LEVEL news

Great Lakes - St. Lawrence River Water Levels

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Lake Levels Continue their Seasonal Decline

Water levels fell on each of the Great Lakes and on Lake St. Clair last month as the lakes continued their annual seasonal declines. Levels on lakes Superior and Erie fell by near-average amounts during November, while lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, and Ontario fell by more than their respective averages for the month, as compared to the 1918-2009 period of record. The levels of lakes Superior and Erie each fell by 4 cm, which is 1 cm less than each of their long-term average declines of 5 cm for November. The levels of lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Ontario fell by 9, 12 and 6 cm, respectively. On average, the level of Lakes Michigan-Huron has fallen 5 cm during November over the 1918-2009 period of record, while lakes St. Clair and Ontario have fallen by 7 and 3 cm, respectively, over that period.

It's too early to say just how large the 2010-11 seasonal declines will be for each of the Great Lakes; however, they have all experienced steeper-than-average seasonal declines so far this year. As of the beginning of December, the daily water levels on lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, Erie and Ontario had fallen 9, 15, 12, and 7 cm more than average, respectively, since they began their annual seasonal declines.

With the levels of lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron well below average, their larger-than-average seasonal declines to date are a concern for people affected by low water levels on these lakes.

Water Level Forecast

If water supply conditions are average, the levels of lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron are expected to continue to fall gradually in December, as is typical at this time of year. The levels of lakes St. Clair, Erie and Ontario are approaching their annual lows and are not expected to fall or rise appreciably in December, unless unusually high or low

(continued on next page)

Great Lakes Water Level Information

Lake	November 2010 Monthly Mean Level		Beginning-of-December 2010 Level	
	Compared to Monthly Average (1918-2009)	Compared to One Year Ago	Compared to Beginning-of-Month Average (1918-2009)	Compared to One Year Ago
Superior	33 cm below	21 cm below	33 cm below	22 cm below
Michigan-Huron	43 cm below	31 cm below	44 cm below	34 cm below
St. Clair	19 cm below	22 cm below	19 cm below	22 cm below
Erie	11 cm below	19 cm below	9 cm below	14 cm below
Ontario	4 cm below	same	3 cm below	3 cm above

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water supplies occur. For a complete range of probable water levels over the next six months on each of the Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair, please refer to the November 2010 edition of the Canadian Hydrographic Service's monthly water levels bulletin found at: **www.waterlevels.gc.ca/C&A/tidal_e.html**.

Bulletin's Naming Convention

Each month, LEVEL*news* directs its readers to the Canadian Hydrographic Service's monthly water levels bulletin for the latest six-month water level forecast. For example, this month's edition points to the November 2010 edition of that bulletin. Contrary to what one might think, the November 2010 date is not an error. The November edition of that bulletin is produced and posted on the Web by the Canadian Hydrographic Service early in December. Although produced in December, the November 2010 date on that current bulletin signifies that it includes recorded water levels data up to, and including, November 2010.

Ice season

With the cold weather upon us and surface water temperatures dropping, can lake ice be far behind?

Environment Canada monitors ice conditions in five regions, including the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River. If you would like to track ice conditions throughout the winter, please visit the Canadian Ice Service Web site at: **www.ice-glaces.ec.gc.ca**.

Click on the appropriate regional area on the map and you will find a number of ice information products. This includes Ice Charts (showing ice concentrations and stages of development), Ice Hazard Bulletins, Ice Forecasts, and Ice Cover Graphs.

Be sure to click on the "Ice Codes" button at the top of the Web page to learn more about the Egg Code and the Colour Codes used on the ice charts. The Egg Code (named for its oval shape) may look complicated, but once becoming familiar with its structure a great deal of information about ice conditions can be acquired in a short period of time.

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November Precipitation over the Great Lakes *

Great Lakes Basin	**87%**	**Lake Erie**	**125%**
Lake Superior	**105%**	**Including Lake St. Clair)**	
Lakes Michigan-Huron	**65%**	**Lake Ontario**	**94%**

November Outflows from the Great Lakes *

Lake Superior	**70%**	**Lake Erie**	**93%**
Lake Huron	**93%**	**Lake Ontario**	**103%**

*** As a percentage of the long-term November average.**
NOTE: These figures are preliminary