

## **“Agnes and Wilkes-Barre, Then and Now”**

*David J. Nicosia,  
Warning Coordination Meteorologist  
NOAA/National Weather Service Binghamton, N.Y.*

During the end of June 1972, the remnants of Hurricane Agnes ravaged the Middle Atlantic States with up to 19 inches of rain and record flooding . The flooding killed 130 people and caused 11.6 billion dollars worth of damage. Agnes was the 7<sup>th</sup> costliest storm on record in United States history. The “Agnes” flood remains the worst natural disaster in Pennsylvania history. 50 people were killed in Pennsylvania with 2 billion dollars worth of damage. Over 100,000 people had to flee their homes and businesses in the Greater Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania area as the Susquehanna River topped the levee cresting around 8 feet higher than the previous flood of record. The Wilkes-Barre area was particularly hard hit by the flooding. It took many years to recover from this flood with some never fully recovering.

This talk will show the development of the Agnes Flood and some of the impacts in the Wilkes-Barre area. In addition, the talk will focus on how the capabilities of warning and detecting floods have evolved and improved since 1972. What if another “Agnes”-like flood occurred today? How prepared are we? The current capabilities of the Susquehanna Flood Forecast and Warning System will be highlighted which includes levee systems, dams, additional river and rain gauges, better networks and data reliability from satellites, better weather and river forecasts, improved communications with partners, flood inundation mapping efforts, internet, and increased outreach to flood prone communities.