

August 30, 2007

Over the last 7 days, the mean areal precipitation records show 7-day departures from normal between -0.1 and -0.9 inches in 56 counties. This is compared with the 90-day departures from normal that show only 28 counties with negative departures. Precipitation during this past week ranged from insignificant amounts up to about the 2 to 3 inch range in the west central and east central parts of the state.

The 90-day precipitation indicator map shows all counties at normal to above normal levels except Clinton County whose moving 90-day average has recently moved into the Drought Watch status.

Streamflow indicators are reflecting the results of the rainfall that occurred last week. However, these improvements may be short lived as a review of the streamflow gages indicate that flows are dropping and are approaching or have moved below median flows. Schuylkill County is the only county that remains in Drought Watch status for streamflow. All other counties are in Normal status. Based on the daily streamflow map, the southeast portion of Pennsylvania is experiencing the lowest flows, however even in that are some gages remain above the daily median value.

Improvement is seen in the groundwater wells with Lawrence, McKean, Mercer and Potter counties moving from Drought Emergency to Watch status; Columbia and Luzerne counties moving from Drought Warning to Watch status; and Carbon, Dauphin, Lebanon, Northumberland and Snyder counties moving from Drought Watch to Normal status. Overall, wells scattered along the Ridge and Valley and the Plateau have improved although several still remain in watch/warning/emergency status.

Forecasting predicts below normal precipitation over the next 14 days. The 7-day forecast predicts 0.1 to 0.25 for most of the state with no precipitation in the far western portion of the state. Probabilities of precipitation over the next 7 days are low (0-15%) from Friday into next week with most areas. The 14-day forecast predicts precipitation amounts between 0.25 to 1 inch between September 7th and 14th.

The recent rainfall from last week continues to impact streams and groundwater wells as they move closer to normal conditions. Conditions continue to be monitored closely to determine areas that may be lifted from the drought watch in the next several weeks. A Drought Task Force meeting has been scheduled for Sept. 4 to discuss and evaluate current conditions. At this point, the commonwealth remains in a drought watch for 58 counties.