

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

January 15, 1999

The past 24 hours brought an inch or more of precipitation across most of the Commonwealth. A few locations in the northwest and southeast recorded only .75-1.0 inches, but throughout the Ridge and Valley and the Appalachian Plateau areas, readings were generally in the 1.0-1.5 inch range.

In the Delaware River basin, flows along the entire main stem Delaware are down from yesterday. Tributary flows in the upper basin are improved somewhat, but generally still below normal. Flows in the headwater areas of the Lehigh River are improved while lower basin flows are declining noticeably. In the Schuylkill River basin, tributary streams are generally improved and near or above normal. Flows in the Christina/Brandywine basins have declined and remain below normal.

In the Susquehanna River basin, main stem flows in the upper basin are declining, while main stem flows in the lower basin are increasing, but all remain below normal. Tributary flows in the upper basin are showing a mix of marginal increases and decreases. West Branch and Juniata tributaries are also showing a mix of marginal increases and decreases, as are the main stem gages on those two rivers. Lower Susquehanna tributary flows are likewise showing mixed changes. Streams throughout the basin generally remain well below normal.

In the Ohio River basin, Allegheny River main stem flows are noticeably increased from yesterday as is the Ohio River itself at Sewickley, up from 44,000 to 76,500 cubic feet per second, compared to a normal of 29,600. Allegheny River flows, however, remain below normal. Allegheny River tributaries are mixed but generally up marginally and are well above normal in the lower basin area. Monongahela basin flows have generally about doubled since yesterday and are exceeding normal by a factor of about 3. Beaver basin flows have shown noticeable increases and are generally above normal.

Ground water continues to show little or no reaction to either precipitation or the recent melt, except in the southern tier. The growing accumulation of frozen precipitation, particularly in the mountainous areas, however, is water in the bank for the future. Hopefully the eventual melt will be slow, to allow infiltration into the ground. Warmer weather is forecast during the next 5-day period, although accompanying rain could speed the melt and result in runoff rather than infiltration during the period.