

Drought Report April 18, 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: April 11 – April 18, 2017

Precipitation during the last seven days was below normal except for the northwestern part of the state. Consequently, groundwater and surface water recovery was limited in certain area across the state. The 30-day streamflow plots are all normal; the 30-day groundwater plots have improved with four counties returning to normal (Bucks, Dauphin, Lebanon and Montgomery). We are keeping careful watch over several groundwater monitoring wells in the southcentral and southeastern parts of the state. These wells, while continuing to display some recovery, remain below normal levels in watch, warning and emergency indicator status. Full recovery of these wells is not guaranteed should dry weather patterns prevail during spring.

Commonwealth Drought Task Force: The next Commonwealth Drought Task Force meeting is scheduled to be held at 11 a.m. on May 4, 2017, at PEMA Headquarters at which time the members will review conditions and recommend any changes to the counties which remain in drought “Watch” status.

Drought Report Details

Precipitation – Over the last seven days, precipitation ranged from 0.0 to 0.5 inches in the east; 0.1 to 0.4 inches in the central part of the state; and 0.5 to 1.8 inches in the west. The 90-day precipitation deficit shows counties ranging from 25% below normal in the east to greater than 75% above normal in the west. The county precipitation indicators based on a 90-day departure continue to remain in “Normal” status for this report.

Surface Water – Instantaneous flows range from normal to above normal in the west with one gage below normal; much below normal to normal in the central and eastern part of the state. The 30-day running average streamflow indicators now show all counties in “Normal” drought trigger status.

Groundwater – The 30-day moving average indicators for groundwater levels are showing seven counties in drought “Watch” (Berks, Chester, Delaware, Lancaster, Lehigh, Northampton and Philadelphia); one county in “Warning” (Centre) and two counties in “Emergency” (Cumberland and Franklin).

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 Borough Water Authority, Perry County
- Mahanoy Township Authority, Schuylkill County
- Mary D Community Association, Schuylkill County
- Richfield Area Joint Authority, Juniata County
- Schuylkill County Municipal Authority, Schuylkill County
- Schuylkill Haven Borough, Schuylkill County

Forecast – The 7-day forecast indicates precipitation will range from 1.25 to 1.50 inches from the southwest to the northeast part of the state; 1.50 to 1.75 inches in the southeast; and 1.50 to 2.00 inches in the northwest part of the state.

Current Drought Status

