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News Release

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Geological Survey

Address:
Maryland-Delaware-D.C. District
8987 Yellow Brick Road
Baltimore, MD 21237

Email and Homepage:
wsmcpher@usgs.gov
http://md.water.usgs.gov/

Release:	**Contact:**	**Phone:**	**Fax:**
May 8, 2001	Wendy S. McPherson	(410) 238-4255	(410) 238-4210

Water Levels Still Normal in April, But More Rain Is Needed

April streamflow was mostly in the normal range across Maryland and Delaware, according to hydrologists at the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) in Baltimore, Maryland. Additionally, water storage in the Baltimore reservoir system increased to 99 percent of capacity at the end of the April. However, streamflow was decreasing at the end of the month and adequate rainfall will be needed in the coming months to maintain normal flows.

The National Weather Service reported 2.15 inches of precipitation during April in the Potomac River Basin, which was 1.07 inches below normal. Despite below-normal rainfall, average streamflow levels in April increased due to above-normal rainfall in March. Streamflow entering the Chesapeake Bay during April increased to 95.7 bgd (billion gallons per day), which is just slightly above the long-term average for April and is the first time flow has been above average since August 2000 (see graphs at http://md.water.usgs.gov/monthly/bay.html). Streamflow at the Potomac River near Washington, D.C., increased from March, and was 28 percent above the long-term average for April. Streamflow at the Choptank River near Greensboro, Maryland, on the Eastern Shore, was 16 percent above average. However, streamflow during the first week of May was decreasing faster than usual for the season, and was below normal in the Potomac River Basin and well below normal in the Youghiogheny River Basin.

Ground-water levels in water-table wells at the end of April were mostly decreasing in Delaware and the Eastern Shore of Maryland and increasing west of the Chesapeake Bay. Most water levels remained in the normal range, although water levels were below normal on the lower Eastern Shore (see graphs at http://md.water.usgs.gov/groundwater/). Ground-water levels in water-table wells typically decrease in late spring as vegetation uses water to grow.

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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