



## 5.4.1 DROUGHT

This section provides a profile and vulnerability assessment for the drought hazard.

### 5.4.1.1 HAZARD PROFILE

This section provides profile information including: description, location and extent, previous occurrences and losses, and the probability of future occurrences.

#### Description

The Climate Prediction Center (CPC) of the National Weather Service (NWS) defines drought as a deficiency of moisture that results in adverse impacts on people, animals, or vegetation over a sizeable area (CPC, 2004). According to the New York State Hazard Mitigation Plan (NYS HMP), drought is a normal, recurrent feature of climate. Although its features vary from region to region, this hazard occurs almost everywhere. Defining drought is therefore difficult; it depends on differences of regions, water supply needs, and disciplinary perspectives. In general, drought originates from a deficiency of precipitation over an extended period of time, resulting in a water shortage for some activity, group, or environmental sector (NYS DHSES, 2011). Other climatic factors, such as high temperatures, prolonged high winds and low relative humidity, can aggravate the severity of a drought. These conditions are caused by anomalous weather patterns when shifts in the jet stream block storm systems from reaching an area. As a result, large high-pressure cells may dominate a region for a prolonged period, thus reducing precipitation.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the NWS, there are four different ways that drought can be defined or grouped:

- *Meteorological/Climatological Drought* is defined in terms of the departure from a normal precipitation pattern and the duration of the drought hazard and has a slow-onset that usually takes at least three months to develop and may last for several seasons or years.
- *Hydrological Drought* is associated with the effects of substandard periods of precipitation, including snowfall, shortfalls on surface or subsurface water supply (for example, stream flow, reservoir and lake levels, groundwater). The frequency and severity of hydrological drought originate with a deficiency of precipitation; hydrologists are more concerned with how this deficiency plays out through the hydrologic system.
- *Agricultural Drought* links various characteristics of meteorological (or hydrological) drought to agricultural impacts, focusing on precipitation shortages, differences between actual and potential evapotranspiration, soil water deficits, reduced ground water or reservoir levels, etc. It occurs when there is not enough water available for a particular crop to grow at a particular time. Agricultural drought is defined in terms of soil moisture deficiencies relative to water demands of plant life, primarily crops.
- *Socioeconomic Drought* occurs when physical water shortage begins to affect the population, individually and collectively. Most socioeconomic definitions of drought associate it with supply, demand, and economic good (NYS DHSES, 2013).

Drought can produce a range of impacts that span many sectors of an economy and can reach beyond an area experiencing physical drought. This exists because water is integral to our ability to produce goods and provide services. Direct impacts of drought include reduced crop yield, increased fire hazard, reduced water levels, and damage to wildlife and fish habitat. The consequences of these impacts illustrate indirect impacts that include: reduction in crop, rangeland, and forest productivity may result in reduced income for farmers



and agribusiness, increased prices for food and timber, unemployment, reduced tax revenues due to reduced expenditures, increased crime, foreclosures, migration, and disaster relief programs. The many impacts of drought can be listed as economic, environmental, or social (NYS DHSES, 2011).

Economic impacts occur in agriculture and related sectors because of the reliance of these sectors on surface and subsurface water supplies. Environmental impacts are the result of damage to plant and animal species, wildlife habitat, and air and water quality, forest and grass fires, degradation of landscape quality, loss of biodiversity and soil erosion. Social impacts involve public safety, health, conflicts between water users, reduced quality of life and inequities in the distribution of impacts and disaster relief (NYS DHSES, 2011). A summary of potential impacts associated with drought are identified in Table 5.4.1-1. This table includes only some of the potential impacts of drought.

**Table 5.4.1-1. Economical, Environmental and Social Impacts of Drought**

Economical	Environmental	Social
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of national economic growth, slowing down of economic development</li> <li>• Damage to crop quality, less food production</li> <li>• Increase in food prices</li> <li>• Increased importation of food (higher costs)</li> <li>• Insect infestation</li> <li>• Plant disease</li> <li>• Loss from dairy and livestock production</li> <li>• Unavailability of water and feed for livestock which leads to high livestock mortality rates</li> <li>• Disruption of reproduction cycles (breeding delays or unfilled pregnancies)</li> <li>• Increased predation</li> <li>• Increased fire hazard - Range fires and Wildland fires</li> <li>• Damage to fish habitat, loss from fishery production</li> <li>• Income loss for farmers and others affected</li> <li>• Unemployment from production declines</li> <li>• Loss to recreational and tourism industry</li> <li>• Loss of hydroelectric power</li> <li>• Loss of navigability of rivers and canals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased desertification - Damage to animal species</li> <li>• Reduction and degradation of fish and wildlife habitat</li> <li>• Lack of feed and drinking water</li> <li>• Disease</li> <li>• Increased vulnerability to predation.</li> <li>• Loss of wildlife in some areas and too many in others</li> <li>• Increased stress to endangered species</li> <li>• Damage to plant species, loss of biodiversity</li> <li>• Increased number and severity of fires</li> <li>• Wind and water erosion of soils</li> <li>• Loss of wetlands</li> <li>• Increased groundwater depletion</li> <li>• Water quality effects</li> <li>• Increased number and severity of fires</li> <li>• Air quality effects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food shortages</li> <li>• Loss of human life from food shortages, heat, suicides, violence</li> <li>• Mental and physical stress</li> <li>• Water user conflicts</li> <li>• Political conflicts</li> <li>• Social unrest</li> <li>• Public dissatisfaction with government regarding drought response</li> <li>• Inequity in the distribution of drought relief</li> <li>• Loss of cultural sites</li> <li>• Reduced quality of life which leads to changes in lifestyle</li> <li>• Increased poverty</li> <li>• Population migrations</li> </ul>

Source: NYS DHSES, 2011

**Extent**

The extent (e.g., magnitude or severity) of drought can depend on the duration, intensity, geographic extent, and the regional water supply demands made by human activities and vegetation. The intensity of the impact from drought could be minor to total damage in a localized area or regional damage affecting human health and the economy. Generally, impacts of drought evolve gradually and regions of maximum intensity change



with time. The severity of a drought is determined by areal extent as well as intensity and duration. The frequency of a drought is determined by analyzing the intensity for a given duration, which allows determination of the probability or percent chance of a more severe event occurring in a given mean return period.

