

# Watershed MANAGEMENT



## Drought Information Center

**May 6, 2002**

On February 12, Governor Schweiker announced the upgrading of 24 counties to drought emergency, with 7 counties in drought warning and 31 counties in drought watch. These counties are indicated on the drought status map and in the news release at <http://www.dep.state.pa.us/dep/subject/hotopics/drought>.

For the period April 6-May 5, 14 of 67 Pennsylvania counties had below normal precipitation. Departures from normal precipitation range from -0.9 inches (Delaware and Philadelphia Counties) to 1.7 inches (Lehigh, Monroe and Schuylkill Counties). The average departure from normal precipitation for the state as a whole for this period was 0.54 inches. For the first 5 days of May 25 of 67 counties have below normal precipitation, with average rainfall for the period being approximately 0.7 inches. Normal for the first 5 days of May is approximately 0.65 inches.

Compared to April 6, in the Delaware Basin, the main-stem of the Delaware River is up from 10,400 to 16,200 cfs at Trenton. The Lackawaxen River is up from 424 to 704 cfs at Hawley. The Lehigh River is up from 1,910 to 3,570 cfs at Bethlehem. The Schuylkill River is up from 1,630 to 3,730 cfs at Philadelphia and the Brandywine Creek is up from 161 to 205 cfs at Chadds Ford. The New York City Delaware River Basin storage (May 6) is 66.1 % (179.04 billion gallons) of normal.

Over the past four weeks in the Susquehanna Basin, the main stem Susquehanna River is down from 15,300 to 13,900 cfs at Towanda, down slightly from 18,800 to 18,700 cfs at Wilkes-Barre, and up from 41,900 to 53,000 cfs at Harrisburg. The West Branch Susquehanna River is up from 6,969 to 9,320 cfs at Lock Haven, up from 11,200 to 15,000 cfs at Williamsport, and up from 12,500 to 17,500 cfs at Lewisburg. The Juniata River is up from 2,590 to 5,240 cfs at Newport. The Yellow Breeches Creek near Camp Hill was up from 149 to 185 cfs.

For the Ohio Basin, the Allegheny River is down from 36,700 to 33,500 cfs at Natrona. The main-stem Ohio River is up from 57,399 to 62,700 cfs at Sewickley. The Kiskiminetas River is up from 3,940 to 7,100 cfs at Vandergrift. The Monongahela River is up from 16,700 to 25,300 cfs at Braddock and the Beaver River is down from 7,710 to 4,910 cfs at Beaver Falls.

Instantaneous streamflow readings for May 6 at 9:45 a.m., indicate that there were 8 (out of 160 reporting) stream gages registering flows below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, 8 less than the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile and 3 at record lows. These statistics reflect the rainfall experienced in the last two weeks, however streamflows have now begun to drop across the state.

Streamflows still remain below normal in the Chester Creek and Christina River Basins in the Delaware River Basin. Overall, the USGS 30-day duration graphs for streamflow are increasing, however there are still some 30-day duration values in warning and emergency in the Lower Susquehanna River Basin and in the southern portion of the Delaware River Basin.

USGS 30-day duration graphs for groundwater show some moderate recovery. However, groundwater levels continue to remain significantly below normal in the Delaware and Susquehanna River Basins. Out of the wells that have increasing 30-day values, 8 of the wells remain in emergency and one in warning. May begins the period of the season where groundwater recharge is limited significantly by evapotranspiration. Therefore, any groundwater recharge will most likely be limited. Currently, groundwater levels have already begun to drop again in those wells that have responded positively to the recent rainfall events.

For the period May 6<sup>th</sup> through May 16<sup>th</sup>, approximately 0.75 to 2.0 inches of rain is projected to fall across the state, with the least in the eastern part of state and increasing westward.