

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

December 22, 1998

The list of public water supply systems that have reported problems has increased by 41 from the December 4 list, to a total of 119 systems. Of these, 37 had called for mandatory restrictions prior to the Governor's emergency proclamation, which imposed mandatory restrictions throughout the 12 emergency counties. About half of the system problems continue to be concentrated in the West Branch Susquehanna River drainage area, particularly in Clearfield County, with growing numbers in Centre, Clinton and Lycoming Counties.

A power generator and three public water supply systems have requested temporary reductions in the required conservation releases from their dams in order to conserve remaining storage. The Department is currently reviewing the requests.

Significant precipitation occurred north and west of the Blue Ridge during the past 24 hours. Clearfield County received locally concentrated precipitation as high as 2.9 inches at one gage, with one other gage recording 0.0. About one inch of precipitation stretched from Erie County southeastward through Crawford, Venango and Clarion Counties. Cameron, Elk and McKean Counties received 1.5-2.0 inches. Allegheny, Westmoreland and Washington received generally 1.0-1.5 inches. Rainfall decreased across the southern tier from Fayette through Fulton Counties from about 1.0- 0.1 inches. The northern tier fared better with rainfall ranging from 1.9 inches in McKean and declining to about 0.75 inches in Bradford. The West Branch Susquehanna River area received rainfall ranging from 2.9 inches in Clearfield County to generally about 0.5-1.2 through Clinton, Centre, Lycoming and Union Counties.

Stream flows in the Allegheny River basin are showing improvement. The Allegheny River at Natrona increased from 3630 cfs to 5230 cfs by this morning, but compared to a normal of 19,400 cfs. The Ohio River at Sewickley increased from 7070 cfs to 11,600 cfs, compared to a normal of 30,300 cfs. French Creek at Utica rose from 244 to 640 cfs, against a normal of 1860 cfs, and the Clarion River at Cooksburg rose from 256 to 647 cfs, against a normal of 1210 cfs. The Kiskiminetas River at Vandergrift increased from 542 to 825 against a normal of 2440. Overall, improvements are noticeable throughout the rainfall area in the Allegheny and Ohio Rivers, although stream flows still remain well below normal

Stream flows in the West Branch Susquehanna are showing rapid runoff in the headwater and tributary streams, well exceeding normal levels; however the West Branch at Renovo is only up from 389 to 531, against a normal of 3450 cfs. This can be expected to improve by tomorrow as the tributary runoff

reaches Renovo.

Overall, improvements in stream flows should be expected to continue for several days before receding to near previous levels, absent sufficient ground water to sustain higher flows. Fortunately the precipitation fell on unfrozen ground, so we may hope to see some limited recharge of ground water in the areas of heavier rainfall.

National Weather Service forecasts call for snow showers of 2-8 inches in northwestern Pennsylvania today and tonight, with chances of snow showers each day Wednesday through Saturday. Temperatures will range in the teens to mid-20s. Eastern Pennsylvania will have a chance of snow showers or light snow in the north to rain showers or light rain in the south Wednesday, with diminishing chances of precipitation on Thursday, fair on Friday, and chance of light snow on Saturday. Temperatures will range in the teens to mid-30s.

Next week's forecast is for near normal temperatures and precipitation.