Hydrologic Conditions – March 2016

The Hydrologic Conditions Mapper for New York State has been updated for the month of March 2016 and can be accessed at:

http://ny.water.usgs.gov/projects/eom/

The average precipitation across most of New York for March was generally between 1.2 and 1.9 inches, but ranged from 0.96 inches in Yates County (the third month in a row for this county to record the lowest precipitation quantity in the State) to 2.49 inches in Oneida County. All counties reported precipitation deficits with the largest departures from normal quantities reported in the southeastern corner of the State. The largest deficit was recorded for New York City where the monthly rainfall total was 3.04 inches below its normal quantity. The lowest departure from normal quantities was 0.31 inches in Jefferson County.

Monthly streamflows varied greatly across the State with above-normal flows generally in the Adirondack Mountains Region and below-normal flows across the central and southern parts of the State. On March 10-11, 1-2 inches of rain combining with snowmelt resulted in some rivers and streams in parts of the Adirondack Mountains to rise within about 2 ft of NWS flood stages. At the other end of the hydrologic spectrum, Canajoharie Creek at Canajoharie, a station with 22 years of record, recorded a monthly mean flow that was greater than its 99-percent flow-exceedance probability (that is, its monthly flow was less than that which occurs 99-percent of the time at this site). New York City reservoirs were collectively at about 93-percent capacity at the end of the month. This is about 2-percent below normal capacity and reflects the below-normal precipitation quantities that fell in the Catskill Mountains during March.

The majority of groundwater levels across the State were at or near normal levels with a larger percentage of bedrock wells (62 percent) reporting normal water levels than water-table wells (55 percent). Twenty-nine percent of all sites reported low-to-very-low water levels with 33 percent of water-table wells and 17 percent of bedrock wells in this category. Fifteen percent of the reporting sites had above-normal water levels. There was no discernible pattern among wells that reported above-normal or below-normal water levels; both categories were found scattered across the State.

Exceedance percentages shown on the Hydrologic Conditions Mapper are calculated for individual USGS sites. This information along with additional information from other Federal, State, and local agencies assist the NYSDEC and the State Drought Management Task Force to evaluate regional conditions for determination of drought classifications.

Let me know if you have any questions.