

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR U.S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

LOW-FLOW CHARACTERISTICS OF KENTUCKY STREAMS, 1980

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INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Geological Survey has been gathering low-flow data on streams throughout Kentucky for many years. This report presents low-flow characteristics at 127 partial-record stations where the flow is not significantly regulated. Data on available stream flow during low-flow periods are used for the design of plants that dispose of waste using dilution procedures, to estimate available industrial and municipal water supplies, to estimate irrigation supplies, and in the design of recreational facilities.

This preliminary report presents low-flow data at 77 continuous record sites and the 7-day 2-year and 7-day 10-year flow at 127 partial record sites. The station identifier, 7-day 10-year discharge in cubic feet per second (cfs), and the drainage area in square miles (mi²) are shown on the map. Other data are shown in tabular form. Data for partial-record sites designated by the symbol Δ were previously reported by Sellsheff, (1974).

LOW-FLOW CHARACTERISTICS

Continuous-record Gaging Stations

The data required for a low-flow frequency study are the minimum average flow for selected lengths of time. Annual low flow at continuous record stations (index stations) were analyzed for 1, 5 and 7 consecutive days. The climatic year (April 1 through March 31) is used as the climatic year to allow the low-water season to be considered as a unit. Analysis and computation in this report were compiled by the Hydrology Division of the U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Division files in Reston, Va. The frequency data were fitted mathematically to the log-Pearson Type III frequency distribution. Ordinarily, the fitted log-Pearson Type III frequency data are plotted and that curve was used when the computed data failed to fit the graphical data.

Partial-record Gaging Stations

Stream sites at which periodical measurements are made are called partial-record sites. Such measurements are made during periods of partial-record sites. The relation between concurrent events can be used with a frequency curve from an index station to approximate the minimum flow at the partial-record site. Flow data observed at 127 low-flow partial-record gaging stations were combined and processed by flow correlation with continuous-record "index" gaging stations to produce the low-flow frequency tabulations included in this report.

UNGAUGED SITES

Comparison of the low-flow values and the drainage area presented on the map may indicate relations that might be used in limited regions to estimate values at ungauged sites. (Riggs, 1973). The drainage area and low-flow data are shown in the table and may be used to determine runoff in cubic feet per second per square mile. The runoff per square mile figures may be plotted on the map and used to develop possible regions to estimate flow at un-gauged sites. However, the transfer of low-flow characteristics to sites without discharge measurements is unreliable in areas where forest formations, secondary permeability due to solution of the limestone are highly developed near or at the land surface.

Physiographic and forest areas in Kentucky are shown on figures 1 and 2. Forest areas are primarily confined to the Mississippi Plateau and to parts of the Inner Blue Grass Region. Within these areas low-flow characteristics cannot be transferred reliably over a site or to systems or channels from a site.

This report is an interim report of a continuing low-flow investigations program in Kentucky. The final report will be published when data is available for the partial-record network of 126 stations that are currently being operated.

FACTORS FOR CONVERTING ENGLISH UNITS TO METRIC UNITS

Multiply English units By To Obtain Metric units Square miles (mi²) 2.590 Kilometers (km²) Cubic feet per second (cfs) .02832 Cubic meters per second (m³/s)

REFERENCES

- Sellsheff, R. V., Jr., 1974, Low-flow characteristics of Kentucky streams: U.S. Geological Survey Open-File Report, 1 p. Riggs, R. C., 1973, Low-flow investigations: Techniques of water-resources investigations of the U.S. Geological Survey, book 4, chap. 18, p. 15.

Additional copies of this report can be obtained from:

U.S. Geological Survey Water Resources Division Room 577 Federal Building Louisville, Kentucky 40202 or Kentucky Geological Survey 307 Mineral Industries Building University of Kentucky Lexington, Kentucky 40506

Index Stations

Table with columns: Station number, Station name, Latitude, Longitude, Drainage area (mi²), and 7-day 2-year and 7-day 10-year flow (cfs).

