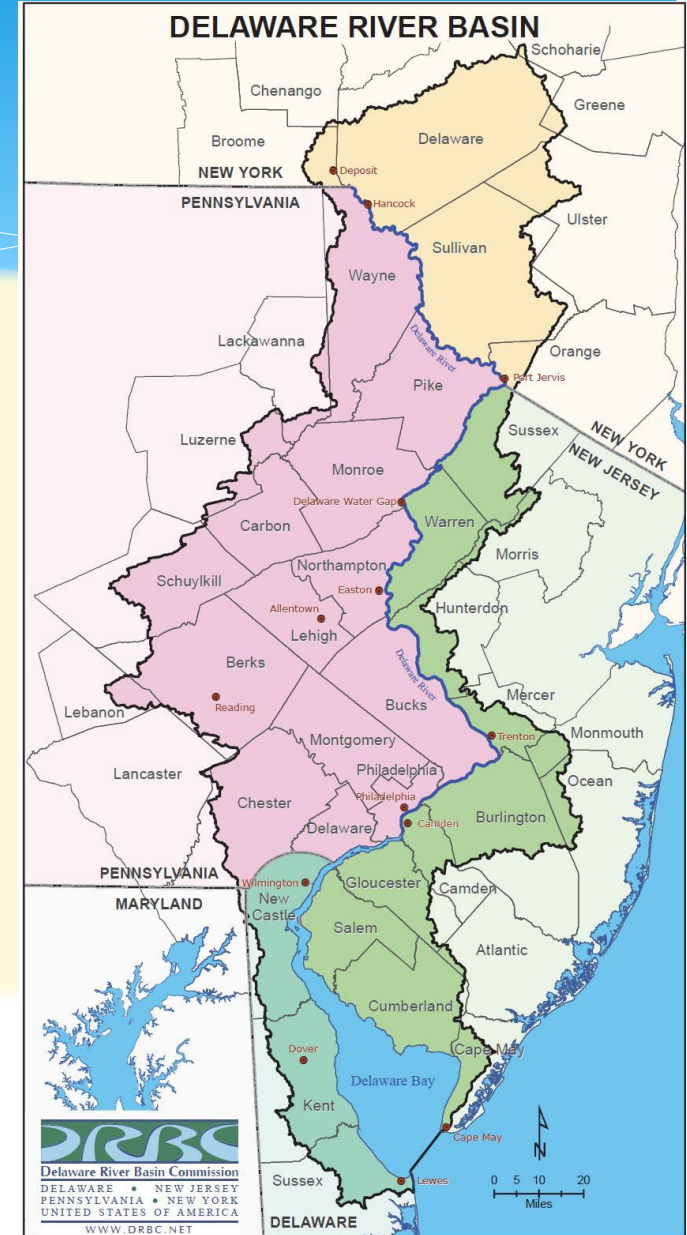


**330** miles of river

**42** counties

**4** states

**1** Delaware River Basin



# Why a Delaware River Basin Commission?



## Before DRBC:

- Water supply shortages and disputes
- Severe pollution
- Devastating floods and droughts
- Disjointed planning and management
- Recognition of joint responsibility for national treasure

# Why a Delaware River Basin Commission?



Before DRBC, water supply shortages and disputes dominated.

- *New Jersey v. New York*, 283 U.S. 336 (1931).
- *New Jersey v. New York*, 347 U.S. 995 (1954).
- NYC water supply
- Tocks dam proposal

Credit: Architect of the Capitol

# Why a Delaware River Basin Commission?



Credit: PWD

Before DRBC,  
water quality  
issues were severe



Credit: PWD

# Delaware River Basin Commission Structure and Mission

- Five Equal Members

- Delaware



- New Jersey



- Pennsylvania



- New York



- Federal Gov.



- Manage, Protect, Improve the Basin's Water Resources



# Delaware River Basin Commission

## Fast Facts

- Founded by Compact in 1961
- Commissioners are Four Governors and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leadership
- Commissioners select alternates
- Meet quarterly
- New York City and Philadelphia are “advisors”
- Significant exports of water to NYC and NJ



# DRBC Functional Responsibilities

Manage, Protect & Improve the Basin's Water Resources, ensuring water security for 13+M People

Water Quality

Water Equity

Water Availability

Water Resiliency

- **Water Quality Protection & Improvement**
- Drought Management
- Flood Loss Reduction
- **Sustainable Water Supply**
- Watershed Planning
- Regulatory Review (Permitting)
- Outreach/Education
- Recreation



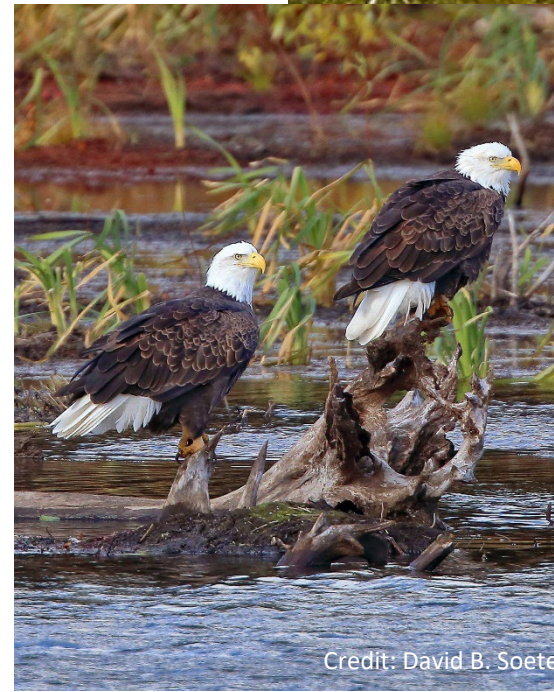
# Delaware River Basin Commission Staff and Organization

