

## Basic Instructions for Retrieving Water Quality Data from EPA's LEGACY STORET System

### **Introduction**

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's fixed Water Quality Network (WQN) data is stored in the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) STORET system. The system is broken down into two programs - the Legacy STORET system and the Modernized STORET system. The Legacy STORET system contains Pennsylvania's data that was submitted prior to September 1998.

To obtain Water Quality Data from the LEGACY STORET system, go to EPA's website [www.epa.gov/storet](http://www.epa.gov/storet) and follow the directions below.

Obtaining Water Quality Data from the **LEGACY STORET** system:

- Click on "Obtaining Water Quality Data"
- Click on the yellow box for "Legacy STORET"
- Click "Query"
- Click the box "Start a simple query by selecting a state"
- Choose Pennsylvania (or whatever state you're interested in) and click "Continue"
- Choose your preferred county and click continue
- Scroll down the listing of data until you find your desired site or sites.
- Click on the site once so that it is the only thing highlighted and click "Continue." If you want to retrieve data from more than one site simultaneously, highlight your first site, hold down the Control key and continue highlighting as many sites as desired. Once all sites are chosen, click "Continue."
- On the next screen, you can specify a specific date range using the drop down arrows in each of the boxes for the desired data or you can choose to leave the default dates displayed.
- On this same screen, you can choose specific tests or parameters. Click once on the desired test. If you want to look at more than one parameter, hold down the Control key and highlight as many test parameters as desired. Once everything is set to your liking, click "Continue".
- The next screen you see summarizes the chosen parameters and at this point, you will have to choose how you want the data to output. This is done by clicking the circle next to the desired option.

The options are outlined below:

## REPORT TYPE

1. **Station Description Report** – this will list your station information only (i.e., name, latitude, longitude, location, etc.) This choice **will not** give you numerical results.
2. **Summary Data Report** – this option will list your station information and the tests that were conducted. This choice **will not** give you numerical results.
3. **Detailed Data Report** – this option will list your station information, the types of tests conducted along with the results, units, etc. of those results. This is the option you will probably choose most often. **Choose this option if you are unsure of which option to choose.**

## OUTPUT FORMAT

1. **HTML** – displays the information on a website in a printable form and is useful only if you want to look at the data as opposed to working with or manipulating the data in a spreadsheet or other form.
  2. **PDF** – I do not recommend using this option. This option will again display your information in a readable, printable form but is not useful if you want to do anything with the data.
  3. **TXT** – This will give you a comma separated data set that can be copied and pasted into an Excel spreadsheet or other database. This is the option you want to choose if you want to manipulate the data. Choose this option if you are unsure of what to choose.
- Once you have specified a Report Type and an Output Format, click “Continue.”
  - Click “OK” when the message comes up explaining that it might take some time to run the report.
  - You will be taken to a data retrieval log or results page. The system can return up to and including 700 results. If your query is over that amount, you can go back and specify fewer parameters, narrow your date range, or request and overnight report. All three of these options work, they are solely based on convenience and urgency of receiving the data.
  - Once you get an acceptable number of returned results, click “Get Report.” Depending on the Output Type chosen, you have several different options from this point.
    - If **HTML** was chosen you can look at the data report online, or print it.
    - If **TXT** was chosen go to Edit → Select All → Edit → Copy  
In a separate program, open a spreadsheet or database and paste the information. You may need to format the data further depending on the program where you’ve pasted the data.

If further queries in STORET are desired, click the “Back” arrow on your browser until you reach the desired screen (county, stations or parameters depending on what you want to change) and start the process over.