News Release

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River Levels Set Records in Eastern New York:

USGS New York Water Science Center Continues to Monitor Upstate Rivers for Flooding

Rivers and streams in New York reached record levels as a result of Tropical Storm Irene's rainfall, with more than 50 U.S. Geological Survey streamgages measuring record peaks (exceeding anything recorded previously at these sites including the 1987 and 1996 floods). Some of these streamgages have been in place for 30 to as much as 101 years.

Eastern New York is seeing the bulk of the record streamflows, as higher than average precipitation the past few weeks had saturated the ground in many locations prior to Irene's arrival. According to the National Weather Service, between 4-11 inches of rain fell locally from Irene, with the highest rainfall amounts falling on the Catskill Region.

Those rivers that experienced the heaviest flooding have already crested, or reached their highest levels, and are now beginning to recede to normal levels, in some cases this might take weeks.

Before the storm, teams of USGS hydrographers were prepositioned to make sure they could be in place to access streams and make streamflow measurements at or near the peak flow. In addition crews on Long Island placed up to 40 storm surge sensors along the coast of Long Island and New York City. Immediately after the worst of the storm had passed, USGS hydrographers from across the State, deployed to measure high-water marks at rivers and streams that don't have real-time streamgages and to verify high river flows and peak stages. The crews also calibrated and repaired streamgages damaged by the storm to ensure they continued to transmit information in real time to users working to protect lives and property. Water-quality samples also were collected from eight locations in the Hudson River Basin in an effort to improve our understanding of how large storms effect the environment.

Widespread moderate to major flooding has occurred in Eastern New York including the Schoharie, Mohawk, Hudson, Lake Champlain, Upper Delaware, and Esopus Watersheds. Peak streamflow recurrence information will be posted to our web page (http://ny.water.usgs.gov) as soon as the data become available.

The USGS, in cooperation with state and federal agencies, operates a nationwide network of more than 7,000 streamgages on inland rivers and streams. These streamgages provide real-time data important to the National Weather Service, FEMA and other USGS partners involved in

issuing flood and evacuation warnings, coordinating emergency responses to communities, and operating flood-control reservoirs.

Real-time information from these streamgages can be seen here (http://waterdata.usgs.gov/ny/nwis/rt/).

Fast Facts:

- Peaks of record have been set at about 50 streamgaging stations so far.

- Three streamgages were destroyed by the flooding.

- Table of recurrence intervals from New York streams as a result of Tropical Storm Irene are available at: http://ny.water.usgs.gov/projects/news/flood_peaks.Irene.pdf

- Storm surge information will be posted and available at: http://107.20.206.65/Irene2011/IreneMapper.html

- Water-quality samples were collected at eight sites within the Hudson River Basin and analyzed for suspended sediment and (or) bacteria, carbon, nutrients, pesticides, and major ions.

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