

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

February 26, 2002

County precipitation totals for the first 26 days of February range from 0.3 inches (Chester and Lancaster County) to 2.8 inches (Erie County). Average departures from normal for the first 25 days of January in the Delaware River Basin is -0.5 , -1.5 and -2.0 inches for the Upper, Middle and Lower Delaware River Basins respectively, in the Susquehanna River Basin the departures are -0.3 , -1.5 and -2.0 inches for the Upper, Middle and Lower Susquehanna River Basins respectively, and in the Ohio River Basin the departures are 0.1 , -0.5 and -1.0 inches for the Upper, Middle and Lower Ohio River Basins.

As of this morning, the daily streamflow readings were below normal across the entire state. Daily streamflow readings are as low as 7% of normal streamflow. Instantaneous streamflow readings of 161 gages for February 25th at 1:45 a.m. indicate that there were 32 gages with flows less than the 25th percentile, 26 at less than the 10th percentile and 34 at record lows for the day. The 30-day streamflow duration graphs for February 26th indicate the seriousness of the drought as it relates to streamflow. Most of the gages now show decreasing values for the 30-day average. In the Delaware Basin, 13 of 18 stream gages are declining. Eighteen of 31 gages show declines in their 30-day average streamflow values in the Susquehanna River Basin. For the Ohio River Basin, 17 of 22 gages have decreasing 30-day duration streamflow values. It should be noted that 12 of the duration graph gages in the Delaware Basin are in the emergency range of the curve and 10 of the duration graph gages for the Susquehanna Basin are in the emergency range.

According to the USGS, streamflow entering into the Chesapeake Bay is at the second lowest level for February since 1937. The 30-day duration graphs for groundwater indicate that 7 of 13 monitoring wells in the Delaware River Basin have decreasing levels, 7 of 18 wells in the Susquehanna River Basin have decreasing levels, and 2 of 13 wells in the Ohio River Basin have decreasing levels. Spot checks of the daily groundwater levels indicate that most wells have decreasing levels. Groundwater conditions continue to remain much below normal in the Lower Susquehanna and Delaware River Basins. The Bucks and Lebanon County wells are at record lows.