



GREAT LAKES
COALITION

*Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter
For Shoreline Preservation*

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Newsletter – Winter 2018

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING DRAWS RECORD ATTENDANCE

Concerns about rising water levels and increased outflow from Lake Superior brought a record attendance of almost 200 shoreline property owners to the Great Lakes Coalition Annual Membership Meeting held Saturday, August 18, 2018, at the Haworth Inn & Conference Center on the campus of Hope College in Holland, Michigan. Guest speaker, John Allis, P.E., Chief, Great Lakes Hydraulics & Hydrology Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District Office, began his presentation by stating that the outflow from Lake Superior is managed by the International Lake Superior Board of Control (ILSBC), an agency under the jurisdiction of the International Joint Commission (IJC). The ILSBC is composed of two commissioners, one from Canada, one from U.S. and are governed by Lake Superior Regulation Plan 2012. He stated that the mission of the Board is two-fold: 1) try to mimic pre-project conditions and maintain natural outflows; and 2) try to balance the levels of each lake. Last year Lake Superior had record high water levels and high levels continue this year. Lake Michigan-Huron (considered one body of water and thus larger than Lake Superior) is well above average. Maximum outflow from Lake Superior would have added 4-5” into Lake Michigan-Huron, but a minimum outflow would still add 1 to 1-1/2” into our lake. Chief Allis concluded by showing a 6-month projected forecast that indicates lakes will remain above average but return closer to average by the end of the 6-month period. More information about the Lake Superior Board of Control can be found at: <https://ijc.org/en/labc>

Following Chief Allis’s presentation, Sabrina Miller, Biologist from the USACE Detroit District Office talked about the permitting process for installing shoreline protection and other structures. Ms. Miller stated that the aim of the permitting process is to protect the physical integrity of property from both chemical and biological standpoints. Section 10 of the “Rivers and Harbors Act” regulates the structures and work to be done and Section 404 of the “Clean Water Act” covers wetlands and tributaries to navigable waterways in regard to fill components and any pollutants contained therein. To obtain a permit in the State of Michigan, one must apply both to the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The steps in the permitting process are: 1) pre-application meeting; 2) submit application (jointly to MDEQ and USACE); 3) evaluation by MDEQ, USACE and Fish & Wildlife Service; 4) decision. There is a \$10 fee and a decision is usually rendered in 60 days or less. For more complete information on the permitting process, call the USACE at 1-800-493-6838 or search the USACE website at: www.lre.usace.army.mil/Missions/RegulatoryProgramAndPermits.aspx

Other Corps of Engineers personnel were on hand to answer questions.

NEW BUFFALO SHORELINE ALLIANCE

Director Ron Watson reports that the New Buffalo Shoreline Alliance is in the process of completing the Michigan DEQ application for a permit for the proposed breakwaters pending some additional detailed engineering studies. This would be the first permit issued by the Michigan DEQ for offshore placement. The NBSA is in the process of securing funding working to partner with universities and Sea Grant programs at the University of Michigan and Michigan State. They have also reached out to Michigan Technological University to ask if they would partner on appropriate engineering studies and grant applications concerning shoreline erosion and impact of harbors. They will also be trying for another Coastal Zone Management Grant. This would be a good test project for the State of Michigan for other beaches that need sand. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers seems to be helping. They have sent in top officials to view the damages.

LAKE SUPERIOR BOARD OF CONTROL

The Coalition has been in contact with the Lake Superior Board of Control regarding increased outflow from Lake Superior. To quote directly from their reply, "...there is virtually nothing that the IJC or its Board can do to address the high water concerns of shoreline property owners on Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron that is not already being done." However, the Coalition feels there ARE things that can be done:

- Canadian rivers could be returned to their natural channels. Long Lac/Ogoki outflow into Hudson Bay was reversed in order to serve power plants on Lake Superior.
- Black Rock Lock, where Lake Erie flows into Lake Ontario, has been closed for some time. Put it back in operation.
- Remove Niagara River infills.
- Increase amount of Chicago Diversion outflow.
- Flows could be increased through the Welland Canal by keeping it open at all times.
- Placing ice booms at head of St. Clair River.

