



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

North Central Division

GREAT LAKES LEVELS

UPDATE, NO. 3

3 October 1985

The Great Lakes, except Lake Ontario, remain extremely high. Lake Superior and Lake St. Clair set new record high levels in September. The approaching storm season continues to be of concern since the high lake levels could compound storm damage to shoreline property.

The attached bulletin shows our projected levels for the period October 1, 1985 through March 31, 1986. All the upper Great Lakes are predicted to remain high for the next six months. The Lake Superior September mean level of 601.96 feet is about 11 inches above average and may continue to set monthly records. Lake Ontario, on the other hand, has fallen to near normal for this time of year. Its level is expected to fall below normal in October and remain below normal through the end of the year.

The purpose of this update is to inform you of the status of the emergency actions taken to date by the International Joint Commission (IJC) and others to provide relief to Lakes Superior, Michigan-Huron, St. Clair, and Erie. The initial decision was to reduce Lake Superior outflows through October by about 30 percent below the flows prescribed by Plan 1977, the regulation plan for Lake Superior. However, heavy precipitation in August (35% above average) and in September (90% above average) on the Lake Superior basin required the IJC to increase the Lake Superior outflows during these months. These flow increases were taken to prevent the criterion level of 602.0 feet (on a monthly mean basis) on Lake Superior from being exceeded. The Lake Superior level seemed to have peaked at the end of the first week in September and begun its seasonal decline. Therefore, the IJC resumed its lake level balancing objective during September. However, additional rainfall near the end of the month caused the level to rise again. It is expected that the level will now reach its annual peak in October and then begin its seasonal decline.

In July 1985, the International Joint Commission directed closure of all gates in the Compensating Works for construction of the St. Marys Rapids Fishery Remedial Works. These works were judged capable of accepting some flow increase by mid-September 1985. However, additional water was also released through two U.S. navigation locks from 23 August through 27 September and through the Canadian navigation lock from 6 September to 12 September. All non-navigation flow through the locks stopped with the dedication of the fishery remedial works on 27 September. This project culminated several years of planning and coordination activities.

By the end of September, the effect of the IJC's emergency action was:

Lake Superior	Up 4-1/4 inches
Lakes Michigan-Huron	Down 2-3/4 inches
Lake St. Clair	Down 1-1/2 inches
Lake Erie	Down 1 inch

As a further action since June 28, 1985, Canada has been withholding about 4,000 cfs of the Ogoki Diversion in an effort to reduce the supplies to Lake Superior.

In addition, the Corps of Engineers' Detroit and Buffalo Districts are continuing to pursue a program for providing flood protection measures to the States of Michigan and Ohio. Potential flooding problems exist primarily along the shores of Lake Erie, the Detroit River, and Lake St. Clair. In Michigan, construction has begun at Luna Pier while planning continues at Frenchtown Township, Estral Beach, Brownstown Township and several locations in Detroit. In Ohio, seven projects are under consideration. They are: Eastlake, Reno Beach/Howard Farms, Whites Landing, Crystal Rock, Bayview, Wightmans Grove and Oregon. All other potential locations are either ineligible or have declined participation in the program.

For Great Lakes basin technical assistance or information, please contact one of the following Corps of Engineers District offices:

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These updates will be continued for the next few months to provide additional information on the actions being taken to help alleviate high water level conditions and to provide flood protection.


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