

# Watershed MANAGEMENT



## Drought Information Center

March 15, 1999

GOOD NEWS arrives! The Governor's December 16 emergency proclamation will be allowed to expire today. Precipitation during the past few months has provided adequate recovery to insure that no area of the state is currently experiencing emergency conditions.

The BAD NEWS, as today's drought report will reinforce, is that stream flows remain below normal for this time of year at most stream gages, and ground water levels remain less than robust at many of our county monitoring well locations. It appears prudent at this time to maintain a "watch" statewide. In keeping with those observations, today the DEPARTMENT IS DECLARING A DROUGHT "WATCH" FOR ALL COUNTIES of the Commonwealth. The effect of the Department's declaration is to downgrade to a drought "watch" the "emergency" or "warning" status that previously existed in 64 counties. The drought "watch" that previously existed in Beaver, Washington and Westmoreland Counties will continue.

The weekend was dry across the Commonwealth until yesterday's storm tracked across the southeastern half of the state. The Laurel Ridge and southern Ridge and Valley areas received 1 to 2 inches of water equivalent precipitation, while the central and eastern Ridge and Valley received about 0.5-1.0 inch. Totals in the northeast were in the 0.1-0.7 inch range, and in the southeast, totals reached more than an inch in the counties along the Delaware River.

Stream flows in the Delaware River basin are generally declined this morning, except in the lower part of the basin, where the effects of the storm are in evidence. Flows in the main stem Delaware River are decreased at all gages, and Trenton flows have declined from 12,300 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 10,100 cfs. The Lackawaxen River at Hawley is down from 390 to 323 cfs. The Lehigh River at Bethlehem is down from 2360 to 2210 cfs, and the Schuylkill River at Philadelphia is down from 2250 to 2090 cfs. Lower Schuylkill watershed tributaries have increased, such as Wissahickon Creek, which is up from 46 to 80 cfs this morning. Christina River watershed flows are up as well, as evidenced by Brandywine Creek at Chadds Ford, up from 258 to 328 cfs. Basinwide, flows at most gages remain well below normal.

In the Susquehanna River basin, main stem Susquehanna River flows have declined at all gages, with flows at Harrisburg down from 37,200 to 31,200 cfs. The Lackawanna River at Old Forge is down from 415 to 392 cfs, and the West Branch Susquehanna at Lewisburg is down from 11,900 to 9160 cfs. Flows in the Juniata River watershed have generally increased as a result of the storm, and flows at Newport are up from 3650 to 3680 cfs. In the lower basin, tributaries are showing the effects of the storm as well; the Conestoga River at Conestoga is up from 456 to 526 cfs this morning. Basinwide,

nearly all gages continue to read well below normal.

In the Ohio River Basin, main stem Allegheny River flows are decreased at most gages, with Natrona reading 15,900 cfs this morning, compared to 18,200 on Friday. Allegheny tributary flows are down as well, as indicated by the Kiskiminetas River at Vandergrift, down from 4290 to 2930 cfs. Monongahela River watershed flows are generally decreased, with the gage at Braddock reading 16,800, down from 19,900 cfs. The Beaver River at Beaver Falls is down as well, from 4590 to 3780 cfs. The Ohio River at Sewickley declined from 42,800 to 32,200 cfs. Gages throughout the basin continue to read near or below half of normal flows.

Ground water declined in 16 of the 27 daily monitoring wells over the weekend. The 11 that showed increased levels are scattered across the state, with no pattern evident.

The three-day forecast indicates the likelihood of very little precipitation after today. The five-day forecast indicates totals in the 0.25-0.50 inch range in the northwest and eastern half of the Susquehanna basin, 0.20-0.25 inches in the western Susquehanna basin, and 0.5-1.0 inch in the Delaware basin. The 6-10 day forecast adds another 0.25-0.50 inch across most of the state, increasing to 0.5-1.0 inch in the southwest, with temperatures in the normal range, from 35-45 degrees.

For all you folks out there who have become addicted to the Drought Report--with the expiration of the emergency status, we will be continuing our reports on a weekly basis until the Commonwealth returns to normal water supply status, so please look for us again next Monday morning.