
Product Announcement

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James Campbell

717-730-6900

jcampbel@usgs.gov

New Web-Based Tool Maps Critical Characteristics for Pennsylvania's Streams and Watersheds

Editors: The StreamStats application and supporting documentation can be found at: <http://water.usgs.gov/osw/streamstats/index.html>.

Stream-flow statistics, including peak-, low-, base-, and mean-flow are used by engineers, planners, and hydrologists in many projects. Bridge and dam design, aquatic habitat studies, and water use allocations all require accurate stream-flow statistics, which until now, typically were compiled in a time-consuming process over many hours.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has released a new web-based application, Pennsylvania StreamStats, allowing users to delineate watersheds, determine their characteristics, and obtain stream-flow statistics quickly and easily anywhere in the state. Users can select locations of interest from an interactive map or enter latitude and longitude to obtain information for these locations.

“Critical information about streams is now available at your fingertips,” said Marla Stuckey, USGS Hydrologist and StreamStats project lead in Pennsylvania. “What used to take hours can now be done accurately in seconds,” explained Stuckey.

Watershed characteristics and statistics are used by water resource professionals, but they are also of interest to watershed organizations and the general public. Using Pennsylvania StreamStats, users can determine a watershed's drainage area in square miles, mean annual precipitation in inches, mean basin elevation in feet, and percentage of area covered by carbonate bedrock, glacial deposits, forests, or urban areas.

“I have been a proponent of the use of StreamStats in our agency and have provided demonstrations to various user groups within our agency,” said Tom Denslinger, Chief, Water Use Management Section, PaDEP.

Some examples of stream-flow characteristics available include the 7-day, 2-, 10-, and 30-year low flows; 30-day, 2-, 10-, and 30-year low flows; 90-day, 10-year low flow; annual mean flow; harmonic mean flow; and base flow at the 10-, 25- and 50-year recurrence intervals.

Information on the method and sources used to obtain the basin and streamflow characteristics can be found at <http://pubs.usgs.gov/sir/2006/5130/>.

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