In New York State, the Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and the New York State Drought Management Task Force, have identified four stages of droughts. The stages are as follows:

- *Normal* is considered the standard moisture soil levels found throughout the State
- *Drought Watch* is the first stage. This stage is declared by the NYSDEC and is intended to give advanced notice of a developing drought. At this stage, the general public is urged to conserve water. Public water purveyors and industries are urged to update and begin to implement individual drought contingency plans.
- *Drought Warning* is the second stage. This stage also is declared by the NYSDEC and is a notice of impending and imminent severe drought conditions. A warning declaration includes stepping up public awareness and increasing voluntary conservation. Public water supply purveyors and industries are urged to continue to implement local drought contingency plans. Federal, state, and local water resources agencies are notified to prepare for emergency response measures.
- *Drought Emergency* is the third stage. This stage is declared by the New York State Disaster Preparedness Commission (NYS DPC), based on recommendation of the Task Force. It is a notice of existing severe and persistent drought conditions. An emergency declaration is a notice for local water resources agencies to mandate conservation and implement other emergency response measures. A continuing and worsening drought emergency may result in the New York State’s governor declaring a drought disaster. It is a notice of the most severe and persistent drought conditions. At this stage, a significant proportion of communities in the impacted area are likely unable to respond adequately (NYS DHSES, 2013).

New York State uses two methodologies to determine the different drought stages. The most commonly used indicator is the Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI), which is primarily based on soil conditions. These are typically the first indicators that a moisture deficit is present. The second used in New York State was created by the NYSDEC and is known as the State Drought Index (SDI).

According to the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), the Palmer Drought Severity Index (PDSI) was developed in 1965, and indicates the prolonged and abnormal moisture deficiency or excess. It uses temperature and precipitation data to calculate water supply and demand, incorporates soil moisture, and is considered most effective for unirrigated cropland. The PDSI primarily reflects long-term drought and has been used extensively to initiate drought relief (NIDIS, 2013).

Table 5.4.1-2 lists the Palmer Classifications. Zero is used as normal and drought is shown in terms of negative numbers. For example, -2 is moderate drought, -3 is severe drought and -4 is extreme drought. The PDSI also reflects excess precipitation using positive numbers. For example, 2 is moderate rainfall (National Drought Mitigation Center [NDMC] 2013).

**Table 5.4.1-2. PDSI Classifications**

Palmer Classifications	
4.0 or more	extremely wet
3.0 to 3.99	very wet



Palmer Classifications	
2.0 to 2.99	moderately wet
1.0 to 1.99	slightly wet
0.5 to 0.99	incipient wet spell
0.49 to -0.49	near normal
-0.5 to -0.99	incipient dry spell
-1.0 to -1.99	mild drought
-2.0 to -2.99	moderate drought
-3.0 to -3.99	severe drought
-4.0 or less	extreme drought

Source: NDMC 2013

The SDI evaluates drought conditions on a more comprehensive basis by measuring whether numerous indicators reach dire thresholds. It compares four parameters to historic or “normal” values to evaluate drought conditions: stream flows, precipitation, lake and reservoir storage levels, and groundwater levels. The State’s Drought Management Task Force uses those factors as well as water use, duration of the dry period, and season to assess drought in different areas of the State. The data collected is compared against critical threshold values to show a normal or changeable drought condition. The indicators are weighted on a regional basis to reflect the different circumstances of each drought management region (NYS DHSES 2013; NYSDEC 2013a). Table 5.4.1-3 shows the SDI range values for drought by the four drought stages.

Table 5.4.1-3. State Drought Index Range of Values

Drought Stage	Drought Index Range
Normal	100 to 150
Watch	75 to 100
Warning	50 to 70
Emergency	0 to 50

Source: NYS DHSES, 2013

### Location

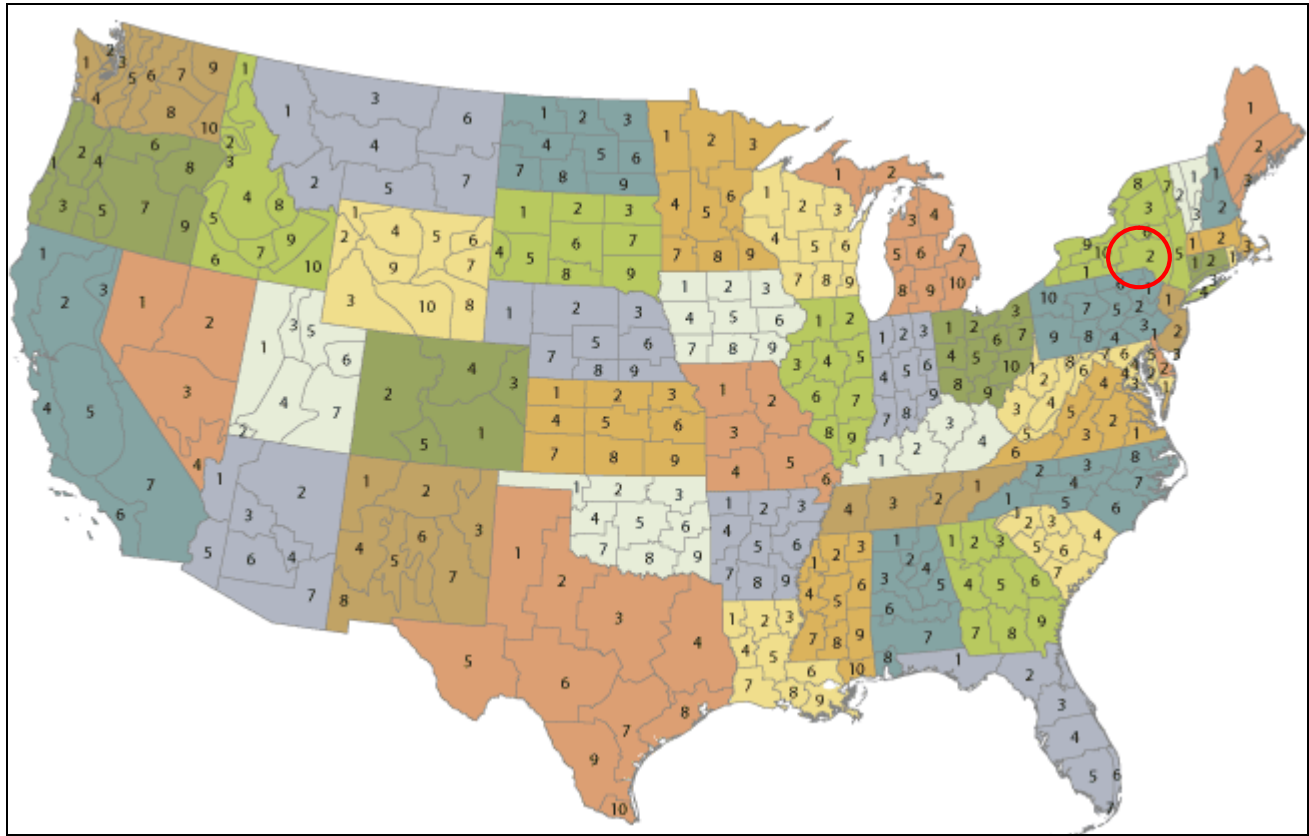
The location of drought and extreme heat temperatures throughout New York State and Chenango County are further identified below.