The IJC has recommended many of these remedies but no action has ever been taken.

The Great Lakes Coalition is concerned that the International Lake Superior Board of Control consists of only two board members, one from U.S. and one from Canada. No other interests are represented. A 1980 study recommended an increase in board membership but this has never transpired. The Coalition is working to make this happen and especially to have other stakeholders such as shoreline property owners represented.

BANKS v. USA

Director John Ehret reports that the government has decided not to petition the U.S. Supreme Court. Settlement discussions are now underway.

A NEW LOCK AT SAULT STE. MARIE

The case for building a new lock at Sault Ste. Marie received a big boost with the publication of a report by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which detailed the critical importance of the locks to the U.S. economy.

The report, entitled: “The Perils of Efficiency: An Analysis of an Unexpected Closure of the Poe Lock and Its Impact” was completed in October of 2015, and reported on MLive on March 13, 2016.

The “Soo” locks were completed in 1855, just in time for the brigantine, *Columbia*, to haul 130 tons of iron ore to be delivered to Cleveland, Ohio. Prior to the use of the locks, ships and cargo had to be portaged around the falls. As David Brown writes, in *White Hurricane*, “With a vertical drop of 19 feet from Superior to Michigan and Huron, ships could not carry iron ore directly to the lower lakes. A wooden tramway with iron banding for rails was constructed in the 1840s to allow transshipment of ore around the rapids, but the demand was still not satisfied until the first canal and lock system was opened in 1855.”

The construction of the locks was a significant factor in the outcome of the Civil War. The shipments of ore through the new locks enabled the manufacture of weaponry and ammunition necessary for the Union to win the war. Of the locks, the Poe Lock, constructed in 1896, and updated, in 1968, came to be dominant in shipping and a crucial underpinning to the U.S. economy. MLive describes the Poe Lock as “...the largest of the Soo locks in Sault Ste. Marie and the only one able to handle the 1,000-foot freighters that carry 70% of Great Lakes cargo. From the day of construction completion of the locks in 1855 to 1898, shipping quantities increased many times over. The cost of moving heavy or bulk freight dropped to very competitive levels as the efficiencies of water-based transportation took hold of the steelmaking economy.

Originally, the ore found in the Upper Peninsula and Minnesota was so pure, it could be fed directly into the blast furnaces on Lakes Michigan and Erie. As time passed, the purity of the ore diminished and was replaced by a baked ore known as Taconite. Taconite is a marble sized and shaped pellet of high-grade iron ore. Whatever the grade of the iron ore, industrialization in the United States grew up around the transport of a raw material across water to processing plants based on the waterfronts. The industrial infrastructure of the growing nation conformed to the shipping patterns.

So, what would be the consequence of an interruption of shipping through the Soo locks? The DHS reports unemployment would go through the roof. MLive reported that the national unemployment rate would reach 11.3%. The report further predicts that the States of Texas, Michigan, and Ohio would lose 800,000 jobs. The report additionally calculated a drop in U.S. gross domestic product of \$1.1 trillion. The consequence of a breakdown, then, at the Soo, or worse, say, a terrorist strike would be enormous. Enough so that Michigan and Ohio congressional delegations support the construction of a new lock. Governor Rick Snyder has called for the construction of a new lock. Senator Gary Peters has supported plans to create a new larger lock comprised of two antiquated locks, the Sabin and Davis locks.

Some do not take alarm as a breakdown at the Soo could be overcome by trucking and rail. Nothing could be farther from the truth. There are not enough rails cars in the country to compensate. Nor are any of the processing plants configured to receive raw materials by rail or truck. The interstates are barely adequate to handle the traffic they currently host. A significant increase is out of the question.

Brown writes: “The importance of the Soo locks to the industrial development of the United States cannot be overstated”. That was true in the early stages of industrialization and it appears to be even more so in 2018.

