

# Watershed MANAGEMENT



## Drought Information Center

January 4, 1999

We closed out the old year with precipitation deficits for the month of December in every county. Following December rainfall patterns that were concentrated mostly north and west of the Blue Mountain, deficits ranged from about 1 inch in the northwestern counties to about 1.5-2.0 inches along the Allegheny Plateau side of the Ridge and Valley. Deficits ranged from 2.0-2.5 inches in the Ridge and Valley to about 3.0 inches in the southeastern counties.

January has begun well. Precipitation for the first three days totaled about 3/4 inch in the northwest to about 1.5-2.0 inches in the southeast.

Six-month precipitation deficits still remain generally in the 7.0-9.0 inch range. Exceptions are the southwestern counties, where deficits range 5.0-6.0 inches, and Philadelphia County, where the deficit exceeds 12 inches.

Stream flows throughout the Delaware River Basin have generally increased, reflecting the recent precipitation. Depending upon the travel times of runoff, some gages are well above normal while many remain near or below normal.

West Branch Susquehanna tributary flows are generally declining and remain well below normal. The main stem Susquehanna and its tributaries are reflecting some storm runoff and flows are generally up but remain below normal.

In the Ohio Basin, Allegheny River tributaries are showing mixed but light reaction to the January precipitation. Most streams continue to decline and most remain well below normal. Monongahela River tributary flows have increased noticeably, but also remain below normal. Beaver River tributaries are showing little change.

Ground water levels showed some minor improvement yesterday. While it is too early to determine the results of the recent storm, it is anticipated that most of the precipitation will remain frozen or run off of frozen ground and will result in little additional improvement in ground water levels. It is becoming increasingly important for individuals on private wells, particularly those on relatively shallow wells to be very conservative in their use of water. Well drillers are already reporting waiting lists representing a month or more in many areas of the state.

The five-day forecast shows precipitation ranging from about 0.25 inch in the southeast to about 0.5

inch in the northwest. The ten-day forecast shows an additional 1 inch northwest to about 1.5 inches southeast.