Climate divisions are regions within a state that are climatically homogenous. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has divided the U.S. into 359 climate divisions. The boundaries of these divisions typically coincide with the county boundaries, except in the western U.S., where they are based largely on drainage basins (U.S. Energy Information Administration, Date Unknown).

According to NOAA, New York State is made up of 10 climate divisions: Western Plateau, Eastern Plateau, Northern Plateau, Coastal, Hudson Valley, Mohawk Valley, Champlain Valley, St. Lawrence Valley, Great Lakes, and Central Lakes. Chenango County is located within the Eastern Plateau Climate Division (NCDC, 2012). Figure 5.4.1-1 shows the climate divisions throughout the U.S. and Figure 5.4.1-2 shows the climate divisions of New York.



Figure 5.4.1-1. Climate Divisions of the U.S.



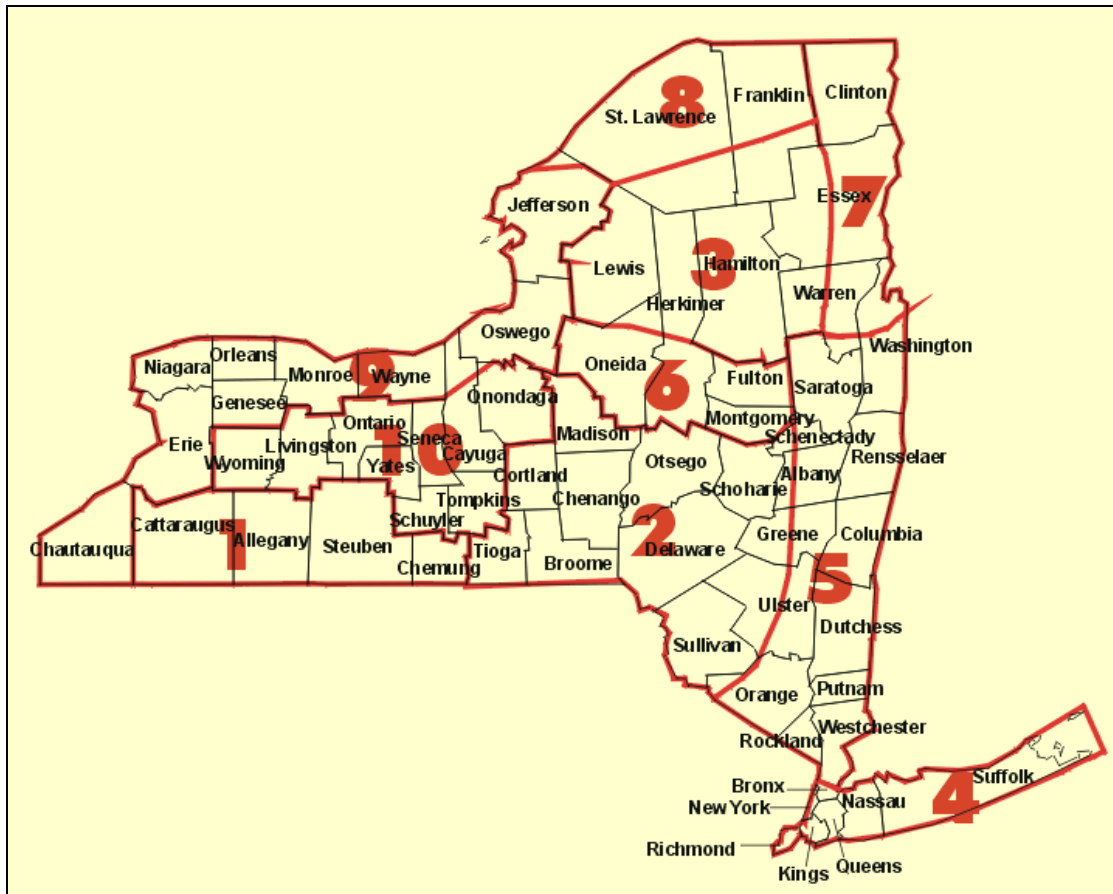
Source: NCDC, 2012

Note (1): The red circle indicates the approximate location of Chenango County (Eastern Plateau).

