



## **Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter for Shoreline Preservation Newsletter – Winter 2012**

### **THE DONALD C. COOK NUCLEAR POWER PLANT**

The coalition has written a letter to the Donald C. Cook Nuclear Power Plant in Bridgman, Michigan and to the International Joint Commission (IJC) expressing the concern of Coalition members who live near the plant about the security of the plant during storms like Hurricane Sandy on October 30. As far as the Coalition knows, the plant came through Sandy all right, but the question we asked was: Would it have been OK if lake levels were at all-time highs, or even 20” higher as proposed in the “Restoration” scenario?

For those who like numbers, the facts, as far as we know them, are:

- The Plant has a seawall that is 585 feet above sea level
- The lake level when Sandy struck was 576.5 feet above sea level
- Peak waves during Sandy were 21.7 feet in mid-lake
- That is (576.5+21.7) or 598.5 feet in mid-lake – well above the seawall
- But the waves near shore could be less. Did they overtop the seawall? Depends on the beach—we don’t know.
- Would they overtop it if lake levels were near the all-time high of 582 feet (5.5 feet higher than on October 30)?
- What if “Restoration” created levels even 20” higher than that?
- Cook Nuclear Plant is a subsidence zone where true elevation requires walking back the IGLD (International Great Lakes Datum) to 1955.

We have asked for a meeting to help us understand the situation better. The Nuclear Regulatory Commission is working with us. To view a copy of the Coalition’s letter, visit our website at [www.iglc.org](http://www.iglc.org) and search under “Newsletters.”

## STATUS OF LAKE LEVEL “RESTORATION” STUDY

Coalition members who read this newsletter are aware that the International Joint Commission has completed a five-year study of lake levels. One outcome was a recommendation that a new “Plan 2012” be adopted for controlling the discharge from Lake Superior to Lakes Michigan-Huron. According to the report, the new plan would not make much difference in the level of Lake Michigan – maybe an inch or so lower; the main benefits would be to power, shipping and environmental interests. There was little comment on “Plan 2012” and it is likely to be adopted.

Another outcome of the study was much more worrisome to the Coalition and to all shoreline property owners: the “Restoration” report. The report described the impact of raising lake levels as much as 20 inches (!), to compensate for dredging in the St. Clair River over the past 100 years. This study was pushed by the people who have cottages on Georgian Bay in Canada where low levels interfere with docking of their boats. However, it would certainly be devastating to Lake Michigan shoreline people if levels were 20 inches higher than in 1986 and 1997. There was no recommendation in the “Restoration” study.

As many of you know, there was a public hearing on “Restoration” at the Doubletree Hotel in Holland in July. There was a good turnout of Coalition members, and our thanks go to everyone who attended and especially to those who spoke up or wrote in. The IJC remarked on the turnout.

So what happens now? Well, the six-person IJC board will consider the facts in the report and the public comments and decide whether to do nothing or to recommend some sort of restoration to the governments of the U.S. and Canada. We thought there might be some preliminary statement in December, and we were optimistic about a do nothing decision.

However, two new developments may weigh against the Coalition. The first is the surprising drop in lake levels in the last few months. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Monthly Bulletin of Lake Levels shows Lake Michigan to be right at the all-time low for October, and it predicts it will set a new record low in December.

The second is a new position statement by an organization called Save Our Shoreline (SOS) that is centered around Saginaw Bay. They have several thousand members and do a good job of turning out crowds for public meetings. The lake bottom at Saginaw Bay is very slightly sloped, so a drop of only a few inches in lake levels may expose a hundred feet of lake bottom and create that much new beach. Up to now SOS has been concerned about weed growth, mostly fragmites, on the exposed beaches, but with record low levels predicted, they decided to write to the IJC requesting consideration of level controls in the St. Clair River.

We don’t know how this will all play out, but more letters from our members to the IJC always helps. We will certainly let you know about any future public meetings. You can write to the IJC at:

International Joint Commission  
2000 L Street, NW  
Suite #615  
Washington, DC 20440

## **LAKE LEVELS**

In November, all Great Lakes were below their long term average. Lakes Michigan-Huron are practically at an all-time record low and in December, January and February are predicted to go below the record low set in 1964.

## **BANKS v. USA**

The Department of Justice has requested until January 14, 2013 to file their Responding Brief. We did not oppose.

