



The Green Sheet

Central Pennsylvania Golf Course Superintendents Association

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Five Ways Golfers Can Care For The Course

May 01, 2020

George Waters, manager, Green Section Education

As golfers, we should always be doing our part to help care for the courses we play on, but contributing to course care is especially important this year. Many golf course superintendents have been operating with reduced budgets and fewer staff members due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have been forced to focus on critical tasks, like mowing, and have postponed or eliminated many other important maintenance practices. Courses will be playing catch-up for a while and doing what we can to help keep them in good shape will help maintenance teams focus on the most important tasks. A little extra effort on our part might also make a big impact on playing conditions because some of the routine repairs we've come to expect from the maintenance staff may not happen for a while. Here are five ways golfers can help care for the course during this challenging season:

- **Repair ball marks** Repairing ball marks is something we should always be doing. Unfortunately, maintenance staffs often spend a significant amount of time each year fixing unrepaired ball marks so they don't negatively impact playability and aesthetics for weeks to come. This year, the last thing maintenance teams need to be doing is a job we can easily do ourselves. If you repair your ball mark and a couple of others with the [proper technique](#), you'll be doing everyone a favor.
- **Repair your divots** [Repairing our divots correctly](#) is another easy way to make a difference this year. Maintenance teams may not have the resources to fix unrepaired divots, and the scars can be lasting. Improperly repaired divots can take months to heal – if they ever fully heal at all. This leaves the risk of a bad lie in the fairway for our fellow golfers. Repairing our divots correctly, along with a few others for good measure, will go a long way toward keeping fairways smooth this year.
- **Follow cart rules** We all know that [golf carts can damage a course](#) if they aren't used properly, if traffic gets heavy, or if weather conditions aren't conducive to cart traffic. This year there is added pressure with the [single-rider cart policies](#) enacted at many courses. Don't be surprised to see more cart restrictions this season as courses try to limit the damage. Following the rules and keeping carts on paths as much as possible will make a difference. If you're able to walk more often this year, that certainly won't hurt either.
- **Smooth the sand** Bunker conditions may be a little rougher than what many of us have become accustomed to. Many courses have removed rakes to reduce touchpoints and maintenance teams may not have the same amount of time to spend on bunkers as they have in the past. A bad lie in a bunker is not the end of the world, but if we can do our best to smooth footprints and other disturbances with a club or our feet it will reduce the number of tough spots out there this year. It's not the ideal way to smooth bunker sand but doing the best you can will help.



Many courses are operating with reduced budgets this year. Putting extra effort into course care etiquette will go a long way toward maintaining good playing conditions.

Adjust our expectations Many golf courses in the U.S. have started this season behind schedule. Due to staffing and budget challenges, important practices like aeration and topdressing had to be scaled back or postponed. Heights of cut were raised to reduce mowing requirements and countless detail-oriented tasks had to be skipped entirely. One of the best ways to help golf courses through this difficult time is by being understanding if we find course conditioning or presentation is different than what we're used to. There's a good reason behind it, and this year has reminded us all that just being out there playing the game we love is something to celebrate.

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<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/course-care/green-section-record/58/special-edition/five-ways-golfers-can-care-for-the-course.html#returnable>

Clarification on Golf Facility Guidance for Pennsylvania Counties in Yellow and Green Phase of Reopening

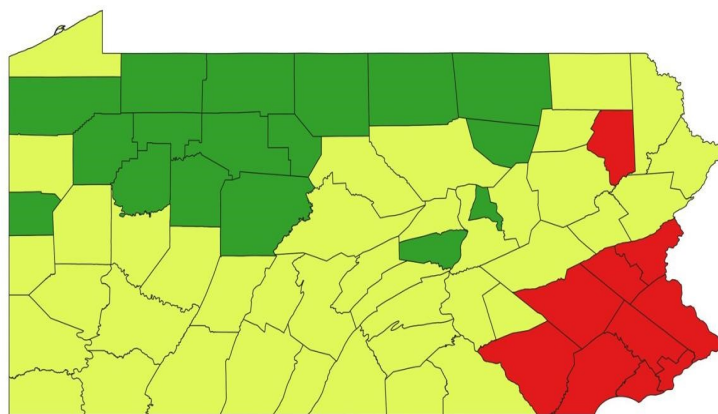
The Pennsylvania Alliance for Golf has received updated guidance from the Pennsylvania Governor's Office for golf facilities located in counties designated as yellow or green phases of reopening.

