

LEVELnews

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Water Levels on Lower Lakes Rise in Response to Rain **Dry Conditions Continue to Limit Seasonal Rise on Upper Lakes**

April brought somewhat wetter conditions to both Lakes Erie and Ontario basins; however, below average conditions continued for Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron.

Due to below average precipitation and limited Spring runoff the levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron rose by just 1 and 3 cm, respectively, from the beginning to the end of April. Signs are that the seasonal rise on these lakes

will be less than usual this year.

Lake Superior began May about 2 cm lower than last year, 22 cm below its long-term average and 8 cm below Chart Datum. Lakes Michigan-Huron are now about 55 cm below average, 33 cm below last year's level and 6 cm below Chart Datum. Last month, Lakes Michigan-Huron were 31 cm above the record low April level experienced in 1964.

Lakes St. Clair and Erie levels rose by 14 and 16 cm, respectively, during April in response to rain over their basins. At the beginning of May, Lake St. Clair was 27 cm below average, down 29 cm from last year. Lake Erie began May about 25 cm below its long-term average and 30 cm below last year's level at this time.

Water supplies to Lake Ontario were close to average during April. Recent rainfall
(continued on next page)

Swimming Hazard

Last year LEVELnews highlighted a hazard often forgotten when discussing the recent drop in Great Lakes water levels. Since water levels on the middle lakes have continued to decline we would like to repeat the warning to swimmers about the danger they face with water levels down significantly over the past few years.

With the water's edge receding, running off a dock or down the beach for that first dive of the year can result in serious, permanent damage to the head, neck and back. With levels much lower than last year, it is imperative that anyone responsible for children—parents, grandparents and camp counsellors—make them aware that the water is not as deep as it has been in the past. There may be little or no water at the ends of docks and the rocks children swam out to last year will be much closer to the surface. Please check water depths for swimming and diving as well as boating so you can continue to enjoy fun-filled, accident-free visits to the lakes this year.



on the Lake Ontario basin and on-going below-average Lake Ontario outflows have brought the level of Lake Ontario to average. By releasing outflows less than specified by the lake's regulation plan the International St. Lawrence River Board of Control has conserved 10 cm of water on Lake Ontario. Water levels are expected to remain near average on Lake Ontario throughout the Summer months.

Volume Change

The water levels of the Great Lakes have declined from near record highs in 1997 to current conditions in response to a combination of consistently below-normal precipitation and unusually high temperatures. The volume of water in each lake has also declined. For

April Precipitation Over Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term April average:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Great Lakes Basin | 108% | Lake Erie | 132% |
| Lake Superior | 85% | (including Lake St. Clair) | |
| Lakes Michigan-Huron | 97% | Lake Ontario | 149% |

NOTE: These figures are preliminary

example, water levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron have fallen 1.27 m from July 1997 to April 2000. With their combined total water surface area of 117 400 km² this 1.27 m decline in levels translates to around a 149 km³ reduction in water volume. The volume of all the Great Lakes combined has decreased by about 231 km³ of water during the same period of time. If all this water were spread out it would cover the total surface area (land and freshwater) of the Province of Ontario to a depth of about 22 cm.

Superior Board of Control has scheduled its annual public meeting for 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 27, 2000 at the Presque Isle Park pavilion in Marquette, MI.

The International Niagara Board of Control has scheduled its annual meeting with the public for the evening of Tuesday, September 12, 2000 in Niagara Falls, NY. Please watch for details on the time and location of the Niagara Board meeting in future editions of LEVELnews.

Public Meetings

The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control has scheduled its annual public meeting for the evening of Tuesday, May 30, 2000 at the Olcott Fire Hall, 1691 Lockport-Olcott Road, Olcott, NY. The meeting is scheduled to start at 7:00 p.m.

The International Lake

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April Outflows From Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term April average:

| | | | |
|----------------------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| Lake Superior | 93% | Lake Erie | 91% |
| Lake Huron | 87% | Lake Ontario | 83% |

NOTE: These figures are preliminary