Watershed MANAGEMENT 

Drought Information Center

September 16, 1999

For the period September 12 to 15, an average of possibly 0.3 inches of rainfall occurred over all but the southeast part of the state. The dry area for this period could be described as bounded by a line from Adams County through Northampton County, and by the state border. During the 24 hours prior to 7 a.m. this morning, essentially the same area received the most rainfall by the initial onslaught of hurricane Floyd, which was on the average of about 1.5 inches. The rest of the Commonwealth was mostly dry over the same period except for a corridor, perhaps 20 to 50 miles wide, bordering the area of heaviest rainfall, and tapering to no rain toward the northwest. During this 24-hour period there was also a small area of rain covering the Warren-McKean County area and averaging about 0.15 inches.

The Delaware River Basin is beginning to show the effects of the rain over the past 24-hour period. Practically all major streams and tributaries show some flow enhancement since Monday, with at least one stream swollen beyond flood stage (Frankford Creek at Philadelphia). The mainstem Delaware River at Trenton is up from 2,770 to 3,130 cfs. The Lackawaxen River at Hawley is up from 45 to 71 cfs. The Lehigh River at Bethlehem is up from 420 to 974 cfs. The Schuylkill River at Philadelphia is up from 785 to 1,830 cfs., and the Brandywine Creek at Chadds Ford is up from 87 to 112 cfs. Only about 30% of the stream gauges in the Delaware River Basin are now at below normal flow for September 16.

Stream gauges in the Susquehanna River Basin are holding rather even, since September 13, except for notable flow increases in the West Conewago Creek Basin, Codorus Creek Basin, and the Conestoga River Basin. A slight receding trend is also seen on the lower mainstem Susquehanna River. The Susquehanna River is almost even at Towanda from 643 to 654 cfs. It is up slightly at Wilkes-Barre from 1,420 to 1,470 cfs., and down at Harrisburg from 6,330 to 5,360 cfs. The West Branch Susquehanna River is close to even at Renovo from 378 to 367 cfs., down slightly at Lock Haven from 514 to 469 cfs., and holding even at Williamsport at 1,020 cfs. The Juniata River at Newport is down slightly from 1,530 to 1,400 cfs., and the Conestoga River at Conestoga is up from 183 to 414 cfs. About 70% of the stream gauges in the Susquehanna River Basin are at below normal flow for this date.

The Ohio River Basin shows no major flow changes since Monday except for some flow enhancements on the Allegheny River and on the mainstem Ohio River. The Allegheny River at Natrona is up from 1,530 to 2,400 cfs. The Ohio River at Sewickley is up from 4,840 to 6,970 cfs. The Kiskiminetas River at Vandergrift is up from 459 to 499 cfs. The Monongahela River at Braddock is down marginally from 1,670 to 1,550 cfs., and the Beaver River at Beaver Falls is also down marginally from 673 to 656 cfs. About 90% of the stream gauges in the Ohio River Basin are at below normal flow for September 16.

Since September 13, 26 counties with monitoring wells show a water level rise for 16 counties and a drop for nine, with one county holding even. Water level rises range from 0.01 to 4.45 ft. with an average increase of 0.43 ft. Decreases range from 0.03 to 0.22 ft. with an average drop of 0.12 ft.

Precipitation over the next five days is expected to be possibly three inches over about the eastern 20% of Pennsylvania, with amounts tapering to zero about two-thirds of the way westward across the state. Rainfall forecasts for this period are based on the expected track of hurricane Floyd. For September 21 to 26, an average of one to two inches are expected for Pennsylvania, with the heavier amounts concentrated in north-central counties. Temperatures for the next ten days are expected to be close to normal.