The Governor's Office has informed us that in the yellow phase, facilities may open, conduct in-person operations, and offer caddies and shared golf cars. These facilities must follow all the [guidance](#) to keep employees and customers safe. All employees should wear masks, clean / disinfect golf carts, etc., and social distancing remains in place. Beginning on June 5, those facilities that have a restaurant on site may offer outdoor dining at 50 percent capacity. Gatherings in the yellow phase are restricted to no more than 25 people.

In the green phase, facilities that have a restaurant on site may offer indoor dining at 50 percent capacity, in addition to in-person operations, caddies, shared golf cars, etc., all while maintaining social distancing. Gatherings of more than 250 people are prohibited. The following counties will move to green on June 5: Allegheny, Armstrong, Bedford, Blair, Butler, Cambria, Clinton, Fayette, Fulton, Greene, Indiana, Lycoming, Mercer, Somerset, Washington, and Westmoreland.

Golf facilities that are located in red counties may only offer golf cars as single occupant only, unless the occupants share a residence, and may not offer caddies. All remaining red counties are expected to move to yellow by June 5; these counties include: Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lackawanna, Lancaster, Lehigh, Northampton, Montgomery, and Philadelphia.

To read the full FAQ document, [click here](#).



READING EAGLE
SOURCE: Pennsylvania Governor's Office

Phases
■ GREEN - Aggressive mitigation lifted
■ RED - Stay at home order
■ YELLOW - Aggressive mitigation

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President’s Message

New Normal...Something we hear every day. Something that changes every day. Something that we have no idea what it will look like and what the future holds. The constant uncertainty can be challenging, and weigh heavy on us all. I hope that you, your teams and your clubs have been able to navigate through the past few months as well as can be expected.

The evil weevil is back! By the time everyone is reading this, some will have already made their first larvicide applications, while others will be close behind. It amazes me when I think about the amount of resources required to manage that little bugger (get it)! Especially in comparison to say 10 years ago, between time and money, the expansion of ABW and growth of knowledge into their habits is quite something. For those of you who do not have them, well your property is a rare breed. Perhaps others out there who do not have high populations of poa literally let them eat! Free poa eradication sounds good to me! As I stated last time, rely on your personal experiences as well as the many resources available to assist you in proper application timing.

The board has held a few virtual meetings to check in with the status of membership/sponsorship as well as to discuss our planned meetings this year. It is obviously very difficult to say when our first physical meeting will take place. We are in the works to host a virtual meeting for the month of June on a topic that I think will be very relevant. If anyone has an idea in terms of a virtual topic, assuming we may have to continue in that fashion moving forward, or again later this year, please let us know! I hope that all of the updates over the past few weeks have been useful for you. If there is still some way that the board can be of assistance, please reach out to me or another board member...we would be happy to help in any way!

I have no idea what phase or color or new normal we will be in by the next time I write to you, but I am optimistic that we will be in a better place by then. Let us all hope that things continue moving in the right direction, everyone remains safe, and we can all tee it up together again soon!

Regards,

Kevin Mark
President

Membership News

The following individuals have applied for membership into our association. If there are no written objections within the next seven days, they will be accepted into CPGCSA at the next meeting.

Corey Barnes, Superintendent
Chambersburg Country Club Class A

Derrick Hudson, Sales Representative
Nutrien Solutions Class AF

We would like to welcome the following individuals into our association.

John Alexander, Superintendent
Armitage Golf Club Class A

Chris Braun, Owner
Synthetic Turf International of PA....Class AF

Douglas Hall, Superintendent
Bon Air Country Club Class A

Dallas Sledzik, Assistant Superintendent
Regents Glen Golf Club Class C

Randy Super, Superintendent
Valley Green Golf Course Class A

If you know of anyone who is interested in membership into the association, please have them contact Wanda at 717-279-0368 or cpgcsa@hotmail.com.

There are a few outstanding 2020 Membership Dues, please contact Wanda if you have any questions about your dues.

