



GREAT LAKES
COALITION

***Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter
For Shoreline Preservation***

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Newsletter – Summer 2016

WHY IS IT SO HIGH? SO FAST??

Lake levels continue to rise. Since January 2013's record 100-year low level of 576.02 feet the level of Lake Michigan-Huron has risen to a current 580.17 feet (as of 6/17/16). And, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is predicting a rise of up to another foot by July. Why are levels rising? And why so fast?

Winter 2015-16 was relatively mild with less than normal precipitation. Lake Michigan did not freeze over and therefore should have produced more evaporation. However, lake levels continue to rise at an alarming rate.

Reports from our membership:

"We have had extreme beach damage which is gone (approx. 60-70 feet of beach that is under water). We have a 10-foot dropoff from our boardwalk which connects all the beach cottages and the boardwalk is washed out in many places." -- Covert, MI

"The 100 feet of sand beach that my family has enjoyed for the past 15 years has been wiped out in just 1-1/2 years. Only 50 feet of dune grass with a 6-foot dropoff lie between the water line and the toe of the bluff and my house stands just 35 feet from the edge of that 100-foot bluff. And that's on a calm day." -- St. Joseph, MI

The Great Lakes Coalition for Shoreline Protection (GLCSP) has written to the International Joint Commission seeking answers to several questions primarily the sudden rise in water levels. Excerpts from our letter:

"The GLCSP is aware of the Adaptive Management of lake levels as it has been described by the International Joint Commission (IJC). We believe it is now time for the Adaptive Management Committee to focus on measures to mitigate current high levels.

"So, our first question is: Specifically, does the Adaptive Management Plan for high water levels on Lake Michigan include the implementation of the emergency measures that the IJC recommended in the December 1993 report, "Methods of Alleviating the Adverse Consequences of Fluctuating Water Levels in the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin"?

"We urge the IJC to implement these measures immediately. They are
-- Restore the Long Lac and Ogaki Rivers in Canada to their original flow channels to Hudson Bay instead of the present diversion of them into Lake Superior.

- Remove the in-fills that restrict flow through the Niagara River.
- Open the Black Rock Lock in Buffalo in order to increase Niagara River flow.
- Utilize the Welland Canal to supplement Niagara River flow.
- Consider increasing the Chicago diversion.
- Install an ice boom at the head of the St. Clair River to reduce the risk of ice jams.

"Additionally, we are concerned about the continuous above average Lake Superior outflows into Lake Michigan-Huron for the last eighteen months, even though Lake Superior precipitation has not been so great -- for example, 92% of normal for the 12 months ending September, 2015. So, our second issue questions are:

"Has the Lake Superior Board of Control deviated from the Lake Superior Regulation Plan? If so, why? Is there inflow from the Long Lac and Ogaki basin in excess of that used for power generation? What have been the Long Lac and Ogaki flows over the last 18 months? Are Lake Superior Board of Control meetings open to the public? Are the minutes available? Could we nominate a shoreline resident for the next opening on the board?

"Lastly, we are aware Restore Our Waters International (ROWI) has expressed concerns similar to ours about high water levels. However, ROWI has also advocated sills in the St. Clair River to raise the level of Lake Michigan-Huron. WE REMAIN ADAMANTLY OPPOSED TO THAT. Levels would be even higher now if sills had been installed several years ago. It has been said that if extra water were to be held back in Lake Michigan-Huron, the sills would just be lowered or removed and the extra water would run out. We do not agree because there is no way to increase the flow through the St. Clair River above existing capacity to release the additionally stored water when levels reach dangerously high levels.

"One significant historical fact that is often forgotten or overlooked on this "restoration" issue is that prior to the recent low level period, water levels on Lake Michigan-Huron were continuously above average for over 30 years while setting record high levels in 1973 and 1986 and nearly reaching record highs in 1997, all AFTER the dredging of the St. Clair River.

