



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
North Central Division

GREAT LAKES LEVELS UPDATE NO. 21 3 APRIL 1987

Good news continues with respect to the below average precipitation on the Great Lakes basin. Early reports indicate that during the month of March, precipitation ranged from about half of the average amount on the Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron to more than three-quarters of average on Lake Erie. The lack of precipitation is reflected in the lake levels; the mean monthly levels for March on all the lakes were lower than projected. Again this month, no new record high levels were set on any of the Great Lakes!

The attached bulletin shows the actual levels through March and the six-month forecasts. It can be seen that all of the Great Lakes should be into their seasonal rises at this time of year. With a below normal snowpack on the basins, the seasonal rises should also be less than normal. Lake Superior is expected to be 0.4 foot above its long-term mean level and Lake Ontario is expected to be nearly at its long-term mean level by the end of September. On the other hand, the middle lakes are expected to remain nearly 2 feet above mean levels for at least another six months.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) is continuing to direct the outflows for Lakes Superior and Ontario. The Lake Superior outflow of 70,000 cfs is continuing during April. The Lake Ontario outflow continues to be regulated under an emergency action known as Criterion (k) and provided for in the IJC's Orders of Approval. The discharge was maintained well above plan flow until March 27th, when downstream flooding in the Montreal area, caused by the spring runoff from the Ottawa River, required a reduction in St. Lawrence River flows. The March St. Lawrence River flows still averaged about 314,000 cfs, a record amount. The emergency action through March has reduced the Lake Ontario level by more than 2-1/2 feet below the level that would have occurred without regulation.

Ice jamming problems were again experienced in early March on the St. Clair River. Some flooding of homes occurred on March 12th through 24th. By the end of March all the lake ice had dissipated.

Under the authority of Public Law 84-99, the Corps of Engineers has continued with the Advance Measures program, which consists of constructing preventive works prior to a flood threat to life and property. There has been little change in the status of the program since my March 4th summary.

The Corps is also authorized to assist local communities in responding to actual flooding situations, to supplement maximum state and local efforts. Requests for assistance should be directed through local and state disaster assistance agencies. For Great Lakes basin technical assistance or information, please contact one of the following Corps of Engineers District Offices:

For New York, Penn. & Ohio
Colonel Daniel R. Clark
Cdr, Buffalo District
1776 Niagara Street
Buffalo, NY 14207-3199
(716) 876-5454-Ext. 2201

For Mich., Minn. & Wisc.
Colonel Robert F. Harris
Cdr, Detroit District
P.O. Box 1027
Detroit, MI 48231-1027
(313) 226-6440 or
226-6441

For Ill. & Indiana
LTC Frank R. Finch
Cdr, Chicago District
219 S. Dearborn St.
6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60604-1797
(312) 353-6400

You can still get the "Help Yourself" brochure from the District Offices listed above or from this office: North Central Division, 536 South Clark Street, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1592, telephone: (312) 353-6364.

Near-shore wave warnings are provided by various National Weather Service Offices for certain portions of the Great Lakes. Information can normally be heard on the National Weather Service's local weather radio broadcasts.

The Corps of Engineers' "Self-Help" program of distributing sandbags, sand and plastic sheeting to threatened communities is continuing. As mentioned, you should call your local or state disaster assistance agencies to obtain materials and assistance under this program.

You have my assurance that these updates will continue to accompany the monthly bulletin until the lakes return to safe levels.


JOSEPH PRATT
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding