

October 2018

On June 19, 1972, Hurricane Agnes made landfall near Panama City, Florida. From there it followed a path up the east coast and weakened as it headed toward the Atlantic Ocean. The storm then reemerged with regained wind speed off the New Jersey coast before veering westward toward northern Pennsylvania as a tropical storm.

From June 21 through 24, 1972, Tropical Storm Agnes stalled over the Susquehanna Basin, dumping between 10 and 18 inches of rain over the mountainous areas of Pennsylvania and western New York, with six to 10 inches common elsewhere. Tropical Storm Agnes wreaked havoc as rivers and streams overflowed their banks like never before. In Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the Susquehanna River crested at 32.57 feet — surpassing the previous record set in the St. Patrick’s Day Flood of 1936.

Seventy-two lives were lost in the Susquehanna Basin and an estimated \$2.8 billion in damages suffered — \$15 billion in today’s dollars. At the time, Hurricane Agnes was the nation’s costliest natural disaster. While Tropical Storm Agnes inflicted untold damages over most of the Susquehanna Basin, including the communities of Corning and Elmira, New York, the greatest damages occurred in the Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania, which

suffered more than \$530 million in damages (in 1972 dollars). Between 20,000 to 25,000 homes were damaged and more than 2,700 businesses and 150 factories were also damaged.

The long list of communities inundated with floodwaters from the Susquehanna River and its tributaries during Tropical Storm Agnes include: Binghamton, Corning, and Elmira in New York; Bloomsburg, Danville, Harrisburg, Lebanon, Lewistown, Lock Haven, Milton, Wilkes-Barre (and the entire Wyoming Valley of northeast Pennsylvania), Williamsport, and York in Pennsylvania; and Port Deposit, Maryland.



*Floodwaters were within inches of overtopping Sunbury’s flood wall.*



*Wilkes-Barre, PA experienced the greatest financial damages from Tropical Storm Agnes.*

### Counties With Greatest Loss of Life\*

Steuben County, NY.....	23
Lancaster County, PA.....	10
Dauphin County, PA.....	8
York County, PA.....	5
Northumberland County, PA.....	4
Luzerne County, PA.....	4

### Communities with Greatest Damages (in 1972 dollars)\*

Corning, NY.....	\$172,314,000	Milton, PA.....	\$29,022,000
Elmira, NY.....	\$260,494,000	Harrisburg, PA.....	\$121,740,000
Binghamton, NY.....	\$1,485,000	Lebanon, PA.....	\$39,734,000
Wilkes-Barre, PA.....	\$538,957,000	York, PA.....	\$12,917,000
Bloomsburg, PA.....	\$17,981,000	Lewistown, PA.....	\$95,261,000
Lock Haven, PA.....	\$88,449,000	Port Deposit, MD.....	\$2,914,000

\*Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Baltimore District, *Tropical Storm Agnes, June 1972, Post Flood Report Volume II Damage and Recovery*, 1974.