

The Susquehanna: A Working River

Over the centuries, the Susquehanna River has served many purposes. It provided a means of travel for Native Americans and early European settlers, a way to transport coal and lumber, and a source of food. It has also served as a method of waste removal, a source of drinking water, and a place to recreate. And, since 1904 when the York Haven Dam was constructed, the river has produced electricity for a rapidly growing region.

The proximity of the river to population centers such as Philadelphia and Baltimore, along with its size, swift-moving water, and narrow valley made it a valuable electricity-

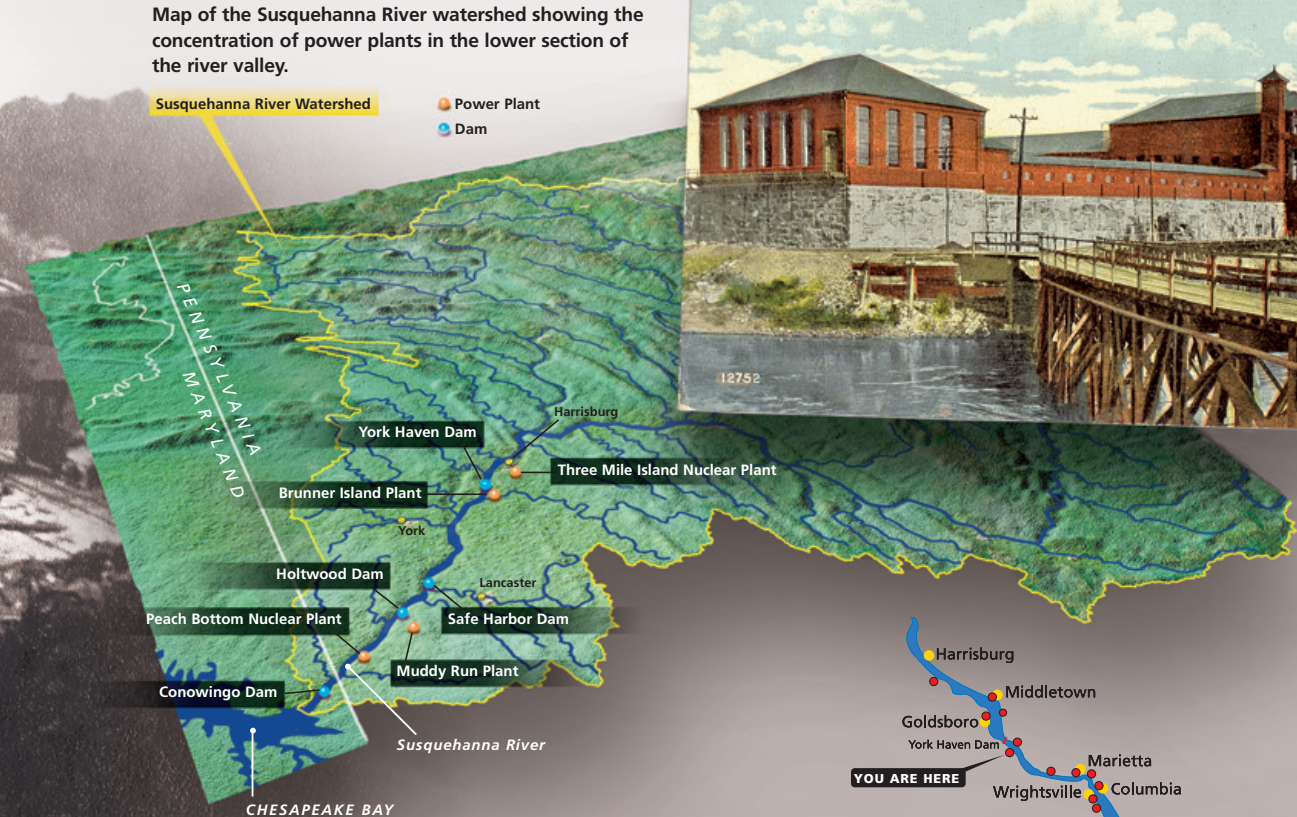
generating resource then and now. Today the lower end of the river corridor is host to four hydroelectric facilities, two nuclear power plants, a pumped-storage plant, and a coal-fired power plant. The power plants have impacted the natural resources of the river. However, public agencies, private organizations, and electric utility companies are working together to restore American shad and eel populations, mitigate power line crossings, and improve water quality. These efforts are helping to restore the Susquehanna River's ecology.

Photo of an early phase of the Holtwood Dam construction project, circa 1906. Note the presence on the left of the "coffer dam" to direct river water away from the construction area.

Courtesy Peter Seibert



Old 1911 postcard photo of the York Haven Hydroelectric plant. Courtesy Mark Arbogast



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Susquehanna River Water Trail

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