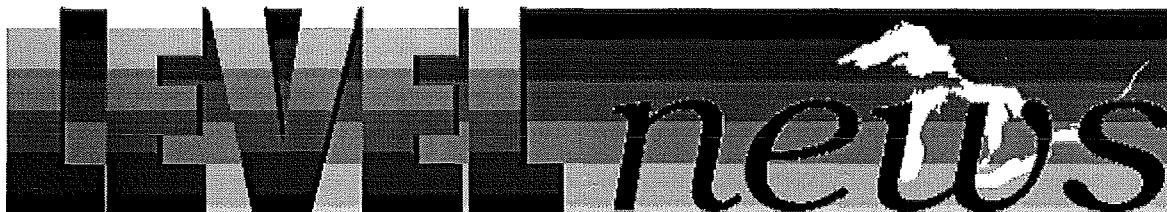




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GREAT LAKES-ST. LAWRENCE RIVER WATER LEVELS



Volume 7, Number 6

June 7, 1999

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... a monthly bulletin from
Canadian Hydrographic Service

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May Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term May average:

- Great Lakes Basin, 103%
- Lake Erie, 93% (including Lake St. Clair)
- Lake Superior, 135%
- Lakes Michigan-Huron, 100%
- Lake Ontario, 60%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

Seasonal Rise Stalls on Middle Lakes

Water Levels Drop at Montréal Harbour

Lakes Superior and Ontario monthly mean water levels rose about 8 cm from April to May, while smaller increases on the middle lakes suggest their seasonal rise has stalled. Water levels dropped significantly at Montréal Harbour.

Precipitation on the Lake Superior basin caused water levels to rise steadily during the latter part of May. The lake's monthly mean level increased by about its usual amount for this time of year. At the beginning of June the lake remains about 17 cm below its long-term average, but levels have increased to above chart datum.

Despite precipitation received over the Victoria Day weekend, the middle lakes experienced lower than average increases during May. Daily levels actually fell slightly during parts of the month. Mean monthly levels on Lakes Michigan-Huron and Erie increased by just 4 and 3 cm, respectively, compared to last month. Lake St. Clair's level remains virtually unchanged. On average, these three lakes rise between 8 and 10 cm at this time of year.

Although Lake Ontario's May level was 8 cm higher than April's it usually increases by about 13 cm at this time of year. At the beginning of June, Lakes Michigan-Huron and Ontario were between 25 and 30 cm below their long-term averages. Lakes St. Clair and Erie were 5 to 10 cm below their averages.

Montréal Harbour's mean level fell about 1.2 m from April to May. The harbour's May level was more than 1.7 m below average and was a new record low since 1967 for the month. This level is close to the low experienced in 1964. By the end of the May, the harbour's level was about 10 cm below chart datum.

Lower Water Levels Mean New Hazards

A recent letter to the Opinions page of The Hamilton Spectator highlighted a hazard often forgotten when discussing the recent drop in Great Lakes water levels. With youngsters about to begin enjoying their summer vacations, the author of the letter wanted to warn children and

May Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term May average:

- Lake Superior 72%
- Lake Erie 99%
- Lake Huron 95%
- Lake Ontario 87%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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those responsible for their well-being, of the danger they face with water levels down significantly from last year.

Running off the dock or down the beach for that first dive of the year can result in serious, permanent damage to the head, neck and back. With levels much lower than last year, it is imperative that anyone responsible for children—parents, grandparents and camp counsellors—make them aware that as much as 65 cm of water is not there due to the dry conditions we are currently experiencing. Please check where the rocks are for swimming as well as boating and have a fun-filled, accident-free summer.

Level News is grateful to Mr. K. B. Paulin, of Burlington, for allowing us to share his timely message here.

