

Drought Report **March 22, 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: March 15 – March 22, 2017

Over the last seven days, the western two-thirds of the state has remained in normal conditions without any changes in individual trigger status. Precipitation in the form of snow fell across the eastern portion of the state resulting in above normal precipitation amounts for the last seven days. The southcentral and southeastern parts of the state continue to show below normal 30-day average streamflows and below normal 30-day average groundwater levels. Streamflows and groundwater levels should experience improvement in the coming week as snow melt results in runoff and percolation into the ground.

DRBC: The Delaware River Basin Commission is not imposing any drought conditions at this time. The salt front is at RM 71, which is one mile upstream of the normal location for March.

Commonwealth Drought Task Force: Due to the recent snowfall and wanting to see the effects of the melting runoff, the Commonwealth Drought Task Force rescheduled its next meeting to be at 11 a.m. on April 6, 2017, at PEMA Headquarters

Drought Report Details

Precipitation – Over the last seven days, liquid equivalent precipitation ranged from 0.2 inches in the northwest to 2.5 inches in the northeast. Most of this precipitation occurred in the form of snow. The 90-day precipitation deficit shows counties ranging from 50% below normal in the southeast to greater than 75% above normal in the west.

The precipitation indicators based on a 90-day departure are now showing two counties in drought “Watch” (Montgomery and Philadelphia). No county indicators are in drought “Warning” or “Emergency”.

Surface Water – Instantaneous flows range from below normal to above normal across the state. For this date, as snow continues to melt and runoff, no gages were reporting instantaneous flow at less than the 10th percentile.

The 30-day running average streamflow indicators are showing seventeen counties in drought “Watch” (Adams, Bedford, Carbon, Centre, Clearfield, Cumberland, Dauphin, Huntingdon, Jefferson, Lebanon, Lycoming, Monroe, Northumberland, Perry, Pike, Sullivan and York); nine counties in “Warning” (Bucks, Delaware, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lehigh, Mifflin, Montgomery and Snyder) and four counties in “Emergency” (Berks, Chester, Northampton and Philadelphia).

Groundwater – The 30-day moving average indicators for groundwater levels are showing five counties in drought “Watch” (Bucks, Mifflin, Montgomery, Sullivan and Wyoming); seven counties in “Warning” (Adams, Berks, Centre, Lehigh, Northampton, Northumberland and York) and eight counties in “Emergency” (Chester, Cumberland, Dauphin, Delaware, Franklin, Lancaster, Lebanon and Philadelphia).

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 continue to implement voluntary restrictions:

- Bloomfield Boro Water Authority, Perry 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 projects precipitation to range from 1.0 to 2.0 inches throughout the state with higher precipitation across the northern tier of the state.

Current Drought Status

