



DETROIT DISTRICT  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
BOX 1027  
DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48231-1027

## **DECEMBER 2008 GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL SUMMARY**

### **LAKE SUPERIOR**

Lake Superior continued its period of seasonal decline in December. Its monthly mean water level of 601.02 feet was 3 inches higher than last December's level, but 9 inches below its long term average (LTA). Lake Superior was 1 inch lower than its chart datum elevation. Precipitation across the Lake Superior basin in December was 0.30 inches above average and total precipitation in 2008 was a half inch above average. The outflow from Lake Superior into the St. Marys River was below average in December. The latest 6-month forecast shows Lake Superior's water level 2 to 4 inches above those of a year ago through April and similar to last year in May and June. Lake Superior's water level is expected to remain below chart datum through May. The lake will also remain 7 to 8 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months.

### **LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON**

Lake Michigan-Huron also continued its normal period of seasonal decline in December. Its mean water level of 577.33 feet was 11 inches higher than December 2007, but 15 inches below its LTA. Lake Michigan-Huron is 2 inches below its chart datum elevation of 577.50 feet and is expected to remain below chart datum through April. A very active winter storm track left a large amount of snow across the Michigan-Huron basin by the middle of the month. Very warm temperatures during the last week of December largely melted the snow pack, leading to a large runoff event. This runoff combined with heavy rain lead to a 3 inch rise in lake level during the last 10 days of the month. Precipitation in the Lake Michigan-Huron basin was well above average during the month of December and was almost 6 inches above average during 2008. Lake Michigan-Huron's outflow into the St. Clair River was below average in December. Lake Michigan-Huron is predicted to remain 3 to 11 inches above its level of a year ago but 13 to 14 inches below its LTA over the next 6 months.

### **LAKE ST. CLAIR**

Lake St. Clair's December mean water level was 573.52 feet, or 2 inches higher than November's monthly mean. Snowmelt runoff and heavy rain at month's end contributed to the rise. The lake was 10 inches higher than last year, but 4 inches below average. The outflow from Lake St. Clair into the Detroit River was below average. The latest 6 month forecast shows Lake St. Clair 7 inches higher than last year's levels in January, 2 to 3 inches below last year in February, March and April, then near last year in May and June. The lake is expected to be near to 5 inches below its LTA through June.

### **LAKE ERIE**

Lake Erie's water level also rose in December as a result of heavy rain and snowmelt runoff. Its December mean water level was 570.77 feet; 1 inch higher than last month, 4 inches higher than last year and 1 inch below its LTA. Precipitation in the Lake Erie basin was over 2 inches above average in December and 7 inches above average during 2008. Lake Erie's outflow into the Niagara River was near average in December. The latest forecast shows Lake Erie remaining 3 inches above last year's level in January and then 2 to 8 inches below last year's levels through June. Lake Erie is projected to be near its LTA over the next 6 months.

### **LAKE ONTARIO**

Lake Ontario's water level rose during December, again due to heavy rain and snowmelt runoff. Its mean water level of 244.59 feet was 2 inches above last month's level, 9 inches above last year's level and 1 inch above its LTA. Precipitation in the basin was just over an inch above average in December and 5 inches above average for all of 2008. The lake's outflow into the St. Lawrence River was above average in November. Lake Ontario is expected to be 6 inches above last year's levels in January, then fall to 3 to 14 inches below last year's level through June. It is forecasted to remain 4 to 6 inches above its LTA in January and February and then be near LTA from March through June.