(Editor’s note: A special thanks to new Board member Jim Hettinger of South Haven for this factual and historical article about the Soo Locks. Jim’s article was previously published in Gannett newspapers.)

Update: On October 10, 2018, Congressional approval was given for water resources legislation that contains critical Great Lakes provisions including authorization for a new large lock at the Soo Locks complex. The Act now goes to the president for his signature.

The legislation includes additional provisions to support efforts of states, provinces and other partners on key challenges facing the Great Lakes. For example, the Act:

- Directs the Army Corps of Engineers to undertake research on the management and eradication of aquatic invasive species, including Asian carp and zebra mussels;
- Directs the Army Corps of Engineers to implement a five-year harmful algal bloom technology development demonstration program;
- Authorizes the Army Corps of Engineers to carry out a Great Lakes Coastal Resiliency Study; and
- Adjusts the cost share to 80% federal, 20% nonfederal for operating and maintaining measures to prevent the upstream movement of Asian carp through the Brandon Road Lock and Dam near Chicago.

NEW DIRECTORS ON BOARD

At our last board meeting, the directors voted to add one additional director position to our board and also fill the vacancy due to the resignation of Director John Yerington of Stevensville. Please welcome two new directors:

James F. Hettinger, South Haven. Jim received his BA and MA degrees at Western Michigan University and received his doctorate in Public Administration from the University of Missouri. He received an honorary doctorate in Public Service from WMU. Jim previously was marketing director and went on to become president of Battle Creek Unlimited. He also served as Chair of the Western Michigan University Board of Trustees for 8 years. Jim has a keen interest in Great Lakes history, enjoys photography, reading, walking the beach, and is an ardent hockey fan.

Ron Wilson, Manistee. Ron received his MS degree in Natural Resource Policy from the University of Michigan. He has spent 20 years as a lobbyist for the City of Lansing and worked with Lana Pollack (IJC) to enact the Sand Dunes Preservation Act.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ECONOMIC REPORT

A report issued September 30, 2018 by the University of Michigan analyzes the economic impacts of the funding provided by the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GRLI) from 2010 through 2016 on the Great Lakes Region using a combination of econometric analysis (looking back in time) and regional economic modelling (looking back in time and projecting into the future); the study was conducted by a team of economists at the University of Michigan’s Research Seminar in Quantitative Economics. They estimated that there was a total of \$1.4 billion in federal spending on GRLI projects in the Great Lakes states between 2010 and 2016.

Matching funds, primarily from state and local governments, contributed an estimated additional \$360 million in funding, bringing total spending on GLRI projects in the Great Lakes states to \$1.7 billion. Some key results from the study were:

- Every dollar of federal spending on projects funded under the GLRI from 2010-2016 will produce a total of \$3.35 of additional economic output in the Great Lakes Region through 2036.
- Every dollar of GLRI spending from 2010-2016 increased local house prices by \$1.08, suggesting that GLRI projects provided amenities that were valuable to local residents.
- Additional tourism activity generated by the GLRI in the Great Lakes region will increase regional economic output by \$1.62 from 2010-2036 for every \$1.00 in federal government spending, nearly half of the total increase estimated.
- The GLRI created or supported an average of 5,180 jobs per year and increased personal income by an average of \$250 million per year in the Great Lakes region from 2010-2016.

A conservative approach was employed to modelling the regional economic impacts of the GLRI, and they believe their estimates are likely to understate the program's true impacts. Although the GLRI was designed and implemented as an environmental restoration program, rather than an economic development program, it nonetheless produced economic benefits for the Great Lakes region that were on par with more traditional economic stimulus measures.

The complete report, and more information on the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, can be viewed online at the University of Michigan's website:

<https://lsa.umich.edu/econ/rsqe/impact-analysis/great-lakes-restoration.html>

If you have not already done so, time to renew your membership for 2019, or join us if not already a member:

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We are a 501(C) (3) tax-exempt organization
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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.