

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

February 22, 1999

Precipitation since last Wednesday, the last time we had data, was substantial in the southeast, totaling slightly over an inch in Chester and Delaware Counties, mostly from rainfall that occurred early in the period. The numbers declined to about 0.6-0.7 inches westward to a line from York to Lehigh Counties and further declined to about 0.1-0.2 inches to a line from Franklin to Bradford Counties. Precipitation was minimal west of that line, with totals across the remainder of the northern tier being less than 0.05 inches. Precipitation during the weekend was very minimal statewide.

Stream flows in the Delaware River basin continue declining, with all main stem Delaware gages down from Friday. Flows at Trenton have decreased from 15,600 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 11,600 cfs. The Lackawaxen River at Hawley is down from 472 to 272 cfs, the Lehigh River at Bethlehem is down from 2840 to 2380 cfs, and the Schuylkill River at Philadelphia is down from 5270 to 2640 cfs. Brandywine Creek at Chadds Ford is down from 554 to 268 cfs. Basinwide, the vast majority of flows have fallen below normal again, with Christina watershed flows remaining well below normal.

In the Susquehanna River basin, main stem flows are considerably reduced in the upper basin and have declined somewhat in the lower basin. Flows at Towanda are down from 14,000 to 9430 cfs and at Harrisburg are down from 39,900 to 38,400 cfs. West Branch and Juniata watershed flows are similar. Flows on the West Branch at Lewisburg are down from 12,500 to 10,600 cfs and on the Juniata at Newport are down from 2600 to 2160 cfs. Lower basin tributary flows are down as well, as reflected in the Conestoga River at Conestoga, down from 992 to 466 cfs. In the upper basin and West Branch, increasing numbers, perhaps approaching a third, of gages are recording below-normal flows, and in the Juniata and lower basin tributaries, nearly all gages are reading below normal this morning.

In the Ohio River basin, main stem flows on the Allegheny River are showing similar trends, with the Natrona gage reading 20,800 cfs this morning, down from 24,300 cfs on Friday. Allegheny tributary flows are generally down, as well, with the Kiskiminetas at Vandergrift down from 2150 to 2000 cfs. Monongahela watershed flows are generally down also, except in the lower river at Braddock, where an increase from 8190 to 8840 cfs is noted this morning. Beaver River watershed flows have all declined, with the river at Beaver Falls down from 4620 to 3270 cfs. The Ohio River at Sewickley is down from 35,600 to 28,200 cfs. As in the Delaware basin, the vast majority of flows in the Ohio basin have fallen below normal.

Groundwater information indicates a downward trend yesterday at all daily recording sites except Lehigh County. Delaware basin wells showed some weekend recovery from last week's rain, but with the exception of Lehigh County, have begun to recede again.

The three-day forecast indicates colder weather, with snow flurries or showers accumulating to no more than 0.1 inch water content in the southwest and only about 0.01 inch east of a Crawford -to- Franklin County line. The five-day total indicates about 0.5-1.0 inch in the western two-thirds of the state and 1.0-1.5 inches in the east. The ten-day forecast adds another 0.25 inches northwest to 1.5 inches southeast. Temperatures are to be near normal.