Please see a list of our Association Sponsors on Page 15.

BACK2GOLF:

REOPENING RESOURCES

GCSAA knows your lives and businesses have been affected by the global COVID-19 Pandemic. While there is no lack of general information about the virus and its widespread impact, we wanted to provide you with resources specific to golf and business operations to assist you as golfers get back on the course. Check back as resources will be added regularly.

<https://www.gcsaa.org/resources/back2golf-resources>



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Paul Jacobs, agronomist, Northeast Region
USGA NORTHEAST REGIONAL UPDATE

As golf courses begin reopening, expectations should be tempered because maintenance teams have been operating with less staff than normal.



While it goes without saying that this pandemic is affecting the entire golf community, it is also interesting to see how different regions have been affected by state-mandated closure of golf courses. The Northeast has been one of the hardest-hit parts of the country in this regard. Affected facilities have been generating little to no revenue, which has prompted maintenance staff sizes to be reduced significantly.

While temperatures were cool and turf growth was minimal, small maintenance crews were able to keep up with minimum maintenance, such as plant protectant applications and mowing. However, as temperatures begin to rise, course maintenance becomes more demanding. If staff sizes are still reduced, there are a few things golfers should expect when they get back out on the course:

- Rough height will likely be taller than usual. This is because the rough may not be mowed as frequently as it is under normal conditions. Additionally, the height may be set slightly higher than normal to avoid scalping and to reduce mowing requirements.
- High-traffic areas may not be as dense and healthy as usual. Many courses that are open are using a single-rider cart policy. This increases the number of carts used by the same number of players. Additionally, many courses have removed all ropes and stakes to streamline maintenance practices. This can result in concentrated traffic at pinch points. Golf cart users can help improve conditions by scattering cart traffic whenever possible.
- Green speed may be slightly slower than expected. Maintenance teams are prioritizing turf health while short staffed and may be mowing greens slightly higher to reduce mowing requirements.

Golf course accessories, scorecards, tee markers, annual flower plantings and other nonessential items have been eliminated by some courses this year as maintenance teams are focusing their efforts on maintaining putting greens, tees and fairways.

There are a variety of different challenges faced by golf courses in the Northeast due to different state and local regulations as well as the financial status of individual golf courses. However, one thing is for sure – golf course maintenance teams have been facing a difficult task this year. As temperatures rise, it will only get more difficult.

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Coronavirus Shutdowns Are Making Golf Courses an Oasis for Stir-Crazy Americans Eager to Get Out and Tee It Up

With few alternatives for outdoor activities, the golf business hopes built-in social distancing can draw new participants

by **Jena McGregor**, The Washington Post
May 20, 2020

Linsey Chamberlin's first time playing golf in eight years was on Mother's Day weekend amid a global pandemic.

After weeks of staying at home and without their usual Mother's Day options of lunch and a pedicure, Chamberlin and her brother decided to introduce their mother to the game by playing nine holes at Friend Country Club, a public course outside Lincoln, Neb.

"We'd been stuck in our house the last eight weeks, and we didn't want to go to her house to just sit around," said Chamberlin, 27, who was on her high school golf team but gave up playing in college after getting frustrated with the mental aspects of the game.

Despite safety precautions — no ball washers, no rakes in the sand traps, a foam pool-noodle ring for touchless ball retrieval from the hole, and a closed clubhouse — "we had a blast," Chamberlin said. "I didn't play as terrible as I thought I would after not playing for eight years, and my mom played better than I did my first time out."

Across the country, Americans remain deeply divided about leaving the house for work and leisure activities, except, apparently, when it comes to golf, giving an unexpected jolt to a sport that has seen declining popularity.

It's too early to say whether the heightened demand will continue, especially in the middle of an economic recession, or how much the cost of safety protocols will affect course revenue.

But some in the golf industry are hoping that the interest in a relatively safe outdoor activity — and the expected return of the PGA Tour to television on June 11, at a time when there are few alternatives for watching live sports — could boost enthusiasm for the game.

"People are itching to get outside," said Stuart Lindsay, a principal with Edgehill Golf Advisors. "They can't go to a bar. They can't go to a restaurant. They can't play softball. Golf is one of the few things they can do that's a variation of riding a bike or walking the dog."

