Watershed MANAGEMENT 

Drought Information Center

October 18, 1999

The only significant rainfall in Pennsylvania since Friday occurred in the past 24-hour period. Rainfall totaling about 0.20 inches occurred over the northwest part of the state; this area is bounded by a line through approximately Lawrence and McKean Counties, and by the state border. The other area is in the southeast and also received about 0.20 inches total precipitation; this area can be described as south and east of Pottsville, in Schuylkill County, and bounded by the Maryland and New Jersey borders.

Streams in the Delaware River Basin show a mainly receding trend since Friday. Crum Creek Basin, Ridley Creek Basin and the Christina River Basin are the exceptions with enhanced flows while Chester Creek Basin is holding about even. The mainstem Delaware River at Trenton is down from 9,920 to 8,500 cfs. The Lackawaxen River at Hawley is down from 263 to 183 cfs. The Lehigh River at Bethlehem is down from 2,900 to 2,650 cfs. The Schuylkill River at Philadelphia is down from 3,140 to 2,770 cfs. and the Brandywine Creek at Chadds Ford is up from 279 to 506 cfs. About 90% of the streams in the Delaware River Basin are at above normal flow for today's date.

The Susquehanna River Basin also shows a general receding flow trend over the past three days. The upper reaches of the Susquehanna River mainstem is the only watercourse with overall flow enhancements, while the Tunkhannock Creek Basin is holding mostly even. Mixed flow enhancements and recessions are seen in the Chemung River Basin and in the West Branch Susquehanna River Basin. The mainstem Susquehanna River is up from 2,960 to 3,650 at Towanda, up from 5,650 to 5,970 cfs. at Wilkes-Barre and down from 15,100 to 13,700 cfs. at Harrisburg. The West Branch Susquehanna River is up from 1,130 to 1,310 cfs. at Lock Haven, about even from 2,700 to 2,690 cfs. at Williamsport and down slightly from 4,120 to 3,830 cfs. at Lewisburg. The Juniata River at Newport is down from 2,160 to 1,830 cfs. and the Conestoga River at Conestoga is down from 647 to 523 cfs. About 80% of the stream gauges in the Susquehanna River Basin are at above normal flow for October 18.

The Ohio River Basin also shows general flow recessions except for enhancements on the Allegheny River, mainstem Ohio River, Conewango Creek Basin and lower reaches of French Creek Basin. Pine Creek Basin is about even. The Allegheny River at Natrona is up from 3,580 to 5,170 cfs. The mainstem Ohio at Sewickley is up from 8,110 to 8,320 cfs. The Kiskiminetas River at Vandergrift is up from 848 to 967 cfs. The Monongahela River at Braddock is down from 4,270 to 2,570 cfs. and the Beaver River at Beaver Falls is down from 1,100 cfs to 656 cfs. About 75% of the stream gauges in the Ohio River Basin are at below normal flow for this date.

Since October 15, 26 counties with monitoring wells show a water level rise for ten counties and a drop for 16. Water level rises range from 0.01 to 0.66 ft. with an average increase of 0.18 ft. Decreases range from 0.01 to 8.94 ft. with an average drop of 1.16 ft.

Pike and Potter Counties have water level decreases of 8.94 and 3.43 feet respectively. If these readings are called into question and excluded from the analysis, the maximum drop is 1.95 ft. with an average drop of 0.44 ft.

The forecast for the next five days includes light rain in the west, northwest and extreme southeast sections of Pennsylvania. Rainfall totals should be under 0.25 inches. For the period October 23 to 28, an additional 0.75 inches of rainfall is expected over most of the state with lighter amounts in the extreme south and southeast. Temperatures for the next ten days are expected to be somewhat below normal.