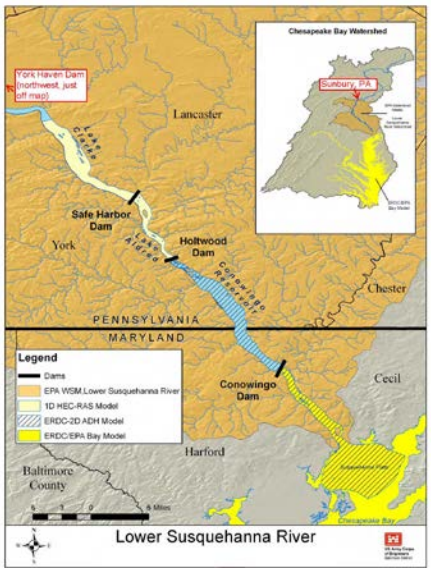
# Lower Susquehanna River Watershed Assessment, MD and PA

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS** **BUILDING STRONG®**

**FACT SHEET as of February 1, 2015**




**AUTHORIZATION:** Section 729 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended, and resolution of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, dated 23 May 2001

**TYPE OF PROJECT:** Watershed Planning, Ecosystem Restoration and Protection

**CONTRIBUTION TO CHESAPEAKE BAY:** Directly contributes to achieving protection and restoration goals established by the 2009 Executive Order 13508 and the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Program Agreement to restore clean water, recover habitat, and sustain fish and wildlife.

**PROJECT PHASE:** Feasibility

**CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST:** Senators **Mikulski and Cardin (MD), Casey and Toomey (PA)**; Representatives **Harris (MD-01), Ruppersberger (MD-02)**, **Perry (PA-04)** and **Pitts (PA-16).**

**NON-FEDERAL SPONSOR:** Maryland Department of the Environment

**BACKGROUND:** The study area consists of the lower Susquehanna River watershed from Sunbury, Pennsylvania, to the confluence with the Chesapeake Bay. The area includes the reservoirs behind the four hydroelectric dams along the river as well as the upper Chesapeake Bay, which is impacted by the discharge from the dams.

Though the effects of sediment on the Chesapeake Bay and its living resources have been researched, past studies have not included an examination of the impact of the lower Susquehanna River dams on sediment transport into the Bay. As of 1990, it was estimated that 280 million tons of sediment originating from the Susquehanna River watershed were trapped behind the three major hydroelectric dams located on the lower Susquehanna River between Havre de Grace, Maryland, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Two of the three dams – Holtwood and Safe Harbor – have reached steady state. That is, they have fully silted in and no longer trap sediment, long-term. The third impoundment, Conowingo Reservoir, will be evaluated in this study to determine any remaining trapping capacity and the impact of sediment transport through this reservoir on attainment of the Chesapeake Bay total maximum daily load sediment requirements.

This study intends to understand the dynamics behind sediment transport in the lower Susquehanna River, through the reservoirs and into the Chesapeake Bay. Measures to maintain the sediment and associated nutrient trapping abilities of the reservoirs will be considered. High sediment loads into the Bay and the nutrients they carry can cause a loss of submerged aquatic vegetation, degradation of oyster and benthic habitat, and other environmental problems, as well as shoaling of navigation channels.

**STATUS:** The cost-sharing agreement for the watershed assessment was executed on September 23, 2011. Technical activities were subsequently initiated in November 2011. The draft assessment report has undergone several technical reviews as well as public review. USACE higher authority review is underway. The final report is expected to be complete in summer 2015.

**BUDGET ($):**

| | Investigations FEAS |
|---|---|
| Total Estimated Cost | $1,377,000 |
| Federal Cost Estimate | 1,033,000 |
| Non-Federal Cost Estimate | 344,000 |
| | |
| Federal Funds Data | |
| Allocation thru FY 2013 | 906,000 |
| Allocation for FY 2014 | 127,000 |
| President Budget FY 2015[1] | 0 |
| Allocation for FY 2015[2] | 0 |
| Balance to Complete | 0 |

NOTES:

[1] The President typically sends the budget to Congress in February each year. Upon release, budget amounts for the USACE Civil Works programs and specified projects are posted online at the HQUSACE website in a program budget press book at http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/CivilWorks/Budget.apsx.

[2] The final FY 2015 allocation amounts will be made available upon final approval pursuant to the Energy and Water Appropriations Act's continuing funding requirements.

