

Watersheds

Pennsylvania is commonly divided into five major and two minor river basins. The five major basins are the Delaware, the Great Lakes, the Ohio, the Potomac and the Susquehanna. The two minor basins are the Elk and Northeast and the Gunpowder.

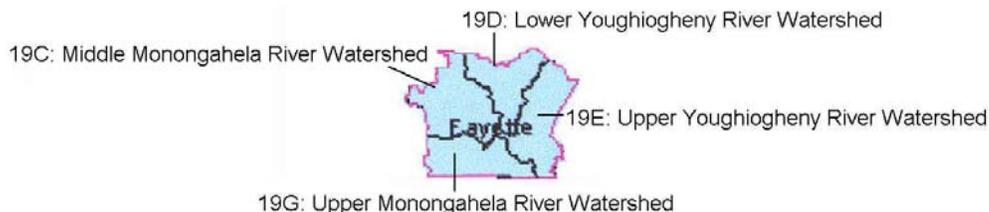
The largest portion of Pennsylvania lies within the Susquehanna River Basin (20,960 square miles) while the Gunpowder River Basin contains the smallest portion (11 square miles). Fayette County lies within Pennsylvania's second largest river basin, the Ohio.

The Ohio River Basin is approximately 164,000 square miles in size and drains eleven states including Pennsylvania. This basin covers 15,614 square miles in Pennsylvania and drains more than a third of the state! According to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, the Ohio River Basin is home to approximately 3.5 million Pennsylvanians and more than 20 million people total. That's approximately 10 percent of the United States population. The basin not only covers a portion of Pennsylvania, but also sections of New York, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Kentucky, Indiana, Tennessee, Illinois and North Carolina.

In Pennsylvania, the Ohio River Basin is divided into five major sub-basins. These are the Upper Allegheny, the Central Allegheny, the Lower Allegheny, the Monongahela and the Ohio. All of Fayette County is located in the Monongahela sub-basin. In addition, the Monongahela sub-basin is divided into seven smaller watersheds. Four of these smaller watersheds encompass the entirety of Fayette County. These four watersheds are the Middle Monongahela, the Upper Monongahela, the Lower Youghiogheny and the Upper Youghiogheny. In turn, each of these four watersheds can be divided up further. For example, the Middle Monongahela may be divided into the Redstone Creek Watershed and the Peters Creek Watershed.



Re-produced from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Web-site (www.dep.state.pa.us)



Fayette County State Water Plans

Watersheds are not confined to county, state or international boundaries. They may be quite large or quite small and often one may find smaller watersheds contained within larger watersheds. In short, watersheds interconnect not only with each other but also with everything that exists within them, including humans. Remember, we all live downstream.