"In conclusion on this third issue, our question is: What is the status of the IJC's recommendation "that the Governments undertake further investigation of structural options to restore water levels in Lake Michigan-Huron by 13 to 25 cm (about 5 to 10 inches)" as reported in the "International Joint Commission's Advice to Governments on the Recommendations of the International Upper Great Lakes Study" dated April 15, 2013?"

We eagerly await answers from the IJC.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our Annual Membership Meeting will be held on Saturday, August 13, 2016 starting at 10 a.m., once again at the Haworth Inn and Conference Center on the campus of Hope College in Holland, Michigan. Our guest speaker will be Dr. Guy Meadows, Director of the Great Lakes Research Center at Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan. Dr. Meadows received a Ph.D. in Marine Science from Purdue University, then joined the faculty of the University of Michigan, College of Engineering, where he served as Professor of Physical Oceanography for 35 years. He joined Michigan Tech in 2012 to help establish the new Great Lakes Research Center. Please plan to attend this important meeting.

HARBOR DREDGING

A major cause of beach erosion is lack of sand supply especially to the south of piers along our shoreline. A long pier such as those in major ports along the Eastern shore will cause sand in the littoral drift to flow out beyond the "depth of closure" never to return to renourish the beaches south of these piers. Silt flowing from the rivers entering Lake Michigan also contributes to the renourishment process. However, silt builds up at the harbors' mouths not only causing a hazard to navigation, but also preventing the silt from entering the system and renourishing the beaches.

An article on "M-Live" announces that "Beaches south of the channels in Holland and St. Joseph will get some extra sand this spring. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will dredge more than 110,000 cubic yards from those two Lake Michigan harbors." For more information on the planned dredging, you can read the full article at:

http://www.mlive.com/news/grand-rapids/index.ssf/2016/04/beach_renourishment_coming_to.html.

You will find many other pertinent articles on our lake on the M-Live website.

NEW DIRECTOR

Ron Watson of New Buffalo has been elected to our Board of Directors. Ron received his Bachelor's degree at the University of Illinois and his Masters degree at Northwestern University, both in Mechanical Engineering, where he specialized in fluid mechanics and heat transfer/high speed gas dynamics. Ron had a long career as a research & development engineer and manager at Bells Labs in Naperville, Illinois. He accepted a senior level engineering management position when Lucent Technologies split from AT&T (Bell Labs) and retired from Alcatel/Lucent, Inc. in 2008. Ron is currently President of Watson Consulting, LLC, President of the Sunset Shores Property Owners Association in New Buffalo and Treasurer/Officer of the New Buffalo Yacht Club. Ron lives with his wife, Rita, in New Buffalo and is active with a group of leaders of the nearby communities and condo association presidents who are impacted with shoreline erosion and lack of beaches and sand supply south of the New Buffalo harbor.

REPORT FROM NEW BUFFALO

New Board member, Ron Watson reports that a New Buffalo home was partially "destroyed" by a large storm in October, 2014. The porch/patio fell and the homeowner abandoned the property during the storm and did not return. As the rest of the home was being threatened by additional erosion, the City of New Buffalo condemned the property and had the home demolished and removed. Part of the foundation remains, but the lot, as is, is not approved for building. The lot/dune continues to erode and utilities and the roadway are threatened. Citizens' groups efforts to get the city, Army Corps of Engineers or Dept. of Environmental Quality to do anything have been unsuccessful. Adjacent properties are being threatened with one house being very close to the eroded cliff. What makes the situation worse is the fact that the city/USACE/DEQ approved and built a large peninsula revetment around the city's shoreline water pumping station just north of the subject property around 1998 that exacerbated the erosion of this property. From 1975, when the New Buffalo harbor was installed, to 1995, the Corps added over a million yards of sand south of the harbor as part of the plan to stop erosion and replenish the sand blocked by the harbor. This effort was part of the original harbor design consideration and greatly reduced erosion and provided adequate beaches south of the harbor. However, in 1995 the Corps stopped the renourishment program (budget issues, they said) and many properties south of the harbor have been seriously threatened. Homeowners have spent millions of dollars on revetments and other shoreline protection, beaches have been lost, and conditions are deteriorating. Efforts to get the USACE or DEQ and the city to restart the nourishment program have failed. A meeting in April with U.S. Representative Fred Upton offered little hope to residents saying that "beach nourishment was low on the Army Corps of Engineers' budget list." Rising water levels are not helping the situation.

INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT OF ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Coalition President Dr. Larry Robson is a member of the University of Michigan's Graham Sustainability Institute's Water Center Integrated Assessment of Adaptive Management Study Panel. The panel has awarded 7 study grants in order to research adaptive management methods. A recent webinar open to the public gave reports on several of the studies. Visit the Graham Water Center's website at <http://graham.umich.edu/water> for further information and to sign up to receive their quarterly newsletter.

USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Now is the time to contact your U.S. Members of Congress, state and local senators and representatives, the International Joint Commission and others who should be aware of our rising water levels and shoreline conditions. You can write, or in many cases you can send an e-mail.

U.S. Senators and Representatives:

www.senate.gov

www.house.gov (Search by district)

State Senators and Representatives:

www.senate.michigan.gov (Search by district)

www.house.michigan.gov (Search by district)

Permit Application for Shoreline Protection:

The permit application is available online at www.mi.gov/jointpermit or at

<https://miwaters.deq.state.mi.us>. Cost for a general permit is \$50, \$100 for minor projects, and from \$500 to \$2,000 for individual projects. The permit is processed at the local MDEQ district office.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Lake Levels Bulletin:

You can view the monthly Lake Levels Bulletin online at:

<http://www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/Great-Lakes-Information/Great-Lakes-Water-Levels/Water-Level-Forecast/Monthly-Bulletin-of-Great-Lakes-Water-Levels/>

or have the bulletin mailed to you each month. Write to Dept. of the Army, Detroit District Corps of Engineers, ATTN: CELRE-HH-W, 477 Michigan Ave., Detroit, MI 48226-2550.

International Joint Commission:

If you would care to send a letter to the IJC describing your current property conditions, send to: Chair, U.S. Section, International Joint Commission, 2000 "L" Street, N.W., Suite 615, Washington, D.C. 20440.

You can also view their many reports and activities at: <http://www.ijc.org>.

Great Lakes Environmental Research Laboratory:

The NOAA website covering our Great Lakes and providing lake level data.

<http://www.glerl.noaa.gov/data/wlevels/>

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our annual membership meeting will be held on
Saturday, August 13, 2016
starting at 10:00 a.m. (EDT)
at the Haworth Inn and Conference Center
Located on the campus of Hope College in downtown Holland
225 College Avenue
Holland, Michigan 49423

Our Guest Speaker will be:
Guy Meadows, Ph.D.
Robbins Professor of Sustainable Marine Engineering
and
Director, Great Lakes Research Center at
Michigan Technological University, Houghton, Michigan

Please let us know if you plan to attend:
call: Marcia Wineberg
(847) 965-5616
or e-mail at marciawineberg@yahoo.com

TRAFFIC NOTE: If you plan on attending, please note that 9th Street in downtown Holland will be closed during the summer for re-construction.

Time to renew your membership for 2016, or join us if not already a member:

Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter-Great Lakes Coalition
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We are a 501(C) (3) tax-exempt organization
Contributions are deductible to the full extent of the law

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

LAKE PROPERTY ADDRESS IF DIFFERENT:

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

SUGGESTED MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTION: \$35 \$50 \$100 Other



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

MISSION STATEMENT

The Great Lakes Coalition (GLC) concentrates on water levels; natural sand supply to beaches, dunes, and bluffs; and coastal management. The objective is to promote environmentally sound management of the coastal zone. Natural conditions have been changed by sometimes flawed government intervention and judgment. The GLC is a respected advocate for shoreline property owners that challenges inappropriate regulations and encourages beneficial government decisions.