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JANUARY 2008 GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL SUMMARY

LAKE SUPERIOR

Following its normal seasonal cycle, Lake Superior's water level continued to fall during the month of January. Precipitation within its basin was less than 75% of its January average. As in previous months, Lake Superior's outflow through the St. Mary's River was lower than its monthly average. Its average water level in January was 600.7 feet, which is 6 inches higher than it was in January of 2007, but is 9 inches lower than its Long-Term Monthly Average (LTA). Furthermore, it is lower than its chart datum by 5 inches, and 10 inches above its record low. Lake Superior is predicted to reach its seasonal low in March, remain below its chart datum through May, and be 9 to 10 inches below its LTA through July 2008.

LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON

Lake Michigan-Huron rose 3 inches during January, which is unusual because it is usually dropping in January. This rise can be attributed to significantly above average precipitation for the month of January as well as increased runoff due to snow melt. In addition, evaporation was near average. Lake Michigan-Huron's outflow was about 14% below average for January. Its monthly water level average was 576.4 feet, which is about 2 feet lower than its LTA of 578.5 feet. Lake Michigan-Huron was 12 inches below chart datum in January, and 4 inches above its record low. It is predicted to continue to rise over the next 6 months, but will remain below its chart datum through May. The lake is forecasted to be 20 to 22 inches below its LTA, but 6 to 12 inches above its record lows over the next 6 months. Lake Michigan-Huron was 10 inches below its January 2007 level, but is expected to reach its level of a year ago by June 2008.

LAKE ST. CLAIR

Lake St. Clair's water level fluctuated greatly in January. These large short term fluctuations in water level were the result of heavy runoff from large precipitation events. Due to Lake St Clair's smaller size, it reacts quickly to large precipitation and runoff events. The January mean water level of Lake St. Clair was 573.0 feet, which is approximately 7 inches below its LTA. It was 10 inches above chart datum. Its inflow was 84% of normal, and its outflow to the Detroit River was 12% lower than normal. The precipitation for the month was about an inch higher than average, and the evaporation was about average. Lake St. Clair is projected to continue rising over the next several months, but will remain below its LTA by about 5 to 12 inches over the next 6 months.

LAKE ERIE

Lake Erie experienced large fluctuations in water level throughout the month, as a result of extreme weather occurrences. For example, on January 30th, a windstorm caused a near record seiche event of approximately 11 ft at Buffalo. In addition, the Lake Erie basin saw 2.79 inches of precipitation, which is 0.32 inches above average. It has received near average precipitation over the past 12 months, and is projected to experience above average precipitation in February. Lake Erie outflow was near average in January. Lake Erie's mean January level was nearly at its LTA of 570.8 feet, and is predicted to remain steady over the next month, and then begin its seasonal rise.

LAKE ONTARIO

Lake Ontario continued to rise in January. Only 2.13 inches of precipitation fell in the Lake Ontario basin during January, which is 0.62 inches below normal. It has received below average precipitation in the past year. The lake's outflow into the St. Lawrence River was 6% below average. Lake Ontario was 14 inches above datum for the month of January. Lake Ontario is projected to continue rising over the next several months. It is at its LTA and is projected to remain near average over the next 6 months.