

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

July 22, 1999

Tuesday, Governor Ridge signed a proclamation declaring a drought emergency in 55 counties. Armstrong, Butler, Clarion and Jefferson Counties remain in a warning, while Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren remain in a watch. In the 55 emergency counties, nonessential uses are now banned.

If you have questions on the nonessential use bans, the Chapter 119 regulations can be found by clicking on "Drought Emergency Rules" on the "Drought Information" web page. In reading the regulations, please be aware that the bans apply to uses, rather than to sources. If a use is banned, then it is banned regardless of the source of water, be it from private or public, ground or surface water, including private wells and ponds. If you have questions regarding the regulations, please feel free to call us at 717-772-4048.

While the regulations do not address outdoor burning, we encourage you to observe local or state burning bans, and to be especially careful with fire. Fires not only damage and destroy, but they require large quantities of fire-fighting water. This places additional stress on water supply systems.

Since Sunday, most of the state, except the southwestern counties, has received precipitation. Totals are greatest in the Delaware/Philadelphia County area where 0.75-1.5 inch occurred. Otherwise, totals are generally in the 0.1-0.3 inch range, except in very localized areas in the lower and central Susquehanna valley, where heavier thunderstorms brought 0.5-2.0 inches during the past 24 hours.

Stream flows in the Delaware River basin are continuing downward. The Delaware River at Riegelsville is down from 3440 cubic feet per second (cfs) Monday to 3030 cfs. Trenton gage data is not available this morning. The Lackawaxen River at Hawley is up slightly, from 41 to 45 cfs. The Lehigh River at Bethlehem decreased from 590 to 529 cfs, and the Schuylkill River at Philadelphia is down from 443 to 306 cfs. In the Christina River watershed, Brandywine Creek at Chadds Ford is flowing at 75 cfs, below its record low for today of 87 cfs.

In the Susquehanna River basin, flows in the main stem Susquehanna River declined at all gages, with Harrisburg down from 4610 to 4310 cfs. The Lackawanna River at Old Forge decreased from 74 to 64 cfs, while the West Branch at Lewisburg is even, at 968 cfs. The Juniata River at Newport increased slightly from 717 to 728 cfs, as did streams in the lower basin, with the Conestoga River at Conestoga up from 82 to 106 cfs, but well below its record low of 173 for today.

In the Ohio River basin, flows in the Allegheny River main stem are generally even with Monday; at

Natrona the flow is 3030 cfs again this morning. Kiskiminetas River flows at Vandergrift are about even at 221 compared to 217 cfs Monday, but well below the record low of 352 for today. Monongahela River flows at Braddock have improved somewhat, from 1320 to 1600 cfs, marginally above the record low of 1480. The Beaver River at Beaver Falls declined from 953 to 917 cfs, nearing its record low of 820. The Ohio River at Sewickley declined somewhat, from 4760 to 4680 cfs.

Ground water continues to decline generally, with only 7 daily monitoring wells showing very minor increases.

The precipitation outlook appears slightly better for the near term. The next 5 days could bring 0.5-1.5 inches across much of the state, while the 6-10 day outlook adds only 0.25-0.5 inch, with temperatures to be much above normal. These quantities may help stream flows locally, but will provide little or no overall drought relief.