US Army Corps
of Engineers
Detroit District

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DECEMBER 2021 GREAT LAKES WATER LEVEL SUMMARY

LAKE SUPERIOR

Lake Superior continued its seasonal decline by falling 3 inches to a level of 601.41 feet from November to December. The December mean level was 4 inches below the December long-term average (LTA) level, 13 inches below its December 2020 level and 20 inches below its record high December level from 1985. Lake Superior basin received above average water supplies* likely due to well above average precipitation and runoff. The 6-month forecast indicates that Lake Superior will continue its seasonal decline into March and begin its seasonal rise in April. From January to June, water level is forecast to be 0 to 2 inches below its LTA levels and 4 to 11 inches below levels from a year ago.

LAKE MICHIGAN-HURON

Lake Michigan-Huron also declined about 3 inches from November to December. The December mean level of 579.69 feet was 13 inches above the LTA level, but 18 inches below its level from last year. The December mean level was also 22 inches below the record high December level. Lake Michigan-Huron basin received above average water supplies* in December likely due to below average evaporation and above average runoff. The 6-month forecast predicts Lake Michigan-Huron will continue its seasonal decline through February. Water levels are forecast to be 4 to 17 inches below last year's levels and 24 to 25 inches below record high levels from January to June. However, water levels are forecast to be 10 to 13 inches above LTA levels over the next 6 months.

LAKE ST. CLAIR

Lake St. Clair also continued its decline from November to December and declined 2 inches to a level of 575.52 feet. The December monthly mean level was 19 inches above its monthly LTA level, 8 inches below its December 2020 level, and 15 inches below its record high December level. The recent 6-month forecast indicates the lake will continue its seasonal decline through the winter and begin its seasonal rise in the spring. Over the next 6 months, water levels are forecast to be 3 to 9 inches below last year's levels and 16 to 20 inches below record high levels. Also, from January to June water levels are forecast to be 12 to 22 inches above LTA levels.

LAKE ERIE

Lake Erie declined 2 inches from November to December to a level of 572.77 feet. The December monthly mean level was 22 inches above its LTA December level, 12 inches below the December record high level, and 3 inches below the level from last year. Water supplies* were above average in December likely due to below average evaporation and above average runoff. The recent 6-month forecast indicates Lake Erie will remain near its December level into January and continue its seasonal decline in February before beginning its seasonal spring rise in March. From January to June, water levels are forecast to be 4 inches below to 2 inches above last year's levels and 11 to 17 inches below record high levels. Additionally, water levels are forecast to remain 13 to 22 inches above LTA levels over the next 6 months.

LAKE ONTARIO

Lake Ontario stayed near its November level in December at a level of 245.64 feet. The December monthly mean level was 13 inches above the December LTA level and 10 inches above last year's level. The December mean level was also 13 inches below the record high December level. Lake Ontario received above average water supplies* likely due to above average runoff and below average evaporation. The recent 6-month forecast predicts the lake will have a January water level near its December level and then begin its seasonal rise in late winter. Water levels are forecast to be 4 to 13 inches above LTA levels and 10 to 21 inches above levels from a year ago over the next 6 months. Also, water levels are forecast to be 11 to 30 inches below record high levels from January to June.

** "Water supplies" refers to the combined quantity of precipitation plus runoff minus evaporation. Also known as the net basin supply.*