Note (2): 1 = Western Plateau; 2 = Eastern Plateau; 3 = Northern Plateau; 4 = Coastal; 5 = Hudson Valley; 6 = Mohawk Valley; 7 = Champlain Valley; 8 = St. Lawrence Valley; 9 = Great Lakes; 10 = Central Lakes



Figure 5.4.1-2. Climate Divisions of New York



Source: CPC, 2005

Note: 1 = Western Plateau; 2 = Eastern Plateau; 3 = Northern Plateau; 4 = Coastal; 5 = Hudson Valley;

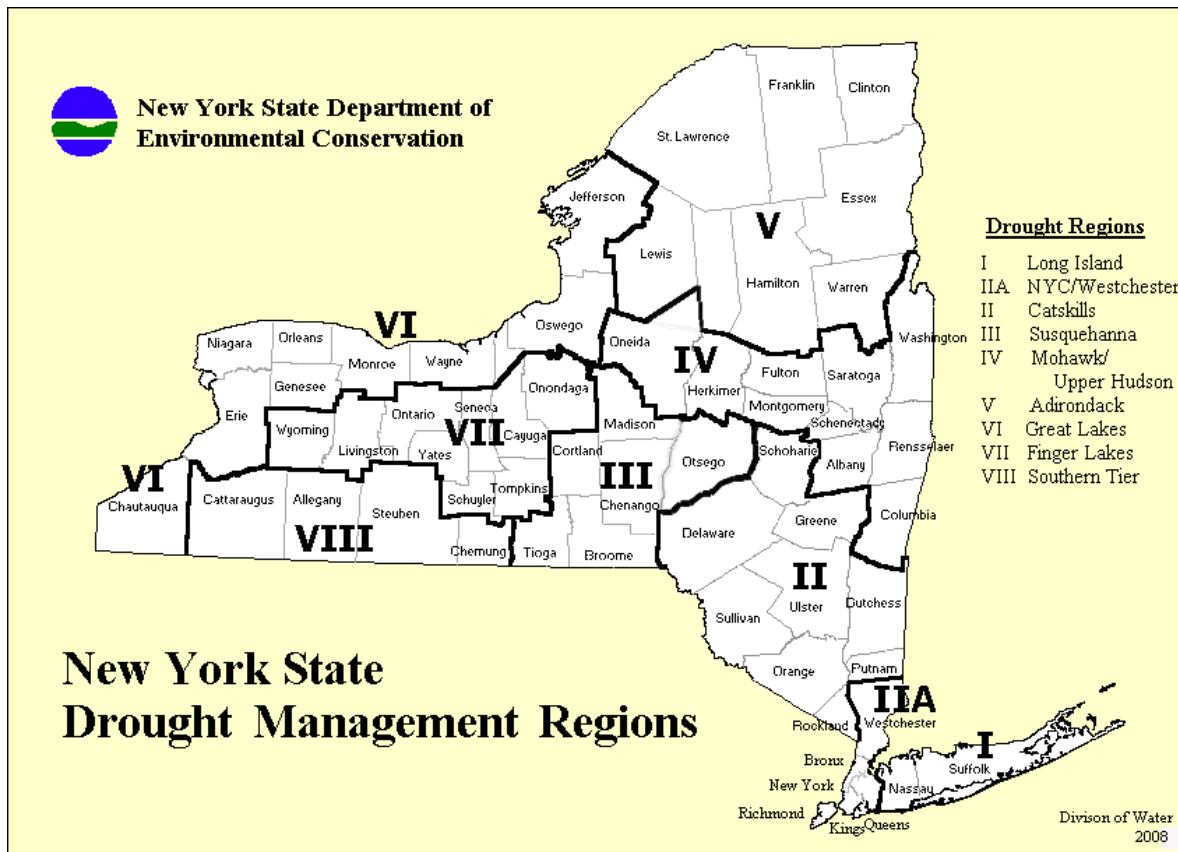
6 = Mohawk Valley; 7 = Champlain Valley; 8 = St. Lawrence Valley; 9 = Great Lakes; 10 = Central Lakes

New York State is divided into nine drought management regions based roughly on drainage basin and county lines. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) monitors precipitation, lake and reservoir levels, stream flow, and groundwater level on a monthly basis in each region and more frequently during periods of drought. The NYSDEC uses this data to assess the condition of each region, which can range from “normal” to “drought disaster” (NYSDEC, Date Unknown). Chenango County is identified as NYSDEC Drought Management Region 3, the Susquehanna Drought Region (Figure 5.4.1-3).





Figure 5.4.1-3. NYSDEC Drought Management Regions of New York State



Source: NYSDEC, 2008

### Previous Occurrences and Losses

Many sources provided historical information regarding previous occurrences and losses associated with drought and extreme heat events throughout New York State and Chenango County. With many sources reviewed for the purpose of this HMP, loss and impact information for many events could vary depending on the source. Therefore, the accuracy of monetary figures discussed is based only on the available information identified during research for this HMP.

According to NOAA’s NCDC storm events database, Chenango County experienced two drought events between April 30, 1950 and May 31, 2013. There were no damages associated with these events. According to the Hazard Research Lab at the University of South Carolina’s Spatial Hazard Events and Losses Database for the U.S. (SHELDUS), between 1960 and December 31, 2012, two drought events occurred within the County. The database indicated that drought events and losses specifically associated with Chenango County and its municipalities totaled over \$16,000 in property damage and over \$4.6 million in crop damages. However, these numbers may vary due to the database identifying the location of the hazard event in various forms or throughout multiple counties or regions.

Between 1954 and 2015, New York State was included in one drought-related disaster declaration (DR) which was classified as a water shortage in August 1965. Generally, these disasters cover a wide region of the State; therefore, they impact many counties. However, not all counties are included in the FEMA declarations. The NYS HMP and other sources indicate that Chenango County has not been declared as a disaster area as a result of any drought-related event (FEMA, 2015).



Agriculture-related drought disasters are quite common. One-half to two-thirds of the counties in the United States have been designated as disaster areas in each of the past several years. The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to designate counties as disaster areas to make emergency loans (EM) to producers suffering losses in those counties and in counties that are contiguous to a designated county. Table 5.4.1-5 presents USDA declared drought and excessive heat events impacting Chenango County.

**Table 5.4.1-4. Drought and Extreme Heat Events Declared by USDA**

Incidence Period	Event Type	USDA Designation Number	County Designated?*	Losses / Impacts	Source(s)
June 1 to October 24, 2012	Drought and Excessive Heat	S3427	Yes	Production losses	USDA
June 26 and continuing, 2012	Drought	S3441	No	Physical and production losses	USDA

Source: USDA, 2012

\*Disaster event occurred within the county.