Joe After months of binging on Netflix and jogging around their neighborhoods, many Americans appear to see golf as an escape. It involves acres of outdoor expanses for natural social distancing, and advance tee time bookings help control the flow of people into all that open space.

In a recent Washington Post-University of Maryland poll, 41 percent of Americans supported their states allowing the reopening of golf courses, a greater percentage than for any other type of business measured in the poll.

Many courses are reporting increased demand. "Our rounds are through the roof," said David Pillsbury, the chief executive of ClubCorp, which owns or operates 173 private golf or country clubs nationally. "It's up 25 to 30 percent over the prior year. Our members are using the club more than they've ever used it before."

Some data shows a big leap in demand for public golf courses, too. Between April 23 and May 5, the number of rounds sold online at public courses that remained open throughout the coronavirus pandemic were up 60 percent over the previous year, according to GolfNow, an online tee time reservations platform used at nearly 7,000 U.S. courses. "There's just a massive amount of demand," said GolfNow Senior Vice President Jeff Foster. "The big question is will that demand stay?"

If more people like Chamberlin and her family — first-timers, younger players, lapsed golfers — are playing more often, the sport might experience a boost after years of decline, some in the golf industry say.

In 2002, nearly 30 million people played golf at least once a year, according to Pellucid Corp., a provider of industry information and insights. But that number had steadily declined, leveling off in the 21 million range starting in 2015. (The National Golf



Foundation, an industry association, put the number of golf course players at 24.3 million people in 2019, with another 9.9 million who only use places like driving ranges or venues such as Topgolf.)

“We think this ultimately can actually be a real growth opportunity for the game,” Seth Waugh, the president of PGA of America, said in a conference call with reporters on May 5 announcing industry guidelines for safely returning to the game. “We think there’ll be obviously a lot of pent-up demand. But we also think that given those specific natural advantages that we have, that we may draw new and interested people.”

Adrian Stills, who runs the Osceola Municipal Golf Course in Pensacola, Fla., said he saw an 18 to 20 percent increase in rounds played during April, when Florida’s beaches were closed but golf courses remained open. Even when the beaches reopened, he said, he’s still up 10 percent over the previous year, with locals replacing snowbirds as customers.

“I started noticing a lot of new faces — a lot of younger new faces,” he said. “A lot of them had been in quarantine, working from home — they just wanted to get out and have an activity they could enjoy, and they chose the golf course. I’m hoping that continues.”

In San Francisco, a golf course offered a different kind of escape: The Presidio Golf Course, located within a former Army post, was converted into a public park for a time during the shutdown. “It was a unique opportunity for nongolfers to come check out what is a beautiful golf course,” said Mark Luthman, president of Touchstone Golf, which operates the course for the Presidio Trust.

Touchstone operates 38 courses in all, and Luthman said rounds played have been higher — “in some examples, dramatically.” Although he’s encouraged, Luthman also warns that it’s early. “It’s difficult to make any large sweeping conclusions about the business,” he said. “Is this just the initial pop of people who are coming out to play golf because they’ve been cooped up in their house for six or seven weeks, or are lapsed golfers coming back in greater numbers and golf is going to be experiencing a bit of a renaissance? I think it’s too early to say.”

Even as people flock to get back on the greens, the impact on golf courses could be uneven, depending on local restrictions and how reliant courses are on other forms of revenue.

Some safety measures require relatively little expense, such as no-touch precautions like removing ball washers and retrofitting cups to prevent handling the flags. But there are additional labor costs for doing extra sanitation of carts between players and positioning more workers on the course to ensure social distancing.

Other precautions may impinge on revenue by reducing the number of golfers. Courses in some states remained closed for weeks in March and April. To help control the flow of people onto the course, some states are requiring tee time intervals of 15 or 16 minutes upon reopening, rather than every seven to nine minutes. Some places, such as New Jersey, have limited groups to twosomes except for families isolating together.

Requirements can also cut into cart-rental revenue, said Pellucid President Jim Koppenhaver, if courses can only charge for single occupancy or run out of carts.

At Renditions Golf Course in Davidsonville, Md., where golf resumed earlier this month, the single-occupancy cart requirement means General Manager Steve Peterson has had to space out tee times to wait for carts to return, reducing overall capacity.

