



**GREAT LAKES
COALITION**

**Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter
For Shoreline Preservation
Newsletter – Summer 2012**

**INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION TO HOLD PUBLIC MEETING IN
HOLLAND
ON RAISING LAKE LEVELS UP TO 20 INCHES!!!**

You are invited to attend a public meeting that the International Joint Commission is holding on Thursday, July 12, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. (EDT) at the DoubleTree Hotel, 650 East 24th Street, Holland, Michigan.

As reported in previous newsletters, the IJC has completed a study on the "restoration" of lake levels, which means raising them as much as 20 inches! The study was made at the urging of the Georgian Bay people, in Canada, who have trouble getting boats to their cottages when levels are extremely low. But of course, people who have homes along the Lake Michigan shoreline could lose their entire home over the bluff if the lake was 20 inches higher than it would otherwise be, the next time high levels occur!

The report made no recommendation. So now the six-person IJC Governing Board will hear from the public, at meetings like this, before deciding what action to take, if any. It will be the final opportunity for public comment. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT COALITION MEMBERS ATTEND TO SHOW THEIR CONCERN.**

For your information, in the next article we have listed some concerns that people have about raising lake levels. You may have had actual experience in 1986 or 1997.

There also are directions to the DoubleTree Hotel in Holland. You might like to come early and attend our annual membership meeting also to be held at the DoubleTree Hotel from 5-6 p.m. preceding the IJC meeting. See enclosed meeting notice.

A second item that will be discussed at the public meeting is Lake Superior regulation. The study group recommended that a new regulation plan called "Plan 2012" be adopted to replace the current "Plan 1977-A." According to the summary report that was issued on March 28, the new plan would lower levels an inch or so when there is high water, and raise levels an inch or so when the levels are low. If that is born out by the formula, the Coalition would support it. However, "**restoration**" is the topic of concern to the Coalition. More information may be obtained at their website: <http://www.ijc.org>. Click on "International Upper Great Lakes Study Submits Final Report", www.iugls.org. Then there are several options. A good choice is the Summary Report (19 pages). The Final Report is about 200 pages. It will probably be available at the meeting and will be mailed to anyone who requests it. Write to: International Joint Commission, 2401 Pennsylvania

Avenue, N.W., 4th Floor, Washington, D.C. 20440. The Final Media Briefing is 34 pages and will use up all the blue ink in a color cartridge.

If you are unable to attend the meeting in Holland, and want to voice your concern, the IJC will be holding several other public hearings in the area during July. You can find their schedule at: http://www.ijc.org/rel/news/2012/120618_e.htm.

CONCERNS ABOUT RAISING LAKE LEVELS

The IJC report says that raising lake levels up to 20 inches, which they call "restoration," would compensate for dredging in the St. Clair River over the last 100 years. However, the record high level for Lake Michigan occurred in 1986, after all dredging was finished! So another 20 inches would not "restore" levels; it would put them into a new range, higher than anything ever before, and many more homes and property would be lost.

One of the "Guiding Principles" of the Study was "no disproportionate effects"; i.e., no interest would be harmed in order to benefit another. Raising lake levels would certainly harm shoreline property owners in order to benefit Georgian Bay.

Loss of one's home is devastating. It is often the greatest part of one's net worth, and it certainly places "disproportionate" suffering on the individual.

If one's home goes over the bluff, it is gone forever. When levels go up again after a cycle of low water, people get their boats in the water again. But homes do not spring back after a cycle of high water.

The Restoration report says it would take two to ten years to raise levels. If they became too high, it could take that long to lower them, too, and homes would be lost before the lowering was completed.

You can't imagine the anxiety and mental stress one suffers when he sees his property disappearing.

Shore protection is not the answer because the Michigan DEQ and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers make it difficult to obtain permits. In fact, and I'm not making this up, in 2000 the Corps proposed a policy that, in order to get a permit, a person would have to dig up a sand dune inland and dump it into the lake, in order to make up for the sand that would be eroded from his property with no protection.

Tourism is said to be Michigan's second or third largest industry. It really suffers when there are no beaches for tourists to use.

If "restoration" is desirable in and of itself, why not restore (eliminate) the Chicago diversion and the Ogaki-Long Lac in-diversions, remove fills in the Niagara River, and restore use of the Black Rock lock?

The IJC itself recommended removing the fills in the Niagara River and restoring use of the Black Rock lock in their 1993 report but they never followed up on it. Why not?

Wetlands on Georgian Bay are said to be a concern if they dry up when water levels are low. However, there are endangered species that depend on beaches, too, and they suffer during high water cycles. They include the Piping Plover bird and the Pitcher's Thistle plant.

The Restoration Report says on pages 125 and 126 that the St. Clair River "is considered to be one of the most important Lake Sturgeon spawning sites in the Great Lakes," and sturgeon are a threatened species in the U.S. and Canada. Restoration would be devastating for sturgeon.

Why do Lake Michigan levels have a range of almost twice as great as Lake Superior?

DIRECTIONS TO DOUBLETREE HOTEL, HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

From the South: Take Highway I-196 north. Take LEFT Exit 44 onto US-31 toward Holland. Stay on US-31 for 4.8 miles, then turn right onto E. 24th Street. Hotel is on the right.

From the North: Take US-31 south to Holland and turn left onto E. 24th Street. Hotel is on the right.

From the East: Take I-196 south. Take Exit 52 (16th Street) west toward Holland. After 1.4 miles, turn left (south) on Waverly Road. After .4 mile, turn right (west) on 24th Street. Hotel is on the left.

BANKS v. USA LAWSUIT

In her 143-page Opinion issued December 22, 2011, Judge Emily Hewitt of the Federal Court of Claims dismissed the lawsuit on the basis of the statute of limitations. She said our damages were zero. An appeal is being prepared.

WEBSITE RE-DO

The International Great Lakes Coalition website has received a bit of maintenance. Same look and feel, however:

- a few wording revisions,
- a repaired typo or two,
- added links,

- completely (we hope) validated links,
- continuing access to maintenance (versus full revision)
- tweaked link labels, and
- tweaked descriptions for selected link
- latest newsletters available for viewing

together, constitutes a bit of an update, hopefully leading toward a more functional and useful service available to those wishing to reach us, learn from us and/or involve themselves with us on behalf of the Great Lakes Shoreline and related ecosystem.

Take a new look, inform a friend or colleague, pop an e-mail off to us (from the newly enabled link in the website). All help or noted glitches, as well as any advice, will be received and considered with appreciation. We'd like to hear from you.

LAKE LEVELS

In June, all lakes are below their long term average. Lake Michigan-Huron is 18.6 inches lower, Lake Superior is 11.2 inches lower, Lake St. Clair is 7.2 inches lower, Lake Ontario is 5.2 inches lower, and Lake Erie is just 2.5 inches lower.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

www.iglc.org

P. O. Box 429, Saugatuck, MI 49453

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