

September 15, 2011 Drought Report

Precipitation

Due to the significant rainfall events (Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee) over the past 3 weeks, all 90-day precipitation departure indicators have returned to “normal”. The actual 90-day precipitation deficits were approaching 5 inches at the beginning of August for some portions of the state, following the dry back-to-back months of June and July. Hurricane Irene hit the eastern side of the state on 8/27-8/28/11 depositing up to 8 inches of rain in some areas, while Tropical Storm Lee pummeled the middle of the state on 9/6-9/8/11 dropping up to 10 inches of rain and causing recordbreaking flooding along the Susquehanna River and many of its’ tributaries.

Because the 2 storms bypassed the Ohio basin, small 90-day precipitation deficits remain in 8 northwest/northcentral counties (Cameron, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, McKean, Potter and Tioga) although the indicators are in “normal”.

Surface Water

A review of the (US Geological Survey) USGS County monitoring gages indicates that the 30-day average streamflow values reflect the rainfall that has fallen over the past several weeks and all counties have returned to “normal” except Erie.

The snapshot of instantaneous streamflows indicates above normal flows across all major river basins.

Groundwater

The 30-day moving average groundwater indicators have all returned to “normal” except McKean and Potter.

Palmer Drought Severity Index

All regions are normal.

Forecast

The short term forecast indicates 1-2 inches of rain over the next 7 days and trace amounts up to about a ½ inch over the next 2 weeks.

Public Water Supply Agencies

It is anticipated that all of the Public Water Supply Agencies currently on voluntary or mandatory water use restrictions will eliminate the restrictions as their supplies are replenished and return to normal.

Summary

Conditions began to improve for the eastern side of the state by the end of August and with the most recent rainfall amounts, almost all drought monitoring indicators have returned to normal. A recommendation is made to lift the drought watch declaration for the remaining 4 counties (Elk, Cameron, McKean and Potter) and return them to normal status.