## **ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

The Annual Membership Meeting of the Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter of the Great Lakes Coalition was held on Thursday, July 12, 2012 immediately preceding the IJC Public Hearing held at the DoubleTree Hotel, Holland, Michigan. Reports were given on the International Upper Great Lakes Study, lake levels, website update, and the Banks v. USA lawsuit. Three directors were re-elected for 3-year terms: Dr. Larry Robson, Roger Smithe, and Marcia Wineberg. In addition, Jim TeSelle of the Wisconsin Chapter reported on several issues of concern to his membership such as phosphorus content in the lake and the invasion of zebra mussels. After adjournment Coalition members attended the IJC meeting held in an adjoining meeting room and many voiced their concerns over the "Restoration" study.

## **BOARD MEMBER VACANCIES**

There will be two Board vacancies to fill. If you are interested in becoming more involved and would like to serve, please contact [marciawineberg@yahoo.com](mailto:marciawineberg@yahoo.com). Board meetings are held bi-monthly at the Coalition office in Douglas, Michigan.

## **SIMPLE DEFINITIONS -- WAVE HEIGHT**

WAVE HEIGHT is equal to the distance from the lowest point, or trough, to the highest point, or crest, of the wave. The still-water level (SWL) is half way between the bottom of the trough and the top of the crest. The WAVE LENGTH is the horizontal distance between two identical points on two successive wave crests or two successive wave troughs. Engineering wave studies suggest that the depth of water necessary to support a given wave height is .83. In other words, in order to have a 20-foot high wave the water must be 16.6 feet deep ( $20 \times .83 = 16.6$ ).

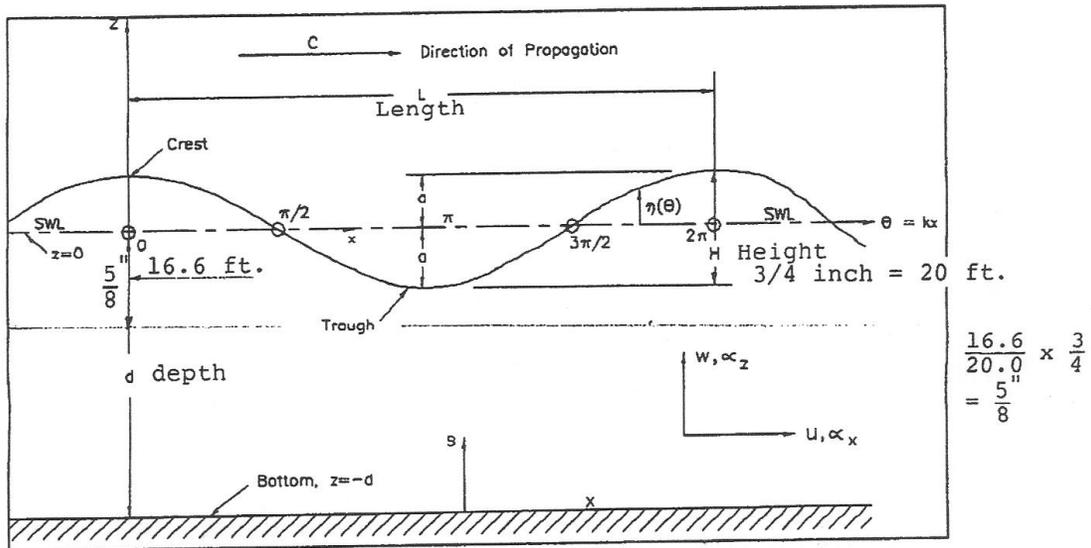


Figure II-1-1. Definition of terms - elementary, sinusoidal, progressive wave

CLASSIFICATION OF WATER WAVES:

Deep water  $d/L$  is  $1/2$  to infinity  
 Shallow water  $d/L$  is 0 to  $1/20$

(Excerpted from Corps *Coastal Engineering Manual* (CEM) 1 Aug 08 EM1110-2-1100 Part II)

**Time to renew your membership for 2013, or join us if not already a member:**

**Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter-Great Lakes Coalition**  
**P. O. Box 429**  
**Saugatuck, MI 49453**  
**(269) 857-8945**

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



**GREAT LAKES  
COALITION**

Michigan/Lake Michigan Chapter for Shoreline Preservation  
P. O. Box 429, Saugatuck, MI 49453  
[www.iglc.org](http://www.iglc.org)

**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.*

