

# POTOMAC RIVER BASIN DRINKING WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PARTNERSHIP

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A coalition of water utilities and state, interstate, and federal authorities working together to amplify regional source water protection since 2005.

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2019



# NOTE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

Joel Caudill, WSSC Water  
Steve Edgemon, Fairfax Water

There is no doubt that protecting the source of our drinking water is a collaborative effort. We accomplish more when we combine our expertise and energy, sharing resources and information to further our mission of improved source water protection for the Potomac River. This philosophy of source water protection was on full display during the 15th year of the Potomac River Basin Drinking Water Source Protection Partnership.

Members worked tirelessly to communicate the importance of protecting our drinking water by engaging the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through meetings and presentations to assist them in their conservation work while maintaining a strong focus on water quality. This included a panel of Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Maryland representations from NRCS at the May meeting who shared their work on source water protection.

In the spirit of collaboration and information-sharing, the Partnership worked with regional governments to explore the current state of combined sewer systems throughout the basin. Additionally, two spill exercises were held during the year to help government agencies and water suppliers improve emergency response during a simulated contamination event in the river.

The year wrapped up with the annual meeting at the USGS MD-DE-DC Water Science Center. The post-meeting tour informed the Partnership of the water quality monitoring done by USGS, as well as the emergency response and laboratory capabilities of the organization.

In addition to the conference calls and quarterly meetings, a biweekly e-newsletter informed the larger source water protection community of the latest news, information, and events pertaining to our drinking water.

This important work will continue into the future thanks to the Partnership members who selflessly and enthusiastically give their time and expertise to protect our drinking. During 2020, the Partnership will work on a Land Prioritization Mapping project developed through the Partnership as well as continue to explore and monitor issues related to source water protection.



DWSPP Annual Meeting at the USGS MD-DE-DC Water Science Center

# WORKGROUP ACTIVITIES

## AGRICULTURAL ISSUES

Chair: Pam Kenel, Loudoun Water

Nutrients, sediment, pathogens, pesticides, and/or pharmaceuticals can be released from agricultural activities into our waterways and can threaten drinking water supplies downstream. The Agricultural Issues Workgroup understands that 30 percent of the Potomac River basin is comprised of agricultural land use and seeks to work collaboratively with the large agricultural community to improve water quality.

A large focus of the workgroup was the 2018 Farm Bill and the subsequent 10% funding requirement for source water protection activities. During 2019, the members worked to understand where the workgroup could make a difference, identified and collaborated with other standing groups, and leveraged activities of other organizations and programs. The workgroup worked to develop relationships, understand the process, and initiate dialogue. Members of the group attended meetings with State Conservationists and state agricultural departments, as well as the Natural Resource Conservation Service's State Technical Committee Meetings and Local District Meetings. This included featured presentations by agricultural organizations at the quarterly meetings to help inform and guide the Partnership's work.

## CONTAMINANTS OF EMERGING CONCERN

Chair: Martin Chandler, WSSC Water

Co-Chair: Patrick Bowling, PA DEP

The Contaminants of Emerging Concern Workgroup supports the Partnership by tracking and reporting on findings of research and occurrence of persistent and newly identified threats posed to the Potomac River drinking water supply. Members of the workgroup also advocate and support related national-level studies with the goal of providing sound science on how these emerging challenges should be addressed.

Specific issues the workgroup addressed in 2019 include tracking the periodic updates of Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule (UCMR4) data, tracking legislation and regulation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), collaboration with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and the DWSPP Reaching Out Workgroup on developing talking points for responding to public inquiries regarding PFAS chemicals, and monitored news and research on microplastics. Additionally, workgroup members followed and shared news reports and research on harmful algal blooms, including a bloom in the Potomac River.



# EARLY WARNING AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Chair: Carlton Haywood, ICPRB

Chair: Joel Thompson, Fairfax Water

The Early Warning and Emergency Response Workgroup helps Partnership members prepare for spills or other events that may affect their water supplies and helps them keep abreast of regional efforts to safeguard our water supply from accidental or intentional releases of contaminants.

In 2019, members helped organized a West Virginia Water Security Tabletop Exercise in May. The exercise walked water suppliers, emergency personnel, and government agencies through their response to a fictional train crash in the Potomac River. Additionally, the workgroup collaborated with the Water Quality Workgroup to complete updates to the Utility Spill Response Plan. The workgroups updated the protocols to upload information on the Potomac Spills listserv and organized an online spill exercise to implement the new Potomac Spills Listserv Protocols. The members collaborated with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Water Security Workgroup to identify USGS water quality parameters that are currently being measured.

