

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

June 5, 2002

Governor Schweiker extended the drought emergency on May 8, 2002 for up to 90 additional days for 20 counties in the state. Four counties were removed from the emergency list with Huntingdon County returning to normal and Carbon, Monroe and Pike counties moving to drought watch status. Twenty-four counties were returned to normal status from drought watch status. 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 month of May, only 4 of 67 Pennsylvania counties had below normal precipitation. Departures from normal precipitation range from -0.3 inches (Fulton County) to 3.3 inches (McKean County). The average departure from normal precipitation for the state as a whole for this period was 1.55 inches. For the first 4 days of May 61 of 67 counties have below normal precipitation, with average precipitation departure for the period being -0.33 inches. Six counties had no reported precipitation for the first 4 days of May.

Compared to May 6, in the Delaware Basin, the main-stem of the Delaware River is down from 16,200 to 11,500 cfs at Trenton. The Lackawaxen River is down from 704 to 312 cfs at Hawley. The Lehigh River is down from 3,570 to 1,870 cfs at Bethlehem. The Schuylkill River is down from 3,730 to 1,320 cfs at Philadelphia and the Brandywine Creek is down from 205 to 147 cfs at Chadds Ford. The New York City Delaware River Basin storage (June 6) is 83.4 % (225.884 billion gallons) of normal.

Over the past four weeks in the Susquehanna Basin, the main stem Susquehanna River is down from 13,900 to 9,250 cfs at Towanda, down from 18,700 to 12,00 cfs at Wilkes-Barre, and down from 53,000 to 29,100 cfs at Harrisburg. The West Branch Susquehanna River is down from 9,320 to 3,930 cfs at Lock Haven, down from 15,000 to 6,820 cfs at Williamsport, and down from 17,500 to 8,100 cfs at Lewisburg. The Juniata River is down from 5,240 to 3,270 cfs at Newport. The Yellow Breeches Creek near Camp Hill was down from 185 to 131 cfs.

For the Ohio Basin, the Allegheny River is down from 33,500 to 17,300 cfs at Natrona. The main-stem Ohio River is down from 62,700 to 22,400 cfs at Sewickley. The Kiskiminetas River is down from 7,100 to 2,020 cfs at Vandergrift. The Monongahela River is down from 25,300 to 6,120 cfs at Braddock and the Beaver River is down from 4,910 to 2,220 cfs at Beaver Falls.

Instantaneous streamflow readings for June 5 at 1:45 a.m., indicate that there were 8 (out of 162 reporting) stream gages registering flows below the 25th percentile, 11 less than the 10th percentile

and 5 at record lows. The rainfall of the last two months has replenished streamflow across the state. Areas of concern still remain in the southcentral and southeastern portions of the state, where streamflows remain below normal.

Streamflows still remain below normal in the Chester Creek and Christina River Basins in the Delaware River Basin and the Yellow Breeches Creek Basin in the Susquehanna River Basin. Overall, the USGS 30-day duration graphs for streamflow are now decreasing across the state, which represents a seasonal trend.

USGS 30-day duration graphs for groundwater show recovery in portions of the state where the heaviest rainfall has occurred over the past two months. However, groundwater levels continue to remain significantly below normal in the Middle and Lower Delaware and Lower Susquehanna River Basins. This is the time of the year when groundwater levels drop due to evaporation and transpiration. Consequently, groundwater levels have already begun to drop again in some of the wells that have responded positively to the recent rainfall events.