

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

March 29, 2001

For the month of February 2001, 61 of 67 Pennsylvania counties had below normal precipitation. Departures from normal precipitation range from -1.70 inches (Adams and Franklin County) to 0.50 inches (Delaware County). The average departure from normal precipitation for the state as a whole, for the month of February, is -0.91 inches. Cumulative rainfall for the period January through February 2001 ranged from 1.70 inches (Tioga County) to 6.60 inches (Delaware County). For the first 29 days of March, 19 counties have below normal precipitation and 48 counties are at or above normal precipitation, with average rainfall for the period being approximately 3.15 inches.

Compared to February 22, the Delaware River Basin shows an overall increase in flows, however the flows remain below the long-term median. Flow enhancements are seen on every major watershed in the Basin. The main-stem Delaware River is up from 9,810 to 16,900 cfs at Trenton. The Lackawaxen River is up from 326 to 756 cfs at Hawley. The Lehigh River is up from 2,110 to 3,180 cfs at Bethlehem. The Schuylkill River is down from 2,950 to 2,770 cfs at Philadelphia and the Brandywine Creek is down from 389 to 346 cfs at Chadds Ford. The New York City Delaware River Basin storage (March 29) is 7.2% below normal and 80.943 billion gallons above the drought warning level.

Over the past four weeks, the Susquehanna River Basin showed an improvement in flows. However, most flows were below the long-term median. The main stem Susquehanna River is up from 9,910 to 12,500 cfs at Towanda, up from 14,300 to 18,700 cfs at Wilkes-Barre, and up from 34,500 to 47,000 cfs at Harrisburg. The West Branch Susquehanna River is up from 6,660 to 7,340 cfs at Lock Haven, from 10,300 to 12,000 cfs at Williamsport, and from 12,000 to 14,000 at Lewisburg.

Compared to mid-February, flows in the Ohio River Basin have decreased, with flows running below the long-term median. The Allegheny River is down from 29,000 to 17,300 cfs at Natrona. The main-stem Ohio River is down from 56,500 to 34,300 cfs at Sewickley. The Kiskiminetas River is down from 6,670 to 2,920 cfs at Vandergrift. The Monongahela River is down significantly from 24,300 to 9,900 cfs at Braddock and the Beaver River is down from 3,510 to 2,570 cfs at Beaver Falls.

For February 2001, 12 of 28 available stream gauging stations in Pennsylvania had a monthly mean discharge below average.

Since February 22, 29 counties with monitoring wells show water level rises for all but five counties. Increases range from 0.07 ft. (Snyder Co.) to 9.11 ft. (Carbon County) with an average rise of 1.84 ft. Decreases ranged from 0.01 ft. (Adams Co.) to 2.47 ft. (Potter Co.). USGS February 2001 end-of-month summary figures showing percent of wells where water level is above average have increased for all three major River Basins. The percent of wells where water level is above average is about 30%,

25% and 70% for the Delaware, Susquehanna and Ohio River basins, respectively.

For the period March 29 thru April 8, above normal precipitation is forecast, with rainfall amounts projected to be from 1.75 to 2.5 inches across the state. Temperatures for the next ten days are expected to be near normal.

The drought indicators will continue to be monitored closely. Groundwater conditions have shown some improvement. Snow pack is nearly depleted, with above normal precipitation needed to supplement recharge.