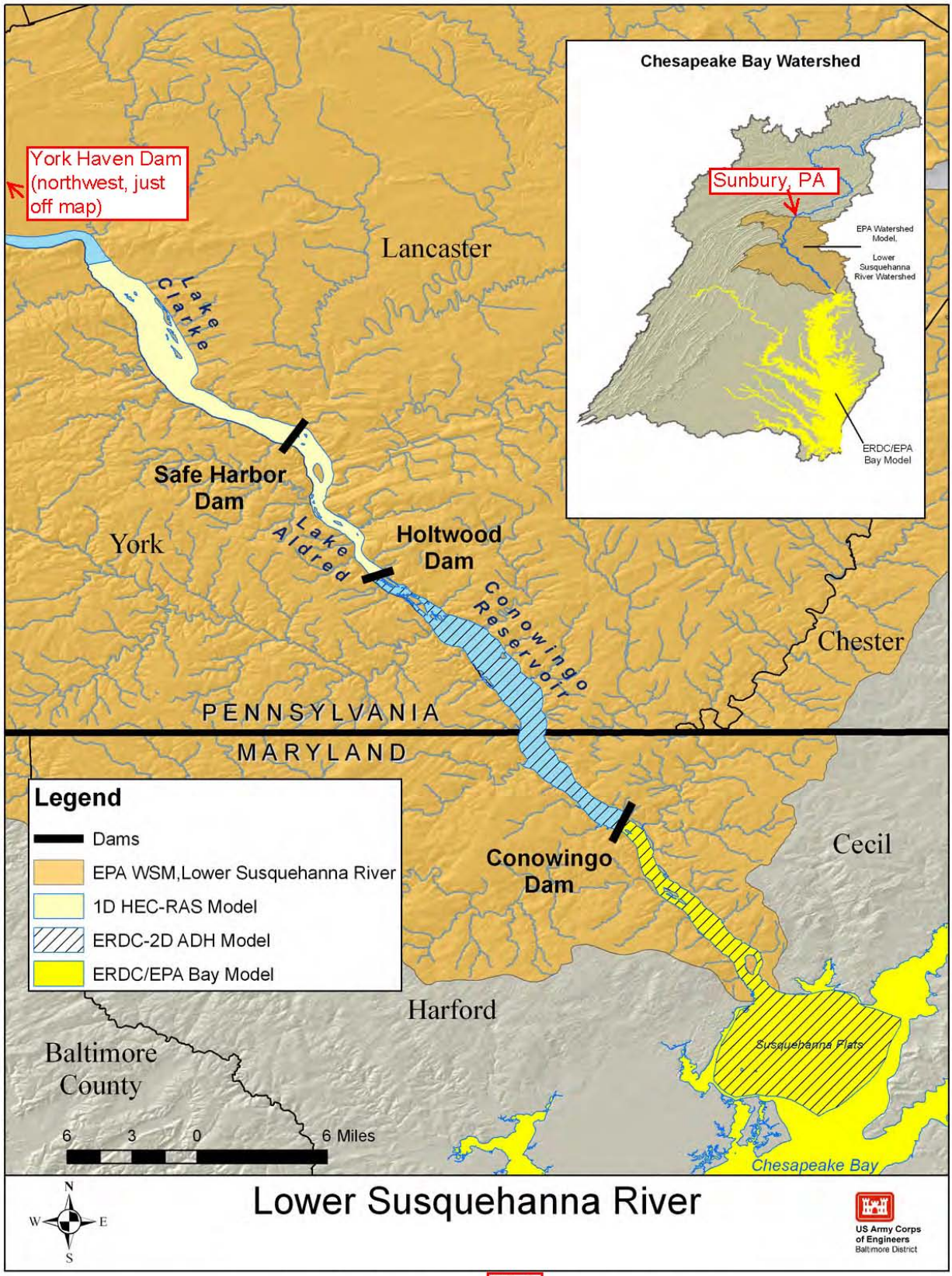
**SCHEDULE:**

FY 2014 Completed Work: With the funding received, the draft assessment report was prepared to include developing consensus on the assessment's conclusions and recommendations. The assessment report also underwent numerous reviews including external review from the Chesapeake Bay Program Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee, and quality control and policy compliance reviews.

FY 2015 Scheduled Work: Previous year carry-in funds in the amount of $84,200 will be used to obtain public comment on the draft assessment report and finalize the report.

**COMPLETION:** The watershed assessment can be completed in 2015.

**For more information** regarding the Lower Susquehanna River Watershed Assessment, please contact Kimberly Gross, CENAB-PP-C, (410) 962-3457, or e-mail, kimberly.u.gross@usace.army.mil.



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