- Staff provide science-based analyses, modeling, assessments, recommendations
  - Water Quality
  - Planning
  - Operations
  - Project Review
- 39 FTE Budgeted
- West Trenton, NJ



# Water Quality Wins Improving Conditions

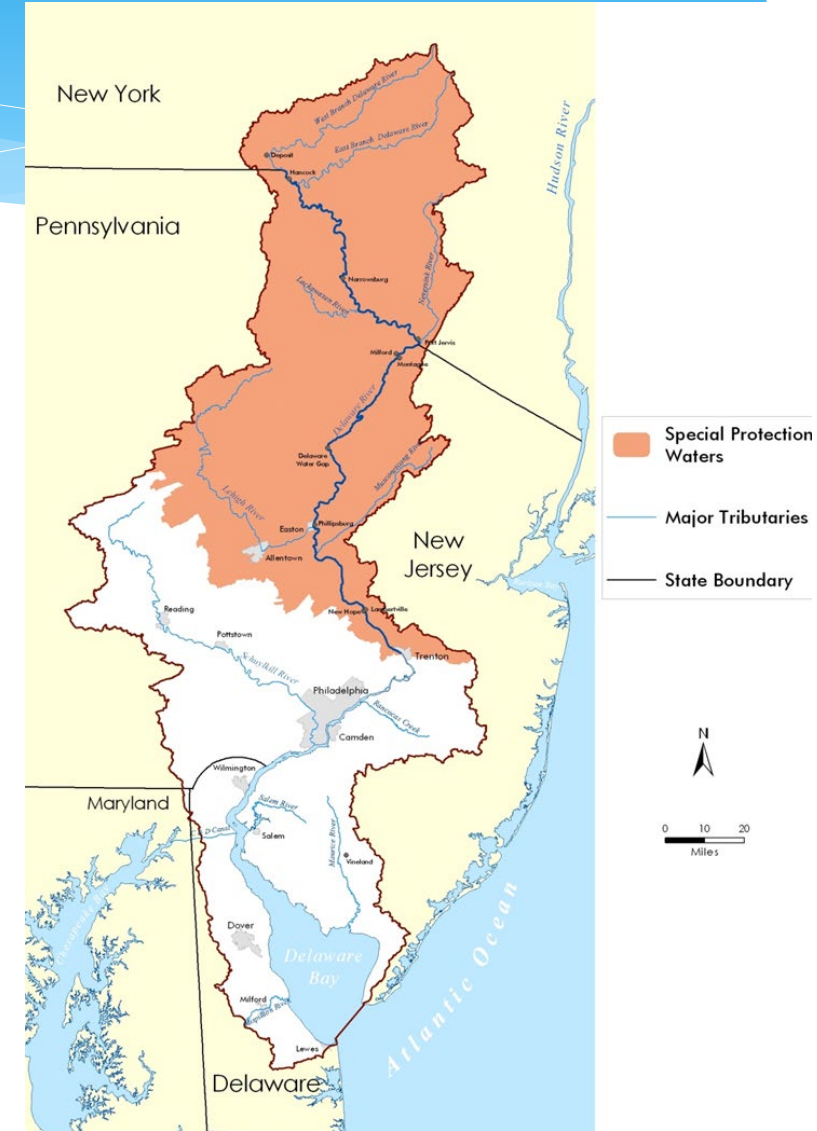
- Dissolved Oxygen Standards
  - 1967, 1968
  - 2017 Resolution to update
- Toxic Pollutants, PCBs standards



Credit: David B. Soete

# Water Quality Wins Special Protection Waters

- Antidegradation program created 1992
- Goal to keep clean water clean
  - Prevents degradation in streams with existing conditions above standards
  - “No measurable change” discharges



# Delaware River Basin Commission

## Power of Partnership

- Advisory Committees
- State of the Basin Report
- Delaware Estuary Program
- Delaware River Greenway Partnership
- Delaware Sojourn
- Upper Delaware Council
- Delaware Basin Conservation Collaborative
- And many more!




# Delaware River Basin Commission Power of Partnership



**The Philadelphia Inquirer**

## Microplastics found throughout Delaware River and its tributaries

Microplastics continue to break down, getting into the food web where they can be ingested by fish, bioplankton.



A grab sampler used to collect water from various locations in the Delaware River watershed as part of a Delaware River Basin Commission study on microplastics in the waterway.

Frank Kummer

by Frank Kummer  
Updated Aug 31, 2022

<https://www.inquirer.com/news/delaware-river-estuary-watershed-microplastics-philadelphia-20220831.html>

Our Shared Waters • Feb 25

## After an Excluded Past, Reconnecting Community to Our Shared Waters



**Damien Ruffner** is Center Manager of the Discovery Center, which protects unique habitat in a major urban area, provides education and adventure programs, builds community in Philadelphia and is part of the Alliance for Watershed Education. Learn more and plan your visit at <https://www.discoveryphila.org>.

We call it the "Ah-hah" moment. The moment when a new visitor sets their eyes on the largest body of freshwater completely inside the city of Philadelphia. "Is that the ocean!?"

# Stay in Touch!

- Elizabeth Koniers Brown, Director of External Affairs & Communications  
[Elizabeth.Brown@drbc.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Brown@drbc.gov)
- DRBC Interest Form  
<https://www.state.nj.us/drbc/contact/interest/>
- Our Shared Waters Resources
  - \* [www.oursharedwaters.org](http://www.oursharedwaters.org)
  - \* [facebook.com/oursharedwaters](https://www.facebook.com/oursharedwaters)