- M Presidential Major Disaster Declaration
- N Administrative Physical Loss Notification
- S Secretarial National Disaster Determination
- USDA United States Department of Agriculture

For the purpose of this 2015 Plan Update, drought events that impacted Chenango County between 2008 and 2015 are identified in Table 5.4.1-4. For events prior to 2008, refer to the 2008 County HMP. Not all sources have been identified or researched; therefore, Table 5.4.1-4 may not include all events that have occurred throughout the County and region.





**Table 5.4.1-5. Drought and Extreme Heat Events Affecting Chenango County Between 2008 and 2015.**

Dates of Event	Event Type	FEMA Declaration Number	County Designated?	Losses / Impacts
July 21, 2011	Excessive Heat	N/A	N/A	For three days, high temperatures across much of central New York rose well up into the 90s, and exceeded 100°F in many typically warmer valley locations. In Chenango County, high temperatures across the area reached 90°F to 100°F each day, with a high of 99°F reported in the Town of Sherburne on July 21 <sup>st</sup> .
March 17-23, 2012	Heat	N/A	N/A	A period of record warm temperatures was experienced across central New York from March 17th to the 23 <sup>rd</sup> . Both of the climate record stations at Binghamton and Syracuse broke records for the warmest March on record. Both locations were over 12 degrees above normal for the monthly mean temperature. In Chenango County, temperatures reached the 70s.
Summer 2012	Drought / Excessive Heat	N/A	N/A	Due to excessive heat and drought conditions, Chenango County was included in two USDA disaster declarations (S3427 and S3441). The heat and drought jeopardized the second and third cutting of hay in the State. The governor issued a statewide ban on outdoor residential brush burning due to the dry weather and elevate fire danger.

Sources: NOAA-NCDC, 2013; FEMA 2014

FEMA Federal Emergency Management Agency  
HMP Hazard Mitigation Plan  
K Thousand (\$)  
M Million (\$)  
N/A Not Applicable  
NCDC National Climatic Data Center  
NOAA National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

NRCC Northeast Regional Climate Center  
NYS New York State  
PDSI Palmer Drought Severity Index  
SBA Small Business Administration  
U.S. United States  
USDA U.S. Agricultural Department



### Probability of Future Events

It is estimated that Chenango County will continue to experience direct and indirect impacts of drought. These impacts will on occasion result in secondary effects causing potential disruption or damage to agricultural activities and creating shortages in water supply within communities.

In Section 5.3, the identified hazards of concern for Chenango County were ranked. The probability of occurrence, or likelihood of the event, is one parameter used for hazard rankings. Based on historical records and input from the Planning Committee, the probability of occurrence for drought in the County is considered ‘frequent’ (likely to occur within 25 years, as presented in Table 5.4.1-6).

**Table 5.4.1-6. Percentage of Time Under Drought Conditions and Expected Interval between Droughts**

Percentage of Time Under Drought Conditions	Expected Interval between Droughts
9.7%	10.3 years

### Climate Change Impacts

Climate change is beginning to affect both people and resources in New York State, and these impacts are projected to continue growing. Impacts related to increasing temperatures and sea level rise are already being felt in the State. ClimAID: the Integrated Assessment for Effective Climate Change in New York State (ClimAID) was undertaken to provide decision-makers with information on the State’s vulnerability to climate change and to facilitate the development of adaptation strategies informed by both local experience and scientific knowledge (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority [NYSERDA], 2011).

Each region in New York State, as defined by ClimAID, has attributes that will be affected by climate change. Chenango County is part of Region 3, Southern Tier. Some of the issues in this region, affected by climate change, include: dairy dominates the agricultural economy and milk production losses are projected, Susquehanna River flooding increases, and this region is one of the first parts of the State hit by invasive insects, weeds and other pests moving north (NYSERDA, 2011).

Temperatures in New York State are warming, with an average rate of warming over the past century of 0.25° F per decade. Average annual temperatures are projected to increase across New York State by 2° F to 3.4° F by the 2020s, 4.1° F to 6.8° F by the 2050s, and 5.3° F to 10.1° F by the 2080s. By the end of the century, the greatest warming is projected to be in the northern section of the State (NYSERDA, 2014).

Regional precipitation across New York State is projected to increase by approximately one to eight-percent by the 2020s, three to 12-percent by the 2050s, and four to 15-percent by the 2080s. By the end of the century, the greatest increases in precipitation are projected to be in the northern areas of the State (NYSERDA, 2014).

In Region 3, it is estimated that temperatures will increase by 3.6°F to 7.1°F by the 2050s and 4.2°F to 11.6°F by the 2080s (baseline of 47.5°F). Precipitation totals will increase between 2 and 15% by the 2050s and 3 to 16% by the 2080s (baseline of 35 inches). The changes in temperature and precipitation are likely to produce an increase in extreme heat, intense precipitation, and more occurrences of short-duration warm season droughts. Both heavy precipitation events and warm season droughts are projected to become more frequent and intense during this century. Table 5.4.1-7 displays the projected seasonal precipitation change for the East Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys ClimAID Region (NYSERDA, 2014).

**Table 5.4.1-7. Projected Seasonal Precipitation Change in Region 3, 2050s (% change)**

Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
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Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
+5 to +15	0 to +15	-10 to +10	-5 to +10

Source: NYSERDA, 2011

In Region 3, the frequency of heat waves, cold events, intense precipitation, drought, and coastal flooding are projected to increase. Table 5.4.1-8 displays the projected changes in extreme events and includes the minimum, central range and maximum days per year.

**Table 5.4.1-8. Changes in Extreme Events in Region 3 - Heat Waves and Intense Precipitation**

Event Type	# Days Per Year	Baseline	2020s	2050s	2080s
Heat Waves	Number of Days per year with maximum temperature exceeding:				
	90°F	10	15 to 23 days	22 to 47 days	28 to 79 days
	Number of heat waves per year	1	2 to 3 events	3 to 6 events	3 to 9 events
	Average duration	4	4 to 5 days	5 to 5 days	5 to 7 days
Intense Precipitation	Number of days per year with rainfall exceeding:				
	1 inch	6 days	6 to 7 days	6 to 8 days	6 to 8 days
	2 inches	0.6 days	0.6 to 1 days	0.7 to 1 days	0.7 to 1 days

Source: NYSERDA 2014

Even though an increase in annual precipitation is projected, other climate change factors, such as an extended growing season, higher temperatures, and the possibility of more intense, less frequent summer rainfall, may lead to additional droughts and increased short-term drought periods (Cornell University, Date Unknown).

