

# *Watershed* MANAGEMENT



## Drought Information Center

**February 22, 2001**

For the month of January 2001, 67 Pennsylvania counties had below normal precipitation. Departures from normal precipitation range from -1.50 inches (Wayne County) to -0.10 inches (Adams and Franklin County). The average departure from normal precipitation for the state as a whole, for the month of January, is -0.48 inches. Cumulative rainfall for the month of January and the year 2001 ranged from 3.1 inches (Chester and Delaware County) to 0.80 inches (Tioga County). For the first 22 days of February, 63 counties have below normal precipitation and 4 counties at or above normal precipitation, with average rainfall for the period being approximately 1.23 inches.

Compared to January 16, the Delaware River Basin shows an overall improvement in flows, however the flows remain below the long-term median. Flow enhancements are seen on every major watershed in the Basin. The main-stem Delaware River is up from 5,440 to 9,810 cfs at Trenton. The Lackawaxen River is up from 326 to 447 cfs at Hawley. The Lehigh River is up from 1,280 to 2,110 cfs at Bethlehem. The Schuylkill River is up from 1,410 to 2,950 cfs at Philadelphia and the Brandywine Creek is up from 367 to 389 cfs at Chadds Ford. The New York City Delaware River Basin storage (February 22) is 6.5% above normal and 95.525 billion gallons above the drought warning level.

Over the past four weeks, the Main Stem and the West Branch of the Susquehanna River Basin showed an improvement in flows, with flows in most cases above the long-term median. The Chemung River Basin flows were below the long-term median. Most tributaries draining into the lower portion of the Susquehanna River are below long-term median flows. The main stem Susquehanna River is up from 3,970 to 9,910 cfs at Towanda, up from 6,130 cfs to 14,300 at Wilkes-Barre, and up from 26,500 to 34,500 cfs at Harrisburg. The West Branch Susquehanna River is up from 2,070 to 6,660 cfs at Lock Haven and from 2,400 to 10,300 cfs at Williamsport.

Compared to mid-January, flows in the Ohio River Basin have improved to where the French Creek, Mahoning Creek, and Beaver Creek Basins are the only basins with flows below the long-term median. The Allegheny River is up from 7,440 to 29,000 cfs at Natrona. The main-stem Ohio River is up from 12,800 to 29,200 cfs at Sewickley. The Kiskiminetas River is up from 856 to 6,670 cfs at Vandergrift. The Monongahela River is up from 3,680 to 24,300 cfs at Braddock and the Beaver River is up from 2,490 to 3,510 cfs at Beaver Falls.

For January 2001, 23 of 28 available stream gauging stations in Pennsylvania had a monthly mean discharge below average.

Since January 16, 29 counties with monitoring wells show water level rises for all but one county. Increases range from 0.04 (Philadelphia Co.) to 11.74 ft. (Carbon County) with an average rise of 2.63

ft. Union County showed a decrease of only 0.07 ft. USGS January 2001 end-of-month summary figures showing percent of wells where water level is above average, have decreased for the Susquehanna and Ohio River Basins. The Delaware Basin wells showed little change. The percent of wells where water level is above average is about 15%, 15% and 28% for the Delaware, Susquehanna and Ohio River basins, respectively.

For the period February 22 thru March 4, above normal precipitation is forecast, with rainfall amounts projected to be from 2 to 3 inches across the state. Temperatures for the next ten days are expected to be above normal.

The drought indicators will continue to be monitored closely. Groundwater conditions are at a precarious point at this time. Snow pack is light, and continued lack of precipitation will jeopardize ground water recharge.