“Demand has been really high, because people are just now being allowed to get out,” Peterson said. “But at the same time, our supply of number of tee times available has gone down because of [cart] guidelines.”

Greens fees may be what drives revenue at public courses, but other sources of income, such as wedding receptions or banquets, have been postponed because of the virus. Shuttered pro shops and dining rooms that remain closed or at reduced capacity also are likely to ding sales.

High unemployment and less disposable income could prompt some golfers to rethink membership dues or frequency of play. The average price of a round of golf at a public course is \$35, according to the World Golf Foundation. “As the economy goes, so does golf,” said Bill Golden, chief executive of Golf Tourism Solutions, a marketing agency that represents the golf industry in Myrtle Beach, S.C. “If we have a prolonged economic recession, that’s going to have an impact on the golf business.”

Some resort-based or destination courses are bracing for a falloff in business. Golden’s agency projects a 61.5 percent drop in



revenue for Myrtle Beach-area courses in the first five months of 2020 compared with 2019, despite remaining open.

Yet others predict that the flexibility of working from home, the lack of commitments to afternoon and weekend youth sports and less traveling overall could prompt golfers to play their local courses more often.

People probably won't be "jumping on planes and traveling to Europe for the summer," said Greg McLaughlin, chief executive of the World Golf Foundation, who added that open courses are seeing rounds at an "all-time high." "People are working from home. Do you have an opportunity, potentially, in the afternoon to slip out and play nine holes if it's light until 8 o'clock? We think it's going to create another alternative."

Cathy Harbin, the owner of Pine Ridge Golf Course in Paris, Tex., had a group of infrequent players tell her one recent evening that "now we can come here, get in our single carts, and we can still play golf and honor social distancing," she recalled.

"Maybe these were guys who were meeting for a drink somewhere else" before the coronavirus, she said. "My prediction is we've created a new normal for them."



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A new 30-second PSA, "Golf and Social Distancing", featuring Nelly Korda, Matt Kuchar, and Steph Curry began airing on digital and broadcast outlets over the weekend, including CBS, Golf Channel and CBS Sports Network. Among the important messages delivered are the health and recreational benefits of golf that can be enjoyed while now applying social distancing.

The PSA showcases the industry's collaborative approach in creating the **Back2Golf** Guidelines and Operational Playbook. Additionally, the PSA as well as the **Back2Golf** social distancing posters are available for download on the WE ARE GOLF website.



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Susquehanna River Basin Commission Adopts New Consumptive Water Use Policy – Immediately Expands Mitigation Options and Promotes Cost Savings



HARRISBURG, Pa. May 26, 2020 - The Susquehanna River Basin Commission announced today that it has adopted Resolution No. 2020-02, enhancing its consumptive water use mitigation practices and providing flexibility for facilities paying its water usage fee.

The new policy also offers implementing guidance for water users in the basin seeking to provide water storage. The policy became effective on April 1, 2020.

“After careful review and consideration of the data and our objectives, we determined that exempting pond evaporation losses from mitigation requirements would promote the use of storage and expand options for achieving on-site mitigation,” said Executive Director of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission Andrew Dehoff. “In particular, facilities such as golf courses and ski resorts are likely to find the policy changes beneficial.”

Senator Gene Yaw, 23rd Senatorial District and Chairman of the Senate Environmental Resources & Energy Committee, wrote, “I am very happy to see SRBC’s new water use policy. It will be a huge help to some businesses which are struggling through the COVID 19 crisis.”

Management of low flows is one of the Commission’s primary and unique roles. The traditional approach to this objective has been to provide for water releases from large federal reservoirs to offset downstream water consumption during low flow periods. Through the policy update, the Commission seeks to add new options to the successes of the traditional approach and to enable water users to take credit for mitigation measures that are available to them.

The overarching goals are to improve low flow management, provide reliable water supply during droughts, expand affordable mitigation options to water users, and promote innovative partnerships for water use mitigation projects.