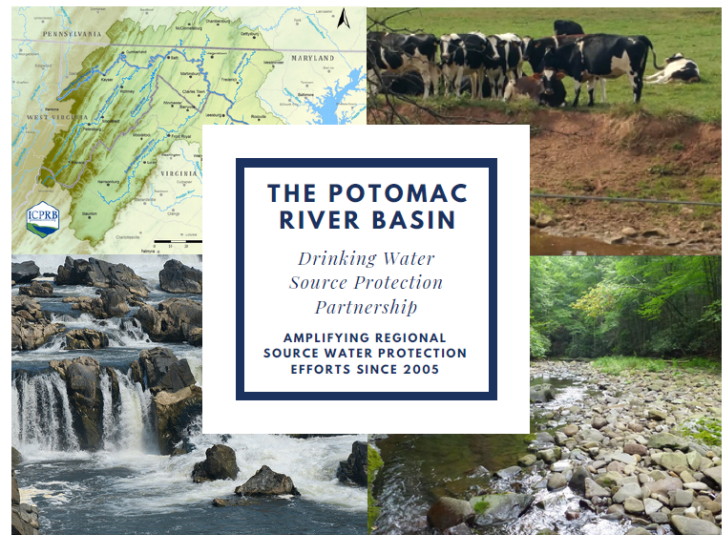
## REACHING OUT

Chair: Lisa Ragain, MWCOG

Co-Chair: John Deignan, DC Water

The Reaching Out Workgroup informs and educates the public and water professionals about DWSPP activities and initiatives. They work collaboratively with other workgroups to develop materials that inform and inspire the public to protect our sources of drinking water. The workgroup also produces outreach materials and conducts activities to help move DWSPP toward its goals.

In 2019 the workgroup members identified and recruited potential DWSPP members which lead to the addition of a new water supplier which increases the collaboration, information, and networking of the Partnership as a whole. In conjunction with other workgroups, the members developed PFAS talking points, attended and presented at the Virginia Forests and Drinking Water Forum, and developed promotional materials for the Partnership.



### WHO ARE WE?

Formed in 2005, the Partnership comprises utilities, government agencies, and regional stakeholders to amplify source water protection efforts across the Potomac River Basin.



### WHAT DO WE DO?

#### WE EDUCATE.

The Partnership holds quarterly meetings and workshops designed to keep members up-to-date on issues such as pathogens, emerging contaminants, and other river pollutants that can threaten drinking water.

#### WE RESEARCH.

- Agricultural Issues
- Early Warning & Emergency Response
- Contaminants of Emerging Concern
- Urban and Industrial Issues
- Water Quality Monitoring and Data Sharing

#### WE COOPERATE.

Members share best practices for improving water quality and minimizing operational costs. Experts provide progress on regulatory affairs, advocacy opportunities, and the latest research affecting our sector.

#### JOIN US!

The Partnership gives members access to the network and resources they need to strengthen their organization and advance our shared mission. Join the Partnership to be best equipped to tackle the issues of today, and the challenges of tomorrow.

DWSPP promotional material created by the Reaching Out Workgroup





## URBAN AND INDUSTRIAL ISSUES

**Chair: Greg Prelewicz, Fairfax Water**

The Urban and Industrial Issues Workgroup promotes urban and industrial environmental stewardship in the Potomac River basin in order to protect downstream sources of drinking water. The members work to enhance communication of drinking water needs and related Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act water quality programs to urban and industrial stakeholders involved in the implementation of point and non-point source discharges with a focus on upstream discharges and pollutant sources.

During 2019, the workgroup provided support and coordination with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Water Sector Program, providing new information and updates into the WaterSuite database and initiated a new project to track possible sources of PFAS in the basin. Workgroup members participated in workshops for the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality Salt Management Strategy and attended related events. The workgroup requested and discussed the water quality implications of 7 draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination (NPDES) permits. The group was instrumental in coordinating information sessions of the current state of combined sewer systems (CSOs) across the basin jurisdictions, including a presentation at the May meeting by the Maryland Department of the Environment regarding CSOs in Maryland.

## WATER QUALITY

**Chair: Niffy Saji, Fairfax Water**

Understanding which contaminants are in the river, where they are, and in what quantities is essential to addressing water quality concerns and protecting source waters. The Water Quality Workgroup addresses this need by maintaining a list of water quality resources and by helping other workgroups with analysis and mapping.

In 2019, the workgroup members updated the Utility Spill Response Plan, an important tool for water supplier response during a contaminant spill in the river. They also collaborated with the Early Warning/Emergency Response Workgroup to update the protocols on uploading information on the Potomac Spills listserv during a spill emergency and organized a subsequent online spill exercise to implement the new protocols.





# MEMBERS

## Water Suppliers

Berkeley County Public Service Water District, WV  
City of Frederick, MD  
City of Hagerstown, MD  
Corporation of Harpers Ferry, WV  
DC Water  
City of Rockville, MD  
Fairfax Water  
Frederick County, MD  
Loudoun Water  
Town of Leesburg, VA  
Town of Romney, West VA  
Town of Shepherdstown, WV  
Washington Aqueduct Division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Washington County, MD  
WSSC Water

## Government Agencies

District of Columbia Department of Energy & Environment  
Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin  
Maryland Department of the Environment  
Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection  
United States Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3  
United States Geological Survey  
Virginia Department of Environmental Quality  
Virginia Department of Health  
West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources  
West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection

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MEMBERS

The Partnership of water suppliers, government agencies, and regional stakeholders provides the network and resources needed to strengthen individual organizations and advance our shared mission.

15  
YEARS

For 15 years, quarterly sessions have educated members about current research, regulatory affairs, new initiatives, and emerging issues. Workshops have been held on emergency spill response, cryptosporidium, endocrine disrupting chemicals, harmful algal blooms, roadway deicers, urban stormwater, land conservation, beef and dairy industries, the Clean Water Act, climate change, and unregulated contaminant monitoring.

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MISSION

To serve as a cooperative and voluntary partnership working towards the goal of improved source water protection of the Potomac River in recognition of the vital role of the river in supplying drinking water to millions of people within the Potomac watershed and in support of the multi-barrier approach to safeguarding the drinking water supply for public health.