Droughts, typically caused by extreme heat temperatures, can cause deficits in surface and groundwater used for drinking water. The New York State Water Resources Institute at Cornell University conducted a vulnerability assessment of drinking water supplies and climate change. To assess water supplies in New York State, it was assumed that long-term average supply will remain the same but the duration and/or frequency of dry periods may increase. Both types of water supplies, surface water and groundwater, were divided into three categories: sensitive to short droughts (two to three months), sensitive to moderate and longer droughts (greater than six months), and relatively sensitive to any droughts. Major reservoir systems are presumed to have moderate sensitivity to drought because there is a likelihood of decreases in summer and fall water availability. The greatest likelihood of future water shortages is likely to occur on small water systems (Cornell University, Date Unknown).



### 5.4.1.2 VULNERABILITY ASSESSMENT

To understand risk, a community must evaluate what assets are exposed or vulnerable in the identified hazard area. For the drought hazard, all of Chenango County has been identified as the hazard area. Therefore, all assets in the County (population, structures, critical facilities and lifelines), as described in the County Profile (Section 4), are vulnerable to a drought. The following text evaluates and estimates the potential impact of the drought hazard on the County including:

- Overview of vulnerability
- Data and methodology used for the evaluation
- Impact on: (1) life, health and safety of residents, (2) general building stock, (3) critical facilities, (4) economy, and (5) future growth and development
- Effect of climate change on vulnerability
- Change of vulnerability as compared to that presented in the 2008 Chenango County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- Further data collections that will assist understanding this hazard over time

#### Overview of Vulnerability

The entire County is vulnerable to drought. Assets at particular risk would include areas used for agricultural purposes (farms and cropland), any open land or structures located along the wildland/urban interface (WUI) that could become vulnerable to the wildfire hazard due to extended periods of low rain and high heat, usually associated with a drought. In addition, water supply resources could be impacted by extended periods of low rain. Finally, vulnerable populations could be particularly susceptible to the drought hazard and cascading impacts due to age, health conditions, and limited ability to mobilize to shelter, cooling and medical resources.

Potential drought impacts are agricultural, hydrologic and socioeconomic. The sequence of these impacts further emphasizes their differences. When a drought begins, the agricultural sector is typically the first to be affected due to its heavy dependence on store soil water. During dry periods, soil water can be quickly depleted. If precipitation deficiencies continue, then people who depend on other sources of water will begin to feel the impacts of the shortage. Those who rely on surface water (for example, reservoirs and lakes) and subsurface water (for example, groundwater) are usually the last to be affected. A short-term drought that persists for three to six months may have little impact on these sectors, depending on the characteristics of the hydrologic system and the intensity of water use (NYS HMP 2014).

Numerous economic impacts occur in agriculture and related sectors, including forestry, fisheries, and water activities, because of the reliance of these sectors on surface and subsurface water supplies. Droughts are often associated with losses in crop yields and livestock production, increase issues with insect infestations, increase in forest diseases, and reduce growth. Forest and grass fire occurrences also increase substantially during extended drought periods, which in turn place human and wildlife populations, as well as property, at higher levels of risk (NYS HMP 2014).

Loss of income is another factor used when assessing the impacts of drought. Examples of income loss include a reduced income for farmers, along with retailers and others who provide goods and services to farmers. The recreation and tourism industries may also experience a loss of income due to the increase of food, energy and other products prices as supplies are reduced. In some cases, local shortages of certain goods result in the need to import goods from outside the affected region. Reduced water supply impacts the use of rivers and other waterbodies. Hydropower production may also be impacted by drought effects as well (NYS HMP 2014).



Environmental losses from drought include damages to plant and animal species, wildfire habitat, and air and water quality; forest and grass fires; degradation of landscape quality; loss of biodiversity; and soil erosion. Some impacts may be short-term and others may linger for longer periods of time. If changes in climate intensify, environmental impacts and losses may become more intensified. Wildfire habitat may be degraded through the loss of wetlands, lakes, and vegetation. Increased soil erosion can lead to a more permanent loss of biological productivity of landscapes. However, quantifying environmental losses is difficult (NYS HMP 2014).

Social impacts primarily involve public safety, health, conflicts between water users, reduced quality of life, and inequities in the distribution of impacts and disaster relief. Many of the impacts related to economic and environmental have social impacts as well (NYS HMP 2014).

### Data and Methodology

Data was collected from HAZUS-MH, USDA, NOAA-NCDC, Chenango County, and the Planning Committee sources. Insufficient data was available to model the long-term potential impacts of a drought on the County. Over time, additional data will be collected to allow better analysis for this hazard. Available information and a preliminary assessment are provided below.

### Impact on Life, Health and Safety

Drought conditions can affect people’s health and safety including health problems related to low water flows and poor water quality; and health problems related to dust. Droughts also have the potential to lead to loss of human life (NDMC 2014). Other possible impacts to health due to drought include increased recreational risks; effects on air quality; diminished living conditions related to energy, air quality, and sanitation and hygiene; compromised food and nutrition; and increased incidence of illness and disease. Health implications of drought are numerous. Some drought-related health effects are short-term while others can be long-term (CDC 2012).

As previously stated, drought conditions can cause shortages in water for human consumption. Droughts can also lead to reduced local firefighting capabilities. The drought hazard is a concern for Chenango County because both public and private water supply sources exist in the County and are from local groundwater resources. According to the Chenango County’s Department of Environmental Health, the following maintain public water systems: Villages of Afton, Bainbridge, Greene, New Berlin, Oxford, Sherburne, and Smyrna; City of Norwich; and Guilford, Mount Upton, South New Berlin, and South Otselic water districts. Due to heightened security concerns, the locations of the groundwater wells and surface water sources for municipal water supplies were not provided. However, based on the approximate population serviced by municipal water sources, nearly 20,000 people, greater than 31,000 residents obtain water from private water supplies (Sutton, 2007).

