

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

April 24, 2006

Another week with little or no precipitation across the state had pushed deficits up by about an inch statewide before good soaking rains arrived over the weekend and, by Saturday night, delivered about 0.5 inches in the northwest to about 1 inch along the eastern side of the Allegheny Plateau. Moving southeastward, the Friday-Saturday numbers increased from about 1.5 inches on the western side of the Ridge and Valley to about 2.0 inches or more across the Piedmont and into the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Sunday brought some more rain, but the Sunday precipitation data is not yet available. Statewide, however, the 90-day deficits continue to range between 1.5 and 4.0 inches; these deficits are lowest along the Ridge and Valley and increase toward both the northwest and southeast.

The weekend's sustained rains brought stream flows up markedly across the state. Flows generally rose well above normal statewide, and the hydrographs indicate that above-normal flows may be sustainable for a period of time extending into early May, with possible exceptions in some areas along the western Allegheny Plateau.

Like stream flow, ground water generally evidenced some recovery statewide. Unlike with the stream flows, however, most ground water levels that were below normal previously remain well below normal after the rain, with many along the Ridge and Valley remaining at emergency levels.

The weekend's rain was very instrumental in preparing soil moisture conditions to provide more ground water recharge if further precipitation follows in the near future. Forecasts for mid-week precipitation are encouraging; however, recovery from the particularly troublesome ground-water conditions will require more soaking rains such as we received over the weekend. Meanwhile, the Commonwealth remains in a statewide drought watch condition.