

# Susquehanna River Basin Commission Information Sheet



## Tropical Storm Agnes in the Susquehanna Basin June 21-24, 1972

Hurricane Agnes followed a path from the Florida panhandle, 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 June 24, 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 6 to 10 inches common elsewhere. Tropical Storm Agnes wreaked havoc in New York and Pennsylvania 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 – \$14 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, 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 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.



*Floodwall saved Sunbury, Pa.*

Counties With Greatest Loss of Life*	Greatest Damages (in 1972 dollars)*	
Steuben County, N.Y. ....23 lives	Corning, N.Y. ....\$172,314,000	Milton, Pa. ....\$ 29,022,000
Lancaster County, Pa. ....10	Elmira .....\$260,494,000	Harrisburg ..... \$121,740,000
Dauphin County, Pa. .... 8	Binghamton .....\$ 1,485,000	Lebanon .....\$ 39,734,000
York County, Pa. .... 5	Wilkes-Barre, Pa. ....\$538,957,000	York .....\$ 12,917,000
Northumberland County, Pa. .... 4	Bloomsburg .....\$ 17,981,000	Lewistown ..... \$ 95,261,000
Luzerne County, Pa. .... 4	Lock Haven .....\$ 88,449,000	Port Deposit, Md. .. \$ 2,914,000

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