

Drought Report **February 15, 2017**

Preface

This report summarizes the various indicators used in drought monitoring. Each parameter (groundwater, surface water, precipitation, and palmer index) has its own individual indicator for each county. When readings hit a pre-determined trigger level, the indicator is coded as “Normal”, “Watch”, “Warning”, or “Emergency” for that county. These indicators are used to evaluate the drought status of a particular county; they are not, themselves drought declarations. Drought declarations are determined by the Commonwealth Drought Coordinator, with support of the Drought Task Force, and given final approval by the Governor.

Drought Report

Summary: February 8 – February 14, 2017

Overall, drought conditions across the Commonwealth are reflecting the results of the last few weeks of precipitation and by the improvement during the past week. Generally speaking, between 1 and 2 inches of rain fell across the state during the last 7 days. This resulted in back to normal or close to normal precipitation for most of the state with deficiencies not exceeding 25% below normal for the last 90 days for certain central, south-central and eastern counties. Projected rainfall for the next seven days is not expected to be significant throughout the state.

Precipitation: The 90-day precipitation departures ranged from between 50% above normal to 25% below normal. Precipitation departures exceeding 25% below normal were not found throughout the state.

Groundwater: Groundwater levels continue to rise but at a slower rate. The slow recovery rate of the groundwater in certain counties resulted in maintaining their watch status.

Stream flows: Instantaneous flows ranged from normal to much above normal in the west and from above normal to slightly below normal in the eastern part of the state.

Commonwealth Drought Task Force: The Commonwealth Drought Task Force met on February 14, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. at PEMA Headquarters. The following changes were made at the meeting to reflect improving conditions. Only two counties remain under Drought Watch (Mifflin and Union). Six counties improved from Drought Watch to Drought Warning (Carbon, Juniata, Lehigh, Monroe, Northampton, and Snyder). Eleven counties returned from Drought Warning to Normal status (Adams, Bedford, Clinton, Fulton, Huntingdon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Pike, Sullivan, Wayne, and York). Twenty-one counties are now under Drought Warning (Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Centre, Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Northumberland, Perry, Philadelphia, Schuylkill, and Snyder). The next meeting is scheduled for March 16, 2017, at PEMA.

Drought Report Details

Precipitation – Over the last 7 days, county rainfall ranged from 1-2 inches across the state. The 90-day precipitation deficit shows counties ranging from 25% below normal to 50% above normal.

Surface Water- Instantaneous streamflow across the Commonwealth ranged from normal to much above normal in the Ohio River Basin and Susquehanna to from normal to slightly below normal in certain portions of the Delaware River Basins.

The 30-day running average streamflow indicators are showing most counties in normal condition, a few counties in in “Watch”, and only one county in “Warning”. No counties are in “Emergency”.

Groundwater – The 30-day moving average indicators for groundwater levels are showing 10 counties in drought “Watch”, two counties in “Warning”, and nine counties in “Emergency”.

Palmer Drought Severity Index – The Palmer soil moisture indicator is showing all counties in “Normal” drought trigger status for this reporting period.

Public Water Supply Agencies (PWSAs) – Public water suppliers are requested to continue to follow the county-wide declarations unless there is a need for more stringent restrictions at which point water suppliers may initiate their own voluntary or mandatory water use restrictions. The following public water suppliers are recommending restrictions:

- Bloomfield Boro Water Authority, Perry County
- East Stroudsburg Boro Water Dept, Monroe County
- Mahanoy Township Authority, Schuylkill County
- Mary D Community Assn, Schuylkill County
- Richfield Area Joint Auth, Juniata County
- Schuylkill County Muni Auth, Schuylkill County
- Schuylkill Haven Boro, Schuylkill County

Forecast – The 7-day forecast does not project significant precipitation.

Current Drought Status

