

# Watershed MANAGEMENT



## Drought Information Center

January 22, 1999

The past 24 hours brought light precipitation across most of the Commonwealth, with the lightest concentrations (less than 0.1 inch) northwest of a line from Beaver to McKean Counties. The southwestern counties received about .25-.50 inches, while the Ridge and Valley received about 0.25, and about .15-.25 inches fell southeast of Blue Mountain.

In the Delaware River basin, Delaware River main stem flows have declined from yesterday. Lackawaxen tributary and main stem flows are generally down. Lehigh tributary and main stem flows are generally down in the upper part of the watershed and generally up or holding steady in the lower part of the watershed. Most Schuylkill tributary flows are up from yesterday, while main stem flows are generally down. Christina flows are generally up very slightly. Throughout the Delaware basin, flows remain above normal, with scattered exceptions.

In the Susquehanna River basin, Susquehanna River main stem flows are up slightly in the upper basin and down slightly in the lower basin, but all remain well above normal. Upper basin tributary flows are mixed and above normal, showing increases generally in the smaller watersheds and in the Lackawanna watershed. West Branch Susquehanna tributary and main stem flows are down in the upper basin and mixed but generally up in the lower basin below Bald Eagle Creek. With the exception of a couple small watersheds, they remain above normal. Juniata tributary and main stem flows are mixed, but generally up slightly; most are below normal. Lower Susquehanna tributary flows are nearly all up from yesterday and with the exception of a few smaller watersheds, remain above normal.

In the Ohio River basin, Allegheny main stem flows are slightly down from yesterday, while Allegheny tributary flows have declined more noticeably, except Kiskiminetas flows, which are increased. Monongahela watershed flows are generally up, and Beaver watershed flows are generally down. Flows remain well above normal throughout the Ohio basin.

Ground water showed improvement again this morning in a majority of the observation wells, particularly in the counties southeast of Blue Mountain. Carbon, Lehigh and Monroe County wells continue a fairly stable improvement that has continued for several weeks. Adams, Dauphin, Huntingdon, Lebanon and Union County wells showed declines today.

Forecasts for the next three days indicate about 0.3-0.5 inches of precipitation in the western half of the state and about 0.5-1.4 inches in the eastern half. The five-day outlook shows a total of about 1 inch in the western half, increasing to about 2.5 inches in the easternmost counties. The ten-day forecast adds about 0.5-1.0 inch in the Ohio and Susquehanna basins and about 0.25-0.5 inch in the

Delaware. Temperatures are to remain above normal in the southern two-thirds and normal in the upper third of the state.

We have been fortunate to receive substantial precipitation throughout the Commonwealth during the first half of January, and stream flows have shown at least temporary improvement as a result. Ground water levels remain at extremely low levels, however. Until and unless ground water is finally able to recover as a result of an effective melt of the snow/ice pack, water supplies will remain in jeopardy. Stream flows are improved for the short term by recent precipitation and melt, but flows over the long term will recede to below normal again, unless ground water recovers significantly and is once again able to sustain flows between precipitation events. It continues to be important that we all conserve water to the best of our ability. Things may look better right now, but the true test will be the ground water picture after the spring melt and runoff.