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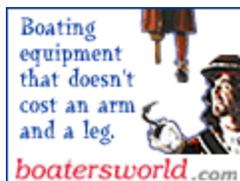
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## Army Corps sees hope for rising Great Lakes

March 8, 2002, 6:50 AM

DETROIT (AP) -- There's hope after all for bone-dry docks and clogged harbors along the water-deprived Great Lakes, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The corps had not been holding out much hope for an easing of the low water levels on the lakes.

In January, the corps said levels the coming summer would be much like those of last year, when many boaters found themselves grounded.

But in a new assessment the corps said lakes Michigan and Huron should rise about eight inches from last year and St. Clair and Erie should increase by about five inches, the Detroit Free Press said Friday.

A very rainy fall and an average snowpack around the Lake Superior basin this winter should combine for higher lakes come spring, it said.

"Earlier we were saying that we expected conditions to be about the same as last year, but now we think we'll see some definite improvement," said Keith Kompoltowicz, meteorologist with the corps' Detroit district office.

"This is good news because I've really had some hard times launching my boat at different ramps around the state," said fisherman Greg Reynolds of Anchor Bay. "I've seen more than a few boats hit bottom or a pile of rocks hidden just below the water's surface."

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Freighters that carry iron ore to area steel plants also have had trouble. For each inch the lake went down, shippers had to lighten their load by about 100 metric tons. With the lakes expected to rise, freighters should be able to carry more weight without fear of running aground.

A 1999 Michigan State University study said Michigan marinas lost about \$30 million that year, mostly because of the high cost of dredging to ease access.

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