

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

May 8, 2006

The past week brought no rain to most of the Commonwealth, with the exception being a total of less than a quarter inch in several of the western border counties. Statewide, the ninety-day precipitation deficits are now in the 4 to 6-inch range, reflecting emergency levels in much of the Susquehanna Basin and the Schuylkill Basin, and warning or watch levels in the Ohio and remainder of the Delaware Basin.

Stream flow indicator gages, still reflecting the peaks from the rains two weeks ago, are generally indicating normal conditions across the southern third of the state, watch conditions across the middle third and warning or emergency conditions across the northern third. Statewide, stream flows are declining, and even in the southern counties, where the 30-day indicators are in the normal range, the current daily flows are measurably below the daily normal flow levels. Flows in many counties across the northern half of the state continue to be significantly below the daily normal levels.

Ground water showed marked declines during the past week, statewide. As was true last week, ground water indicator, also based on 30-day averages, remain in emergency or near emergency levels throughout the northeast, extending southwest into the lower central Susquehanna Valley. Emergency levels are now indicated in several of the western-most county monitoring wells, also.

Forecasts for the early part of this week indicate the possibility of up to a half inch of precipitation across much of the state, occurring on Thursday and Friday, with the 7-day forecast indicating a cumulative inch of precipitation in the northern and western areas of the state and up to 1.5 inches in the south-central and southeastern areas. The 14-day forecast provides hope for about 1 to 1.5 inches throughout most of the Commonwealth. Precipitation of these magnitudes, if falling as sustained, soaking rains, would likely provide temporary, but measurable relief to stream flow levels, but relief to ground water would be less likely, as evapo-transpiration begins to take its toll.

The Commonwealth remains in a statewide drought watch status.