The 2014 New York HMP states that between 1960 and 2012, Chenango County experienced just two drought events that did not cause any fatalities or injuries. Between 2010 and 2011, Chenango County had 50% or more land area experiencing drought for a total of 13 weeks during this time period. The New York State HMP also indicated that Chenango County has an average of \$88,933 in annual drought losses based on data from 1960 to 2012 (NYS HMP 2014).

### Impact on General Building Stock

No structures are anticipated to be directly affected by a drought event. However, droughts contribute to conditions conducive to wildfires. Approximately 60% of the County is forested (Chenango County Profile: <http://www.chenangocounty.org/profile.html>). Risk to life and property is greatest in those areas where



forested areas adjoin urbanized areas (high density residential, commercial and industrial) or wildland/urban interface (WUI). See Section 5.4.7 (Wildfire) for detailed information regarding the impact on general building stock and the WUI.

**Impact on Critical Facilities**

Water supply facilities may be affected by short supplies of water. As mentioned, drought events generally do not impact buildings; however, droughts have the potential to impact agriculture-related facilities and critical facilities that are associated with potable water supplies. Also, those critical facilities in and adjacent to the WUI in the County are considered vulnerable to wildfire.

**Impact on the Economy**

When a drought occurs, the agricultural industry is most at risk in terms of economic impact and damage. During droughts, crops do not mature leading to a lessened crop yield, wildlife and livestock are undernourished, land values decrease, and ultimately there is financial loss to the farmer (FEMA, 1997).

A prolonged drought can have serious direct and indirect economic impacts on a community. As noted in the NYS HMP, it is difficult to estimate financial damages as a result of a drought because ‘the more removed the impact from the cause, the more complex the link to the cause’ (NYS HMP, 2011).

General economic effects from a drought include the following:

- Decreased land prices
- Loss to industries directly dependent on agricultural production (e.g., machinery)
- Fertilizer manufacturers, food processors, dairies, etc.)
- Unemployment from drought-related declines in production
- Strain on financial institutions (foreclosures, more credit risk, capital shortfalls)
- Revenue losses to Federal, State, and Local governments (from reduced tax base)
- Reduction of economic development
- Fewer agricultural producers (due to bankruptcies, new occupations)
- Rural population loss (NYS HMP, 2011).

A summary of the direct and indirect losses to agricultural producers, livestock producers, timber production, fishery production, and tourism is presented in Table 5.4.1-9 (NYS HMP, 2011).

**Table 5.4.1-9. Impacts on the Economy**

Losses to Agricultural Producers	Losses to Livestock Producers	Loss from Timber Production
Annual and perennial crop losses	Reduced productivity of rangeland	Wildland fires
Damage to crop quality	Reduced milk production	Tree disease
Income loss for farmers due to reduced crop yields	Forced reduction of foundation stock	Insect infestation
Reduced productivity of cropland (wind erosion, long-term loss of organic matter, etc.)	High cost/unavailability of water for livestock	Impaired productivity of forest land
Insect infestation	Cost of new or supplemental water resource development (wells, dams,	Direct loss of trees, especially young ones





	pipelines)	
Plant disease	High cost/unavailability of feed for livestock	<b>Transportation Industry</b>
Wildlife damage to crops	Increased feed transportation costs	Loss from impaired navigability of streams, rivers, and canals
Increased irrigation costs	High livestock mortality rates	<b>Decline in food production/disrupted food supply</b>
Cost of new or supplemental water resource development (wells, dams, pipelines)	Disruption of reproduction cycles (delayed breeding, more miscarriages)	Increase in food prices
<b>Loss from Fishery Production</b>	Decreased stock weights	Increased importation of food (higher costs)
Damage to fish habitat	Increased predation	Water Suppliers
Loss of fish and other aquatic organisms due to decreased flows	Grass fires	Revenue shortfalls and/or windfall profits
<b>Loss to Recreation and Tourism Industry</b>	<b>Energy-related Effects</b>	Cost of water transport or transfer
Loss to manufacturers and sellers of recreational equipment	Increased energy demand and reduced supply because of drought-related power curtailments	Cost of new or supplemental water resource development
Losses related to curtailed activities: hunting and fishing, bird watching, boating, etc.	Costs to energy industry and consumers associated with substituting more expensive fuels (oil) for hydroelectric power	

Source: NYSRPC, 2011

In 2012, the County’s agricultural industry generated approximately \$65.9 million in sales (mainly from dairy products), with total sales averaging \$79,630 per farm (USDA 2012). The leading agricultural products sold were milk from cows (\$41 million); cattle and calves (\$7.1 million); grains, oilseeds, dry beans and dry peas (\$5.8 million); and other crops and hay (\$5.8 million).

If the average production (dollar value) per crop type could be identified on a per acre basis, loss estimates could be developed based on assumed percent damage that could result from a drought. As an alternate approach, this HMP considers percent loss of crops produced that could result from drought conditions. Table 5.4.1-10 shows 40% and 60% loss estimates for corn grain, corn silage, hay and oat based on 2003 production. According to Cornell Cooperative Extension for Chenango County, forty and sixty percent loss estimates would be considered realistic potential losses for the drought hazard (Severson, 2007).

**Table 5.4.1-10. Loss Estimates Per Crop Type**

Crop Type	Total Production (2012)	40% Loss Estimate	60% Loss Estimate
Corn for grain (bushels)	776,215	310,486	465,729
Corn for silage or greenchop (tons)	131,881	52,752	79,129
Oats for grain	42,870	17,148	25,722
Soybeans (bushels)	13,372	5,349	8,023
Forage* (tons/dry)	106,195	42,478	63,717

Source: USDA NASS, 2012

\* Forage includes land used for all hay and haylage, grass silage, and greenchop

A prolonged drought can have a serious economic impact on a community. Increased demand for water and electricity may result in shortages and a higher cost for these resources (FEMA, 2005; New York State, 2004). Industries that rely on water for business may be impacted the hardest (e.g., landscaping businesses). Even though most businesses will still be operational, they may be impacted aesthetically. These aesthetic impacts





are most significant to the recreation and tourism industry. In addition, droughts in another area could impact the food supply/price of food for residents in the County.

