

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

May 15, 2006

The past week brought rain across the entire Commonwealth, totaling about 1 to 1.5-inches, with the heavier amounts occurring generally in the upper portions of the Ohio and Susquehanna basins. Statewide, the ninety-day precipitation deficits declined somewhat and are now in the 3 to 5.5-inch range, presenting a mix of emergency and warning levels in the lower half of the state and a mix of watch and warning levels in the northern half.

Stream flow indicator gages, reflecting some improvement from the week's rains, are generally indicating normal conditions in the Delaware and lower portions of the Susquehanna and Ohio basins, with a mix of watch, warning and emergency conditions across the upper Susquehanna and Ohio basins, based upon 30-day averages. Statewide, stream flows peaked over the weekend, following the Thursday-Saturday rainfall and are generally receding rapidly. While some remain marginally above their daily normal levels, many have already receded below their daily normal levels.

The effects of fuller foliage across the lower half of the state are evident, as daily ground water levels in the lower half of the state showed markedly less reaction to the rains than did the levels across the upper half of the state. County indicator wells showed limited change from last week, based upon the 30-day averages, with indicators remaining in emergency or near emergency levels throughout the northeast, extending southwest into the lower central Susquehanna Valley and in counties along the western border.

Forecasts for the early part of this week indicate the possibility about a half inch to an inch of precipitation across much of the state, occurring on Monday and Tuesday, with the 7-day forecast indicating a cumulative inch to two inches of precipitation in most areas of the state. The 7-14-day forecast provides hope for an additional half inch to an inch, again across most of the Commonwealth. As with this week's rains, precipitation of these magnitudes will help stream flows, but as was evidenced this week already, foliage will take its toll through evapo-transpiration to limit the benefits to ground water.

The Commonwealth remains in a statewide drought watch status.