



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**

North Central Division

GREAT LAKES LEVELS UPDATE, NO. 16 3 NOVEMBER 1986

The record high Great Lakes levels have continued and conditions for sustaining damage to the lakes' shoreland are very threatening. This has prompted the Corps of Engineers to initiate a "Self-Help" program. Using an Advance Measures Authority, the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Mr. Robert K. Dawson, approved the new program for Great Lakes shoreline communities affected by the record-high water levels. The program will include distribution of sandbags, sand and plastic sheeting to enable threatened communities to construct sandbag dikes to prevent flooding. The Buffalo, Chicago and Detroit Districts are holding meetings with the states and affected counties to explain the program and obtain commitments for participation. Communities interested in participating should contact their county disaster assistance personnel through whom the materials will be distributed and technical assistance offered.

During October, rainfall on the Lake Erie basin was heavy, while Lakes Michigan-Huron and Ontario received about normal precipitation and Lake Superior received slightly less than normal precipitation. New record highs for the month of October were set on Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Erie. The monthly levels on these lakes were over one foot higher than the previous records for October! New record monthly highs for Lakes Michigan-Huron and St. Clair have been set continuously for over a full year now. On a daily basis, it appeared that Lakes Michigan-Huron had reached a seasonal peak level at the end of July. However, rainfall reversed the decline so that the actual annual peak level was reached in the first week of October, about 1/3 foot higher than the apparent peak daily level in July. The Lake Erie level has been less than its record monthly high only once, in April, since October 1985. Lake Superior remains extremely high although it is not setting records at the present time. Lake Ontario also is now approaching record levels. The attached bulletin shows that all the Great Lakes are predicted to remain extremely high through the end of April 1987.

The International Joint Commission (IJC) is continuing to direct the outflows for the two Great Lakes that are regulated. The Lake Superior outflow is at its specified Plan 1977 outflow setting. The Lake Ontario outflow is being regulated under an emergency action, known as Criterion (k) and provided for in the IJC's Orders of Approval. The emergency action through October has reduced the Lake Ontario level by about 2.7 feet. Shipping interests have been informed of the higher St. Lawrence River velocities and strong cross-currents created by the overdischarges dictated by the emergency action.

The Corps of Engineers, Buffalo District, using an emergency authority, has contracted for removal of the barge lodged against the Peace Bridge at the head of the Niagara River, which is impeding the flow of the river by 6,000-7,000 cfs. The removal is expected to be completed by mid-November.

Under the authority of Public Law 84-99, the Corps of Engineers carries out preventive work known as Advance Measures, prior to a flood threat to life and improved property. There has been no significant change in the status of these projects since my October 3rd update.

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

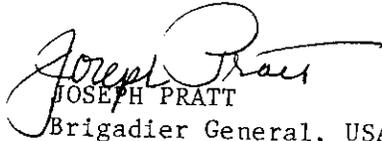
For Mich., Minn. & Wisc.
Colonel Robert F. Harris
Cdr, Detroit District
P.O. Box 1027
Detroit, MI 48231-1027
(313) 226-6440 or
226-6441

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

The "Help Yourself" brochure is still available 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 (NWS) Offices for certain portions of the Great Lakes. Information can normally be heard on the NWS's local weather radio broadcasts. Shoreline residents should pay attention to the weather situation. If severe storms occur this fall or early winter, the amount of damage could be very severe. As stated before, with Lakes Michigan-Huron, St. Clair and Erie at record high levels we are entering a new situation wherein properties never damaged before may now be subject to damage. I cannot over-emphasize the need for shore property owners to take steps to organize and plan now, in advance of the storm season.

I will continue to issue these updates in an effort to keep you informed of the lake levels and the actions that are being taken to help alleviate the situations as well as those you should be taking to help yourself. These updates will accompany the monthly bulletin until the lakes return to safe levels.


JOSEPH PRATT
Brigadier General, USA
Commanding