### Future Growth and Development

As discussed in Section 4, areas targeted for future growth and development have been identified across Chenango County. Future growth could impact the amount of potable water available due to a drain on the available water resources. Other areas that could be impacted include agriculture and recreational facilities such as golf courses, farms, and nurseries. Areas targeted for potential future growth and development in the next five (5) years have been identified across the County at the municipal level. Refer to the jurisdictional annexes in Volume II of this HMP.

### Effect of Climate Change on Vulnerability

Climate change is beginning to affect both people and resources in New York State, and these impacts are projected to continue growing. Impacts related to increasing temperatures and sea level rise are already being felt in the State. ClimAID: the Integrated Assessment for Effective Climate Change in New York State (ClimAID) was undertaken to provide decision-makers with information on the State’s vulnerability to climate change and to facilitate the development of adaptation strategies informed by both local experience and scientific knowledge (New York State Energy Research and Development Authority [NYSERDA], 2011).

Each region in New York State, as defined by ClimAID, has attributes that will be affected by climate change. Chenango County is part of Region 3, Southern Tier. Some of the issues in this region, affected by climate change, include: dairy dominates the agricultural economy and milk production losses are projected, Susquehanna River flooding increases, and this region is one of the first parts of the State hit by invasive insects, weeds and other pests moving north (NYSERDA, 2011).

Temperatures in New York State are warming, with an average rate of warming over the past century of 0.25° F per decade. Average annual temperatures are projected to increase across New York State by 2° F to 3.4° F by the 2020s, 4.1° F to 6.8° F by the 2050s, and 5.3° F to 10.1° F by the 2080s. By the end of the century, the greatest warming is projected to be in the northern section of the State (NYSERDA, 2014).

Regional precipitation across New York State is projected to increase by approximately one to eight-percent by the 2020s, three to 12-percent by the 2050s, and four to 15-percent by the 2080s. By the end of the century, the greatest increases in precipitation are projected to be in the northern areas of the State (NYSERDA, 2014).

In Region 3, it is estimated that temperatures will increase by 3.6°F to 7.1°F by the 2050s and 4.2°F to 11.6°F by the 2080s (baseline of 47.5°F). Precipitation totals will increase between 2 and 15% by the 2050s and 3 to 16% by the 2080s (baseline of 35 inches). The changes in temperature and precipitation are likely to produce an increase in extreme heat, intense precipitation, and more occurrences of short-duration warm season droughts. Both heavy precipitation events and warm season droughts are projected to become more frequent and intense during this century. Table 5.4.1-7 displays the projected seasonal precipitation change for the East Hudson and Mohawk River Valleys ClimAID Region (NYSERDA, 2014).

**Table 5.4.1-11. Projected Seasonal Precipitation Change in Region 3, 2050s (% change)**

Winter	Spring	Summer	Fall
+5 to +15	0 to +15	-10 to +10	-5 to +10

Source: *NYSERDA, 2011*



In Region 3, the frequency of heat waves, cold events, intense precipitation, drought, and coastal flooding are projected to increase. Table 5.4.1-8 displays the projected changes in extreme events and includes the minimum, central range and maximum days per year.

**Table 5.4.1-12. Changes in Extreme Events in Region 3 – Heat Waves and Intense Precipitation**

Event Type	# Days Per Year	Baseline	2020s	2050s	2080s
Heat Waves	Number of Days per year with maximum temperature exceeding:				
	90°F	10	15 to 23 days	22 to 47 days	28 to 79 days
	Number of heat waves per year	1	2 to 3 events	3 to 6 events	3 to 9 events
	Average duration	4	4 to 5 days	5 to 5 days	5 to 7 days
Intense Precipitation	Number of days per year with rainfall exceeding:				
	1 inch	6 days	6 to 7 days	6 to 8 days	6 to 8 days
	2 inches	0.6 days	0.6 to 1 days	0.7 to 1 days	0.7 to 1 days

Source: NYSERDA 2014

Even though an increase in annual precipitation is projected, other climate change factors, such as an extended growing season, higher temperatures, and the possibility of more intense, less frequent summer rainfall, may lead to additional droughts and increased short-term drought periods (Cornell University, Date Unknown).

Droughts, typically caused by extreme heat temperatures, can cause deficits in surface and groundwater used for drinking water. The New York State Water Resources Institute at Cornell University conducted a vulnerability assessment of drinking water supplies and climate change. To assess water supplies in New York State, it was assumed that long-term average supply will remain the same but the duration and/or frequency of dry periods may increase. Both types of water supplies, surface water and groundwater, were divided into three categories: sensitive to short droughts (two to three months), sensitive to moderate and longer droughts (greater than six months), and relatively sensitive to any droughts. Major reservoir systems are presumed to have moderate sensitivity to drought because there is a likelihood of decreases in summer and fall water availability. The greatest likelihood of future water shortages is likely to occur on small water systems (Cornell University, Date Unknown).

### Change of Vulnerability

When examining the change in the County’s vulnerability to drought events from the 2008 original HMP to this update, it is important to look at each entity that is exposed and vulnerable. The total population across the County has minimally changed as shown by the 2000 to 2010 U.S. Census.

In terms of the agricultural industry for Chenango County, from 2007 to 2012, there was a 9% decrease in number of farms (908 farms to 828 farms, respectively). The County also saw a decrease in land in farms (177,267 acres to 167,266 acres). However, the County had a 4% increase in average size of farms (195 acres to 202 acres). Chenango County also experienced a 10% increase in the average market value of products sold per farm, from over \$72,000 in 2002 to over \$79,000 in 2012. Therefore, due to the increase in average farm size and the average per farm of products sold, the County’s potential crop loss due to drought may increase overall.

### Additional Data and Next Steps

For the Plan Update, any additional information regarding localized concerns and past impacts will be collected and analyzed. This data will be developed to support future revisions to the plan. Mitigation efforts could include building on existing New York State, Chenango County, and local efforts. The lead State Agency for drought preparedness is the NYSDEC.