

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

January 28, 1999

Precipitation during the past 24 hours was very scattered and confined to the northern tier counties east of McKean County, with totals generally less than 0.1 inch

Stream flows in the Delaware River basin continue their decline today. The Delaware River at Trenton is down from 37,300 cubic feet per second (cfs) yesterday to 25,900 cfs this morning, indicative of most tributary and main stem flows throughout the basin. Some smaller tributary flows in the Lehigh, Neshaminy, and Schuylkill watersheds are approaching or have already fallen below normal. Most of the Christina basin tributaries are below normal.

The Susquehanna River basin picture is similar, with all flows continuing to decline. Only a few scattered tributaries in the basin are below normal, and most remain well above normal this morning. The Susquehanna River at Harrisburg is down from 178,000 cfs yesterday to 134,000 today. The West Branch at Lewisburg has fallen similarly from 44,500 to 32,500 cfs. The Juniata at Newport is down from 8220 to 6070 cfs. The Conestoga River at Conestoga, down from 807 to 685 cfs, is indicative of lower basin tributaries.

In the Ohio River basin, flows are somewhat more mixed. Allegheny main stem flows are up and down at various locations, with the Natrona flow nearly even at 53,700 cfs compared to 53,100 yesterday. The Ohio River at Sewickley is down somewhat from 98,700 to 91,000 cfs. French Creek watershed flows are generally down, as are all flows in the Clarion watershed. Most tributary flows in the Kiskiminetas watershed are down, while the river itself at Vandergrift is up from 6160 to 11,500 cfs. Monongahela watershed flows as well as the river at Braddock are down. Beaver watershed flows mirror the Allegheny, with a mixture of ups and downs, and the river at Beaver Falls down somewhat from 11,100 to 10,200 cfs. All flows in the Ohio basin remain well above normal.

The hydrologic report presented at the Delaware River Basin Commission meeting yesterday was positive for the first time in over six months. New York City reservoir storage had climbed to 13.6 billion gallons above the "drought warning" rule curve and was anticipated to increase to 15 billion gallons above the line sometime today. After five consecutive days at 15 billion gallons above the line, the reservoir operations automatically return to normal. With stream flows declining and little precipitation forecast for the next ten days, it was too early to determine whether a 15 billion gallon surplus could be maintained for five days.

Ground water remains mixed, with wells generally showing minor declines in the mountainous areas of the Susquehanna basin, and continuing to improve slowly in much of the upper and middle Delaware

basin, while holding steady or declining slightly in the lower basin. We are awaiting end-of-month data, which will be available by late next week to assess the overall ground water situation. The decline of tributary stream flows to below normal levels in some areas of the Susquehanna and Delaware basins indicates that ground water levels are not yet sufficiently recovered to sustain low flows in those streams.

General cloud cover is in the forecast for most of the state today, breaking to partly cloudy tomorrow, with chances of 0.01-0.10 inches of precipitation from showers and flurries. The five-day forecast indicates a total of about 0.1 inch statewide and the 10-day forecast adds another possible 2 inches across the state. Temperatures are to remain at or above normal through the ten-day period.