

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

April 24, 2001

For the month of March 2001, 11 of 67 Pennsylvania counties had below normal precipitation. Departures from normal precipitation range from -1.00 inches (Mercer County) to 3.00 inches (Delaware County). The average departure from normal precipitation for the state as a whole, for the month of March, is 0.95 inches. Cumulative rainfall for the period January through March 2001 ranged from 4.80 inches (Mercer County) to 13.20 inches (Delaware County). For the first 22 days of April, 28 counties have below normal precipitation and 39 counties are at or above normal precipitation, with average rainfall for the period being approximately 2.7 inches.

Compared to March 29, the Delaware River Basin shows mixed results. The Delaware River Main Stem and the Lackawaxen River flows decreased and are below the long-term median flows. Conditions remained stable on the Lehigh River Basin. Flow enhancements occurred on the Schuylkill River and Chester Creek Basins. The main-stem of the Delaware River is down from 16,900 to 14,110 cfs at Trenton. The Lackawaxen River is down from 756 to 571 cfs at Hawley. The Lehigh River is down from 3,180 to 2,800 cfs at Bethlehem. The Schuylkill River is up from 2,770 to 3,340 cfs at Philadelphia and the Brandywine Creek is up from 346 to 429 cfs at Chadds Ford. The New York City Delaware River Basin storage (April 20) is 2.7% above normal and 106.036 billion gallons above the drought warning level.

Over the past four weeks, the Susquehanna River Basin exhibited an overall improvement in flows. Flows over the entire basin are now above the long-term median. The main stem Susquehanna River is up from 12,500 to 21,600 cfs at Towanda, up from 18,700 to 30,500 cfs at Wilkes-Barre, and up from 47,000 to 56,900 cfs at Harrisburg. The West Branch Susquehanna River is up from 7,340 to 10,500 cfs at Lock Haven, from 12,000 to 16,400 cfs at Williamsport, and from 14,000 to 18,200 at Lewisburg.

Comparatively, flows in the Ohio River Basin have also increased, with flows running above the long-term median basin wide. The Allegheny River is up from 17,300 to 33,500 cfs at Natrona. The main-stem Ohio River is up from 34,300 to 47,100 cfs at Sewickley. The Kiskiminetas River is up from 2,920 to 5,260 cfs at Vandergrift. The Monongahela River is up from 9,900 to 12,400 cfs at Braddock and the Beaver River is up from 2,570 to 5,420 cfs at Beaver Falls.

For March 2001, 22 of 28 available stream gauging stations in Pennsylvania had a monthly mean discharge below average.

Since March 29, 21 counties with monitoring wells show water level rises with 6 counties experiencing a drop in levels. Increases range from 0.04 ft. (Wayne Co.) to 8.39 ft. (Potter County) with an average rise of 1.39 ft. Decreases ranged from 0.31 ft. (Lycoming Co.) to 9.09 ft. (Carbon Co.). USGS March

2001 end-of-month summary figures showing percent of wells where water level is above average have increased for the Delaware Basin and decreased for the Susquehanna and Ohio River Basin. The percent of wells where water level is above average is about 39%, 28% and 60% for the Delaware, Susquehanna and Ohio River basins, respectively.

For the period April 23 thru May 3, near normal precipitation is forecast for the northwest corner of the state and below normal for the remaining areas. Rainfall amounts are projected to be from 0.1 inches in the southeast corner to 1 inch in the northwest corner of the state. Temperatures for the next ten days are expected to be above normal.

The drought indicators will continue to be monitored closely. Vegetation and evaporation will now begin to be a factor in any further groundwater recovery. Snowmelt, which is now depleted, had been a factor in the recent rise in streamflows.