

DRBC Releases Water Quality Assessment Report for the Lower Delaware River



Delaware River at Portland, Pa.

Report Shows DRBC's Special Protection Waters (SPW) Program is Keeping the Clean Water Clean

In August 2016, the DRBC released its report entitled *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).

The report compares water quality data initially collected from 2000-2004 to the assessment period of 2009-2011. Extensive monitoring was conducted and water quality data were evaluated at nine interstate control points located on the main stem Lower Delaware River and at 15 boundary control points located on tributaries in a 76-mile stretch of river from Portland, Pa. to Trenton, N.J. A map of these sites appears on the back of this handout.

The purpose of the report was to determine whether changes to existing water quality in this section of river have occurred. For most water quality parameters at most locations, there were no measurable changes to existing water quality. In fact, many tests revealed water quality improvements.

Nutrient water quality parameters were found to show improvement at most sites; this is good news, as these results appear to buck the national trend of nutrient degradation of waterbodies.

Overall, 17 out of 20 parameters showed no measurable change at almost all control points. These results demonstrate that DRBC's Special Protection Waters (SPW) program is working and plays an important role in managing water quality in the Delaware River Basin.

An interactive map was released as an accompaniment to this report.

View/Download the Report & Interactive Map:

nj.gov/drbc/programs/quality/lower-delaware_EWQassessment2016.html

DRBC's SPW Program:

- ◆ Was initially adopted by the DRBC in 1992 and expanded in 1994 and 2008.
- ◆ Covers the entire 197-mile non-tidal Delaware River from Hancock, N.Y. to Trenton, N.J.
- ◆ Protects the existing high quality waters of the river's non-tidal watershed.
- ◆ SPW regulations state that there will be no measurable change in existing water quality of SPW waters except towards natural conditions.
- ◆ SPW regulations take a watershed approach, looking at the drainage area of the designated waters and considering cumulative impacts of discharges.
- ◆ Monitoring is required to determine if measurable change is occurring at the designated sites where existing water quality has been defined.
- ◆ SPW regulations establish an anti-degradation policy on one of the longest stretches of any river in the nation.
- ◆ View additional SPW information at nj.gov/drbc/programs/quality/spw.html.

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Map of the Lower Delaware SPW Interstate and Boundary Control Points

