



News Release

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U.S. Geological Survey

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Release:

November 2, 2001

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Dry October Leads to Low Water Levels

Rainfall in October was more than 2 inches below normal across Maryland and Delaware according to the Middle Atlantic River Forecast Center 30 day precipitation map. The lack of rain is reflected in some record low streamflow and ground-water levels, according to hydrologists at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Baltimore, Maryland.

Streamflow at the end of October was much below normal at USGS gaging stations on Antietam Creek, Deer Creek, Little Patuxent River, Monocacy River, Patapsco River, Piscataway Creek, Potomac River, Savage River, Youghiogheny River, and White Clay Creek near Newark. Streamflow at Winters Run in Harford County set a new record daily low (see real-time graphs <http://md.water.usgs.gov/realtime/>). The monthly streamflow in the Potomac River near Washington, D.C. was 45 percent below normal. Storage in the Baltimore Reservoir system decreased to 73 percent of capacity in October.

Streamflow entering the Chesapeake Bay has been below average since January, except for April (see graphs at <http://md.water.usgs.gov/monthly/bay.html>). October streamflow averaged 10.1 bgd (billion gallons per day), which is 62 percent below the long-term average.

Record low ground-water levels were set in water-table observation wells in Carroll, Harford, and Worcester Counties as well as artesian wells in Calvert, Cecil, and Charles, and St. Marys Counties (see graphs at <http://md.water.usgs.gov/groundwater/>). Wells in Howard, Frederick, Montgomery, Queen Annes, and Washington Counties were significantly below normal in October.

Above-normal rain or snow is needed in the coming winter months to replenish the low streamflow and ground-water levels in order to avoid drought conditions next spring.

As the Nation's largest water, earth and biological science, and civilian mapping agency, the USGS works in cooperation with more than 2,000 organizations across the country to provide reliable, impartial scientific information to resource managers, planners, and other customers. This information is gathered in every state by USGS scientists to minimize the loss of life and property from natural disasters, contribute to the sound conservation and the economic and physical development of the Nation's natural resources, and enhance the quality of life by monitoring water, biological, energy, and mineral resources.

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In-depth information about USGS programs may be found on the USGS home page at <http://www.usgs.gov> and <http://chesapeake.usgs.gov/> for Chesapeake Bay activities. To receive the latest USGS news releases automatically by e-mail, send a request to <mailto:listproc@listserver.usgs.gov>. Specify the listserver(s) of interest from the following names: water-pr; geologic-pr; hazards-pr; biological-pr; mapping-pr; products-pr; lecture-pr. In the body of the message write: subscribe (name of listserver) (your name). Example: water-pr joe smith.