Watershed MANAGEMENT 

Drought Information Center

March 20, 2000

For the period March 12 to 19 there was moderate precipitation across the entire state. The eastern half of Pennsylvania had weekly totals between about 0.5 and 1.3 inches, with an average total precipitation amount for that area of approximately 0.9 inches. Precipitation totals for the western half of the state, for that same period, ranged from 0.3 to 0.9 inches, with the average total precipitation amount being perhaps 0.6 inches. Preliminary data suggests there was close to no measurable precipitation in the state in the past 24 hours.

In the Delaware River Basin, the most dominant trend is flow recession since Monday of last week. Frankford Creek and Crum Creek basins are holding somewhat steady. The Lackawaxen River Basin shows flow enhancement in the lower reaches, and mixed gauge changes are seen in the Lehigh River and Schuylkill River basins. The mainstem Delaware River is down from 31,100 to 26,500 cfs. at Trenton . The Lackawaxen River is up from 382 to 987 cfs. at Hawley. The Lehigh River is down from 5,070 to 4,410 cfs. at Bethlehem. The Schuylkill River is down from 6,090 to 4,120 cfs. at Philadelphia and the Brandywine Creek is down from 559 to 418 cfs. at Chadds Ford. About 55% of the stream gauges in the Delaware River Basin are at above normal flow for March 20.

Since March 13, the Susquehanna River Basin, with the exception of the West Branch Susquehanna River Basin, shows predominantly flow recessions. Flow enhancements are seen in the West Branch Susquehanna River Basin and in the lower reaches of the mainstem Susquehanna River. The Chemung River, Towanda Creek and Wapwallopen Creek basins are holding rather even. The mainstem Susquehanna River is down from 30,700 to 18,700 cfs. at Towanda, down from 41,200 to 29,700 cfs. at Wilkes-Barre, and up slightly from 62,300 to 63,500 cfs. at Harrisburg. The West Branch Susquehanna River is up from 6,840 to 9,200 cfs. at Lock Haven, up from 11,500 to 14,900 cfs. at Williamsport, and up from 13,900 to 17,800 cfs. at Lewisburg. The Juniata River is down from 6,490 to 5,150 cfs. at Newport and the Conestoga River is down from 1,350 to 730 cfs. at Conestoga. About 60% of the stream gauges in the Susquehanna River Basin are at above normal flow for this date.

In the Ohio River Basin, the most prevalent trend over the past week is flow enhancement. Kinzua Creek, Chartiers Creek and Beaver River basins are holding somewhat steady, while recession is seen in the gauges for the Monongahela River Basin. The Allegheny River is up from 13,600 to 17,900 cfs. at Natrona. The mainstem Ohio River is up from 28,900 to 32,400 cfs. at Sewickley. The Kiskiminetas River is up from 2,640 to 2,910 cfs. at Vandergrift. The Monongahela River is down marginally from 15,800 to 15,500 cfs. at Braddock and the Beaver River is holding fairly even from 2,550 to 2,490 cfs. at Beaver Falls. Almost all of the stream gauges in the Ohio River Basin are at below normal flow for today’s date.

Since March 13, 27 counties with monitoring wells show water level rises for 19 counties and drops for eight. Increases range from 0.01 to 3.95 ft. (Potter County) with an average rise of 0.84 ft. Decreases range from 0.02 to 0.47 ft. (Snyder County) with an average drop of 0.15 ft.

An average of about 0.75 inches of precipitation (water equivalent) are forecast for the western half of Pennsylvania over the next five days, with amounts tapering to zero along the Delaware River. For the period March 24 to 29, the only expected precipitation is under 0.25 inches in a very small area along the northern tier. Temperatures for the next ten days are generally expected to be above normal.