

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

December 24, 1998

The Department has approved a request from GPU Generation, Inc. for a reduction in the required conservation release from their Keystone Dam on North Branch Plum Creek and their intake dam on Crooked Creek at the Keystone Generating Station. The Keystone Dam release was reduced from 3.09 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 2.0 cfs. The release from the intake dam was decreased from 30 cfs to 20 cfs. The approved reduction is conditional upon continued cooperation with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and will expire on March 31, 1999.

Precipitation was essentially nonexistent across the Commonwealth during the past 24 hours, with only very scattered light precipitation of 0.1 in or less noted in a few counties.

Stream flows in the Allegheny River Basin are 2-3 times normal in the major tributaries in the upper basin, to near normal in the mid- to lower basin area. All streams are declining. The Ohio River flows at Sewickley are 30, 200 cfs, compared to a normal of 32,800, and have peaked twice; declines will likely begin today.

Stream flows in the West Branch Susquehanna River are showing similar characteristics. Tributaries in the upper basin headwaters are at or slightly above normal, but declining rapidly. Mid- and lower basin tributaries, which received considerably less precipitation, are well below normal and also declining. The City of DuBois reported a 1 ¼-foot increase in reservoir storage by 9:30 yesterday morning; the reservoir was then at 45 inches below spillway, and they are hoping to recover to 36 inches before the storm runoff dissipates.

Ground water showed no further recovery and generally began to decline again yesterday. Freezing weather will likely prevent any further ground water recovery, as the ground becomes frozen.

Combined storage in the New York City Delaware River Basin water supply reservoirs declined into the Drought Warning 2 Zone yesterday, triggering further cutbacks in diversions and releases from the three reservoirs. New York City's allowable diversion has now been further reduced from 680 million gallons per day (mgd) to 560 mgd. New Jersey's diversion through the D&R Canal has been further reduced from 85 mgd to 70 mgd. The Delaware River stream flow target at Montague, New Jersey has been reduced from 1655 cfs to 1550 cfs.

Anticipating possible penetration of the Drought Emergency Zone by mid-January, the Delaware River Basin Commission has scheduled a public hearing at their offices in Trenton, New Jersey on January 5 to receive public input regarding a possible drought emergency declaration.