

August 23, 2007

During the last 7 days, the mean areal precipitation for almost the entire state was > +75% departure from normal. Observed precipitation was between 0.5" up to over 5" in portions of the SW part of the state around Pittsburgh. Over the last 30 days, all counties are above normal precipitation. The 90-day precipitation indicator map shows every county to be at or above normal. The 180 day indicator map shows nearly all counties at or above normal except for McKean and Warren counties.

In short, the precipitation over the past week has brought the entire state back to normal or above normal conditions for precipitation levels.

Streamflow indicators are reflecting the results of the rainfall that occurred over the past week. Streamflow conditions have improved across the entire state, in particular the western portion where flows are at or above the 90th percentile. For the most part, these improvements in streamflow are short lived as a review of the streamflow gages indicate that flows are beginning to drop.

Unlike stream flow, it will take more time to determine the full impact of the recent precipitation on the groundwater wells. A slight improvement is seen in several wells that are in warning and emergency status by the decrease in the rate of decline. Overall, wells in the northeastern tier, scattered along the Ridge and Valley and the Plateau remain in watch/warning/emergency status.

The 7 day forecast shows between 0.1 to 0.25 inches outside the south-central to SE part of the state with lesser amounts in those areas. Slightly higher amounts are forecasted out through the first week in September. Forecasts do not show below normal precipitation patterns over the next 30 days. Long term forecasting predicts an equal chance for normal precipitation amounts through September.

The recent rainfall has improved conditions statewide and in particular, counties in the western part of the state. Conditions continue to be monitored closely to determine areas that may be lifted from the drought watch in the next several weeks. At this point, the commonwealth remains in a drought watch for 58 counties.