

Watershed MANAGEMENT



Drought Information Center

June 5, 2006

The past week brought rain across the entire Commonwealth, ranging from 0.8 to 1.5 inches in the Ohio basin; 1.0 to 2.5 inches in the Susquehanna basin, with the greater amounts occurring in the upper and western portions of the basin; and 1.5 to 3.6 inches in the Delaware basin with the greater amounts occurring in the lower portions of the basin. The 120-day precipitation deficits improved somewhat this week, with a number of county indicators decreasing from warning to watch and one of the previous three emergency indicators improving to watch, in Chester County.

Stream flow indicator gages show even better improvement, with only four county indicators in the Ohio basin now in watch, and many of the Susquehanna and Delaware basin counties improved to normal. No warning or emergency indicators remain after the week's rain. This week's precipitation totals were sufficient to bolster the 30-day averages by generally replacing the end-of-April numbers that had dropped from the 30-day averages last week. While stream flows have improved statewide, the hydrograph recessions are generally trending toward a return to pre-week base flows over the next 4 to 7 days, unless bolstered by additional rainfall.

County indicator wells showed similar improvement from last week, based upon the 30-day averages, with several indicators improving from emergency or warning to watch or normal. Warning and watch conditions continue to extend southwest from the Pocono area into the lower central Susquehanna Valley, with no emergencies remaining in that area. The western border counties continue to reflect mixed emergency through normal ground water conditions. Statewide, daily ground water level response to the week's rain was mixed, but many wells responded positively to rains that were sufficient to penetrate to ground water. With the exception of a few wells that showed little or no response to the week's rain, typical seasonal declines either slowed or reversed during the past few days.

Forecasts for the early part of this week indicate the possibility about a tenth to half inch of precipitation statewide, with the heavier forecasts for the Susquehanna basin, most to occur on Thursday and Friday. The 7-day forecast indicates a total of a half to a full inch, with the heavier amounts in the western Susquehanna and eastern Ohio basins. The 7-14-day forecast indicates that an additional one to three inches of rain may occur, with the lighter amounts along the western border and the heavier amounts in the middle and upper Susquehanna basin. Depending upon the timing and intensity of these rains, they may serve to provide continued improvement to ground water levels in some of the Susquehanna basin counties where ground water levels continue to be problematic.

The Commonwealth remains in a statewide drought watch status.

