

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

May 22, 2006

The past week brought rain across the entire Commonwealth, totaling about 0.5 to 1.5-inches, with the heavier amounts occurring generally in the Delaware and Ohio basins. Susquehanna basin rainfall was generally under an inch. Since this was close to normal rainfall, the ninety-day precipitation deficits changed only slightly in either direction, showing some general improvement across the lower half of the state where they now present a mix of warning and watch levels similar to the continuing mix of warning and watch levels in the northern half. The lower half of the state is weighted more heavily toward warning than is the upper half. Overall, the ninety-day deficits show some improvement over last Monday.

Stream flow indicator gages, also reflecting some improvement from the week's rains, generally continue to indicate normal conditions in the Delaware and lower portions of the Susquehanna and Ohio basins, with a mix of watch, warning and widely scattered emergency conditions across the upper Susquehanna and Ohio basins, based upon 30-day averages. Across the state, the daily stream flow hydrographs showed mixed reaction to Friday's rains, with the greatest peaks in flows occurring across the northern third of the state. Flows are receding at this time. Again this week, some stream flows are marginally above their daily normal levels, while many remain or have receded below their daily normal levels.

County indicator wells showed some limited improvement from last week, based upon the 30-day averages, with indicators in the northeast now in emergency, warning or watch conditions. Warning and watch conditions continue to extend southwest from the Pocono area into the lower central Susquehanna Valley. The western border counties continue to reflect mixed emergency and normal ground water conditions. As with stream flows, daily ground water level reactions to the week's rains were mixed, with many wells showing little or no reaction, particularly to Friday's rain. Overall, ground water is on a gradual decline.

Forecasts for the early part of this week indicate the possibility about a quarter to half inch of precipitation across much of the state, occurring on Thursday and Friday, with the 7-day forecast indicating a cumulative quarter to a full inch of precipitation in most areas of the state. The 7-14-day forecast indicates that an additional one to two inches of rain may occur, again across most of the Commonwealth. Overall, these would be close to normal rainfall amounts, so we may anticipate that ground water levels and stream flows may continue to trend gradually downward, as would be typical from normal rainfall patterns at this time of year.

The Commonwealth remains in a statewide drought watch status.