Representative Dan Moul, of the 91st Legislative District stated, “As Chairman of the Local Government Committee and Member of the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee, I am very pleased to learn of the new Consumptive Water Use Policy recently adopted by the Susquehanna River Basin Commissioners at their March 13th, 2020 meeting, Chairman Moul stated additionally “I want to personally compliment Mr. Andrew Dehoff, SRBC Executive Director and Mr. Gene Veno, SRBC Governmental Affairs Director and thank them for taking the time to meet with me to discuss this policy and work on the data in order to bring about this needed policy change”. “This new policy will help many water use businesses in my district and throughout the entire river basin. I am delighted to see the adoption of the New Consumptive Water Use Policy and I look forward to continuing to work with the Susquehanna River Basin Commission”.

Following adoption, new options now being offered to water users for meeting existing mitigation requirements include:

- Lowering the former 90-day storage standard to 45 days;
- Changing the definition of discontinuance from no water usage to allowing usage up to 20,000 gallons per day; and
- Receiving a fee credit for water-saving practices.

Resolution No. 2020-02 provides the executive director the authority necessary to carry out the implementation of the updated policy. This includes immediately exempting pond evaporation losses from the mitigation requirement and reducing fees in exchange for certain water conservation practices. The Commission estimates that implementation of these changes will result in an initial cost savings of more than \$500,000 annually to qualifying projects in the Basin. Activation of these money saving steps will require no action or cost on the part of water users and has already been begun by Commission staff.

Gene Barr, President and CEO of the PA Chamber of Business and Industry, wrote, “Today's news is the product of collaboration towards mutual goals of economic development and the stewardship of our natural resources. We appreciate and applaud

the efforts of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission's leadership and staff in working productively with stakeholders, including the regulated community, to implement policies that will protect the region's water resources, and we thank the Commission and staff for responding effectively to the concerns and issues raised on behalf of the broader business community.

Prior to the adoption of the updated policy, Commission staff held informational sessions with key water use stakeholders and other interested parties to preview the changes being considered and to solicit feedback. David Spigelmyer, President of the Marcellus Shale Coalition, commented, "The Marcellus Shale Coalition and its members appreciate the continued collaboration that the Susquehanna River Basin Commission has demonstrated with all water users, including oil and gas operators, to ensure that the Susquehanna River's water resources are protected and managed properly. Through this resolution the Commission has provided additional flexibility that will enable all water users to better manage their responsibilities during low-flow periods while incentivizing the mitigation efforts that many users already embrace and encouraging new possibilities for the protection and utilization of one of this nation's great water basins."

The informational sessions and subsequent notification to water users of the policy and cost changes were well received. "A broad array of operators participated in the sessions and we have received very positive feedback from water users throughout the basin for the adoption and implementation of this new policy," added Mr. Dehoff.

Elk Mountains Vice President/General Manager Gregg Confer stated, "This new policy on Consumptive Use Mitigation is a great benefit for the ski areas in the basin. During these crazy times this is a step in the right direction that we greatly appreciate and thank the basin for the relief."

In addition to the above comments in support of this New SRBC Policy, we also received comments from Representative Sue Helm, 104th Legislative District who stated: "As Chairman of Pa. House Urban Affairs and a Member of the House Tourism & Recreational Development Committee I am pleased to learn of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission's newly adopted

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Consumptive Water Use Policy recently adopted that immediately expands mitigation options and promotes cost savings of more than \$500,000 annually to qualifying businesses in the Basin”

Chairman Helm went on to say, “I have seen the many positive developments at the SRBC and I am pleased to see this new policy that will greatly help not only District 104 business owners, but many businesses throughout the river basin”

For questions or additional information, please call Gene Veno, Director of Government Affairs & Public Advocacy, 717-238-0423, Ext. 1311, or e-mail [at gveno@srbc.net](mailto:gveno@srbc.net). Resolution 2020-02 appears on our website www.srbc.net at <https://www.srbc.net/regulatory/policies-guidance/docs/metering-plan-groundwater-elevation-guidance-policy-2020-02.pdf>.

About the Susquehanna River Basin Commission

The Susquehanna River Basin Commission is a federal/interstate governmental agency responsible for protecting and wisely managing the water resources within the 27,500 square-mile Susquehanna River Basin without regard to political boundaries. The Susquehanna rises and flows through New York, Pennsylvania, and Maryland into the Chesapeake Bay.



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