

# Watershed MANAGEMENT



## Drought Information Center

**February 2, 1999**

The previous 24 hours brought precipitation ranging from 0.3 to 0.9 inches statewide, with the heaviest concentrations falling in a 50-75 mile wide band from Lawrence/Beaver County to Snyder/Juniata County and then splitting northeast through the upper Susquehanna valley and eastward to Berks/Lehigh County. Once again, the northwestern-most counties seem to have received the least. Precipitation continues this morning in at least the eastern two-thirds of the state.

In the Delaware River basin, stream flows have not yet fully reacted to the precipitation. All main stem gages on the Delaware River are down, with Trenton decreased from 11,900 cubic feet per second (cfs) yesterday to 9810 cfs today, compared to a normal of 9050 cfs. In the Lackawaxen, Lehigh, Schuylkill and Christina watersheds, gages on smaller headwater tributaries are reflecting increases this morning, but larger streams are showing declines from yesterday. Flows generally remain above normal, except in the Christina watershed, where every gage is below normal again this morning.

New York City storage was 20.1 billion gallons above the "drought warning" rule curve yesterday, so it appears almost certain that reservoir operations will automatically return to normal.

Reaction to the precipitation is somewhat more noticeable in the Susquehanna River basin, with gages on some larger streams reflecting increases from yesterday already. All main stem Susquehanna flows are down, as are flows in the lower main stems of most major tributaries. Flows in the West Branch main stem increased in the very headwaters, but declined everywhere downstream of Curwensville. The Juniata watershed and lower Susquehanna tributaries show similar reaction as well. Less than a dozen gages, widely scattered and on small headwater streams, remain below normal this morning.

Ohio River basin reaction is similar. The uppermost Allegheny River gage, at Port Allegheny is up from 692 cfs yesterday to 764 cfs today, while all other gages on the main stem are down, with flows at Natrona decreased from 52,200 to 46,200 cfs. Allegheny, Monongahela, and Beaver River tributaries are similar to those in the other basins, with upper headwater streams showing increases and lower gages reflecting decreases. The Ohio River at Sewickley is down from 68,500 cfs to 61,600 cfs. The Monongahela watershed is predominately below normal yet this morning, while other Ohio basin flows continue well above normal.

End-of-January ground water data is encouraging. Only seven, or perhaps eight, county monitoring wells-- Blair, Bucks, Crawford, Pike, Somerset, Wayne, and Union --remained at emergency levels at the end of January. Erie County data is not yet available, but Erie is likely to remain in emergency as well. All other wells appear to have recovered to normal conditions, except Bedford that remains at

"warning" and Westmoreland and Fayette that remain at "watch" levels. About half of the wells recorded marginal increases yesterday.