Watershed MANAGEMENT 

Drought Information Center

July 30, 1999

Since July 28, the state had some precipitation that mostly occurred during the first 24-hour period in the western half of the state. For this period, some gauges registered 2.5 inches or higher, but the average, for the western half of the state, was perhaps an inch. The second 24-hour period had very scattered areas of precipitation across the state probably averaging about 0.1 inches.

In the Delaware basin, streamflows remain substantially below normal for this date. Since July 28, no significant change in discharges has occurred. The Delaware mainstem at Trenton is up slightly from 4,420 to 4,920 cfs. The Lackawaxen River at Hawley is essentially unchanged from 99 to 101 cfs. The Lehigh River at Bethlehem is unchanged at 520 cfs. The Schuylkill River at Philadelphia is up from 89 to 181 cfs. although an increasing flow trend for the entire length of the Schuylkill River is not present.

Streamflows in the Susquehanna Basin are also not very encouraging. The mainstem Susquehanna is essentially unchanged from July 28, although the lower reach shows lower discharges; the gauge at Harrisburg is marginally down from 3,560 to 3,420 cfs. but the gauge at Marietta shows a marked decline from 4,010 to 3,320 cfs. Most other streams throughout the Basin have slightly lower flows than on July 28. The West Branch Susquehanna at Renovo is down from 457 to 378 cfs. and the West Branch Susquehanna at Williamsport is down from 833 to 685 cfs. The Juniata River at Newport is essentially unchanged from 717 to 706 cfs. Most streams in the Susquehanna Basin are at or below one-half to one-third normal flow for July 30, with smaller streams substantially below these fractions.

The Ohio Basin has essentially unchanged to slightly improved discharges except for significant temporary improvement on the Monongahela River, Beaver River, Chartiers Creek, and the mainstem Ohio. These increases are the result of the locally heavy downpours on July 28 or 29. The Monongahela River at Braddock is up from 1,130 to 6,450 cfs.; the Beaver River at Beaver Falls is up from 917 to 3,180 cfs., and the Ohio River at Sewickley is up from 4,760 to 8,540 cfs. The Allegheny River at Natrona is essentially unchanged from 3,520 to 3,630 cfs. and the Kiskiminetas River at Vandergrift is up from 464 to 524 cfs. Many streams in the Ohio Basin, however, still have flows substantially below normal for this date.

Monitoring wells throughout the state continue their general decline; 21 of the 27 county readings are lower than on July 28. Although most decreases are less than 0.5 ft., Potter and Franklin Counties dropped 0.57 and 2.55 feet respectively. Five county wells showed some improvement, with one county unchanged.

The next few days are not expected to bring significant precipitation on a statewide basis.

Likely average accumulations of 1.5 inches or less will be combined with higher than normal temperatures. The long-range precipitation forecast for the period of August 4 to 9 includes 0.50 inches or less, limited mainly to the eastern half of the state.