

# *Watershed* MANAGEMENT



## Drought Information Center

**July 19, 1999**

The past week was generally not good for drought relief. Precipitation totals ranged from 0 to about a half inch, with the higher amounts occurring in the northwestern six counties and in the lower western Susquehanna basin. Virtually no rainfall occurred in the lower and middle Delaware basin or in the southwestern counties. July deficits exist in all but a couple counties at this time, with deficits exceeding 2 inches in most of the Delaware basin and ranging from about 1-2 inches in the Susquehanna basin.

Stream flows in the Delaware River basin have generally declined; although, the primary gages we have been using for these drought reports are showing improvement. These improvements are largely the result of reservoir releases. Releases from the New York City water supply reservoirs in the headwaters of the Delaware River, as well as from Beltzville and Blue Marsh Reservoirs, in the headwaters of the Lehigh and Schuylkill Rivers, respectively, are supporting flows in those rivers at this time. The Delaware River at Trenton is flowing at 3010 cubic feet per second (cfs) this morning, compared to 2600 cfs last Monday. The Lackawaxen River at Hawley has declined from 48 to 41 cfs, while the Lehigh River at Bethlehem increased from 539 to 590 cfs, and the Schuylkill River at Philadelphia increased from 402 to 443 cfs. Headwater tributary streams in all of those watersheds are reflecting general decreases, however. In the Christina River watershed, flows are generally decreased, as well, although we have no reading at the Chadds Ford gage on Brandywine Creek this morning. Throughout the basin, some headwater gages continue to record low daily flows today.

In the Susquehanna River basin, stream flows have declined significantly from last Monday, in most cases by a third to a half. On the main stem Susquehanna River, all gages are recording lower flows, with Harrisburg reading 4170 cfs, compared to 4660 last Monday. The Lackawanna River at Old Forge is showing a slight increase, from 71 to 74 cfs. The West Branch Susquehanna at Lewisburg is down from 1430 to 968 cfs, marginally above its record low for today of 824 cfs. The Juniata River at Newport decreased from 750 to 717 cfs. In the lower basin, Swatara Creek at Harper Tavern decreased from 44 to 30 cfs, and the Conestoga River at Conestoga is down to 82 cfs, well below its daily record of 157. As in the Delaware, several Susquehanna tributary streams throughout the basin are measuring record lows for today.

In the Ohio River basin, main stem flows on the Allegheny are up in the upper reach of the river and down in the lower reach, with the Natrona gage measuring a flow of 3030 cfs this morning, compared to 4040 last Monday. The Kiskiminetas River at Vandergrift decreased markedly from 506 to 217 cfs, and the Monongahela River at Braddock declined from 1550 to 1320 cfs, both gages below their daily records of 336 and 1640 cfs, respectively. The Beaver River at Beaver Falls is down, from 1060 to 953

cfs. The Ohio River at Sewickley decreased from 5010 to 4760 cfs.

Ground water levels continued their seasonal decline at all daily monitoring wells, except slight increases have occurred in Allegheny, Cameron and Potter Counties.

Little relief appears in sight for most of this week. The next three days will bring possible thunderstorms as somewhat cooler weather moves in tonight and tomorrow, but the end of the period will bring increasing temperatures again. Overall, the possibility of up to 0.5 inch of rain is shown statewide during the period. The 5-day outlook shows up to 1.0 inch total across the Commonwealth. The 6-10 day outlook indicates heavier activity, adding 2-4 inches, concentrated most heavily in the western half of the state, with temperatures to remain above normal.