Partial Record Stations

Table with columns: Station number, Station name, Latitude, Longitude, Drainage area (mi²), and 7-day 2-year and 7-day 10-year flow (cfs).

EXPLANATION
Index station
Partial record station, not previously published.
Partial record station, previously published.
Gaging station, less than ten years record.
Upper number is station number. Lower left number is 7-day 10-year discharge, in cubic feet per second. Lower right number is drainage area, in square miles.

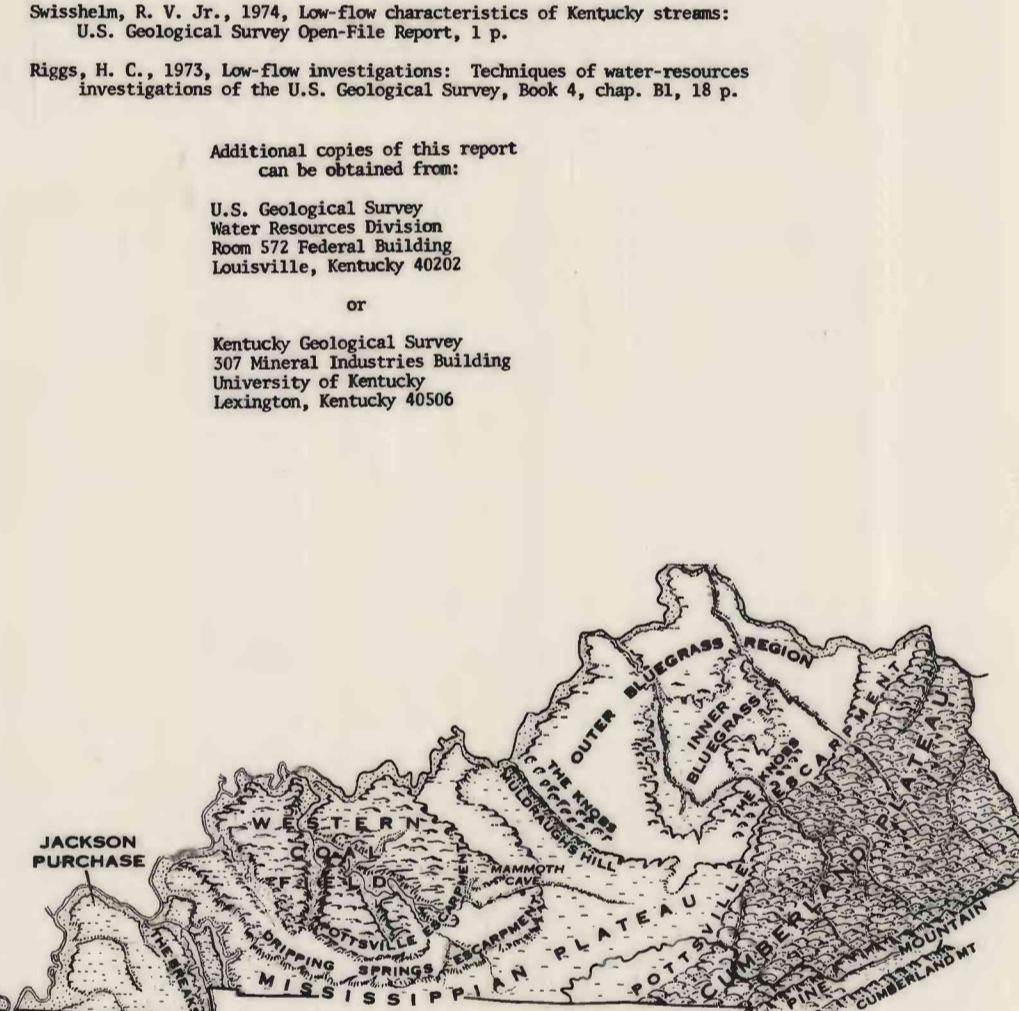


Figure 2 - Map of Kentucky showing approximate areas of karst geology.

