

# SRBC Meeting

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decade because of a series of droughts that caused water shortages.

However, it also has received more attention because of water demand problems that have caused some shortages even during non-drought years.

In recent years, the SRBC has revised regulations from piecemeal rules developed over time into a comprehensive and coherent package. It also has been conducting research on groundwater and the flow of nutrients, as well as the use of artificial "wetlands" (biofilters) in reducing nutrient flows from croplands.

In its most publicly visible role, the SRBC has been functioning as an agency that facilitates the storage of water in upper basin reservoirs for release during drought.

To maintain critical flows in the river during drought, the agency charges for the "consumptive use" of water — that water use that evaporates or transpires water out of the immediate water system, so as to deplete the flows to the river.

The money is used to pay for the storage of water in reservoirs that is then released during drought, to compensate for the consumptive uses.

It is estimated that, during a drought of historical significance, more than 40 percent of the river's flow is used consumptively. That amount is expected to increase if residential and commercial uses continue to increase at current rates.

The Eastern United States historically has not had the water problems experienced in the West, but demands on the flow of water within the basin have increased dramatically over the years.

Per capita use of water has increased dramatically, while an overall population increase has been increasing the demand and use of water.

Many water-use regulatory issues remain unresolved, largely because the people living in the basin have never had to come to terms with those issues.

For example, since state policy changed and now dissuades communities from establishing or maintaining existing surface water reservoirs for community drinking water supplies, unless costly treatment systems (including staff) are incorporated, many small communities are seeking combined efforts for public water supplies. Many of those supplies are coming from wells.

In the meantime, water supplies to many communities are provided through private water companies that have grown through buyouts and consolidations.

Out-of-area water supplies are becoming more common, especially in areas with large residential developments and a lack of adequate supplies from natural, close-proximity watersheds.

In some cases, groundwater-dependent residential developments have dried-up streams. (All streams are actually flows of groundwater forced to the surface. True surface water flows generally only occur during a rain storm.)

In other cases, there are some areas where water supplies were inexpensive, and sewage was primarily treated on-lot. For years those residents had inexpensive water and sewer service.

However, with residential and industrial demands exceeding local water capacity, outside sources had to be created in order to get

residential development approved. (While environmental laws don't prevent building homes in water-depleted areas, financial support is difficult to obtain for a project that doesn't secure potable water.)

Some of the problems this scenario presents are not necessarily felt by those in the new residential developments, but rather with the historic communities where water and sewer costs had been minimal.

Such subcommunities can and do include a high percentage of retired or fixed-income, long-time residents who now, in effect, have been forced to give up inexpensive water and sewer service to subsidize expensive systems that were built to facilitate approval for new residential development.

Approval for such expensive systems has been promoted by local politicians under the ruse that increasing residential growth provides a stronger tax base and thus a better standard of living and long-term lower taxes.

Scientific research has shown the reserve to be the case, however, as residential developments, especially newer ones, carry higher demands for public services and actually use more in local government funds than are paid through taxes and fees.

While the SRBC is not directly involved in forming state policy with water and sewer and its subsequent affect on development, or with local policies that benefit residential developments instead of providing for long-term stability of water supplies, the SRBC has to deal with the reality that residential development is not dependent upon the availability or adequacy of water supplies.

In some areas, demand on groundwater sources has caused extreme problems.

The SRBC, as a regional authority, has the power to prevent groundwater withdrawals that

overdraw upon an aquifer, however it has yet to exercise that option, though it has been considered in some areas with heavy development tapping into high value aquifers, such as in some areas near State College.

Further complicating are the realities that have yet to be addressed legislatively, such as the occurrence of sinkholes which can be directly linked to the stability of groundwater flows.

Again, while the SRBC has the authority to deny groundwater withdrawals because of natural limitations, much remains to be documented concerning the avail-

ability of groundwater and the specifics of certain aquifers.

Without supporting documentation, legal challenges to denials of groundwater are difficult to battle.

Further, since the agency is generally not well-understood by the general public, it can lack the necessary political support that some circumstances to exercise its authority.

The agency, and its sister agency — the Delaware River Basin Commission — both depend upon state and federal support. Recently the U.S. Congress sought to eliminate funding for both.

## Pennsylvania Cable Network Offers Live Coverage

CAMP HILL (Cumberland Co.) — The Pennsylvania Cable Network, the first educational cable television service in the nation, has announced its programming schedule of live events at the Pennsylvania State Farm Show.

The network is supported by Pennsylvania cable companies statewide which carry the network on their channel lineup.

Broadcasting is set to begin at 11:30 a.m., Saturday with an opening address by Gov. Tom Ridge. The Farm Show opens to the public then.

Coverage by the cable network is to continue through the sale of junior market livestock champions at 10 a.m., Thursday.

Complementing the live coverage are to be delayed telecasts of some events, such as the Sheep-to-Shawl contest and auction, livestock judging, vo-ag school demonstrations, and Farm Show fashions. Interviews with judges, contestants and exhibitors are also to be included.

On Saturday, after the governor's address, a partial listing of the events scheduled to be telecast live includes the championship rodeo from noon to 3 p.m.; the Cumberland County 4-H Club Horse Drill Team from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.; followed by another session of championship rodeo from 5 p.m. until 8 p.m.

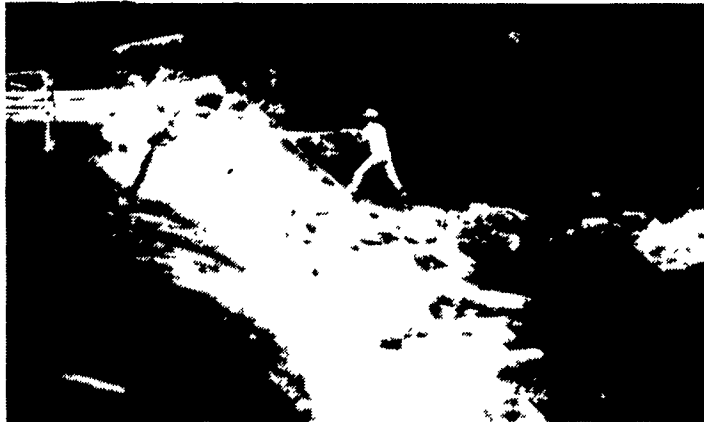
On Sunday, the draft horse hitched competition is set to be aired from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m., followed by team classes of hitched horses from 5 p.m. until 7 p.m.

Other events during the week to be broadcast live include the folk dance festival and contest on Monday, from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.; the championship horse pulling contest on Tuesday from 4:30 p.m. until 8 p.m.; the state championship pony pulling contest on Wednesday from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m., and the livestock sale Thursday.



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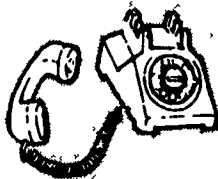
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