Accessing Water Level Data by Telephone

Present water levels on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River are available from a network of gauging stations operated by the Canadian Hydrographic Service. Phone numbers for the stations are listed below. When you call a particular station, the answering equipment will ask you to press 1 for English or 2 for French, on the keypad of your touch-tone phone. If you do not have a touch-tone phone, the message will start after a few seconds delay. The present water level is given in metres relative to chart datum at that station. Next the message gives the high and low water levels recorded during the previous 12 hours, followed by the elevation of chart datum. You can press 1 or 2 at any time during the message to have it start again, or press 0 to end the call. Call (905) 336-4844 (fax: (905)-336-8916 or e-mail: solvasonr@dfo-mpo.gc.ca) to report any problems or to obtain additional information.

Lake Superior at Thunder Bay	(807) 344-3141 at Rossport (807) 824-2250 at Michipicoten (705) 949-1886 at Gros Cap (705) 779-2052
St. Marys River	above the lock (705) 949-2066 below the lock (705) 254-7989
North Channel	at Thessalon (705) 842-2215 at Little Current (705) 368-3695
Georgian Bay	at Parry Sound (705) 746-6544 at Collingwood (705) 445-8737
Lake Huron	at Tobermory (519) 596-2085 at Goderich (519) 524-8058
St. Clair River	at Point Edward (519) 344-0263 at Port Lambton (519) 677-4092
Lake St. Clair	at Belle River (519) 728-2882
Detroit River	at Amherstburg (519) 736-4357
Lake Erie	at Bar Point (519) 736-7488 at Kingsville (519) 733-4417 at Erieau (519) 676-1915 at Port Stanley (519) 782-3866 at Port Dover (519) 583-2259 at Port Colborne (905) 835-2501
Lake Ontario	at Port Weller (905) 646-9568 at Burlington (905) 544-5610 at Toronto (416) 868-6026 at Cobourg (905) 372-6214 at Kingston (613) 544-9264
St. Lawrence River	at Brockville (613) 345-0095 at Iroquois above lock (613) 652-4426 at Iroquois below lock (613) 652-4839 at Morrisburg (613) 543-3361 at Cornwall (613) 930-9373 at Summerstown (613) 931-2089

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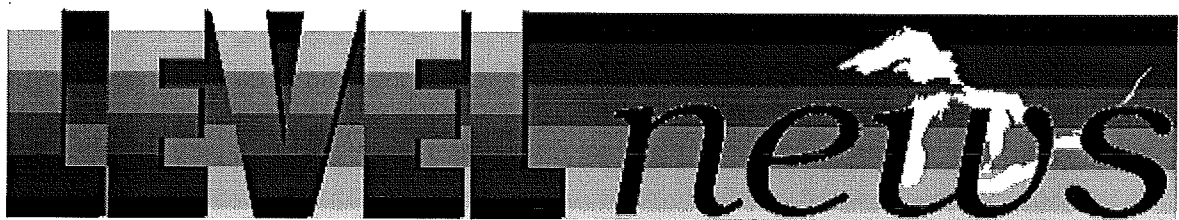
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Volume 7, Number 7

July 7, 1999

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About the monthly Water Level bulletin

June Precipitation Over the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term June average:

Great Lakes Basin	107%
Lake Erie (including Lake St. Clair)	77%
Lake Superior	142%
Lakes Michigan-Huron	127%
Lake Ontario	85%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

Low Water Levels Continue to Cause Concern for Boaters

Water levels in most parts of the Great Lakes system remain low and are a cause of concern especially to boaters and commercial navigation. Levels of the St. Lawrence River at Montréal and on all the Great Lakes, except Superior, have not been lower at this time of year since the 1960's.

The levels of all of the Great Lakes remain below average and much below their level of a year ago. The levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron are expected to continue to rise by a few centimetres in July, while the levels of the other lakes are expected to begin to decline in July unless water supplies are much greater than average.

Great Lakes basin precipitation for June was about 107% of average. The water supplies to all the Great Lakes were below average for the month.

The water levels of Lakes Superior and Michigan-Huron rose by slightly less than their usual amounts during June. The level of Lake St Clair rose by more than the usual amount in June due in part to significant local rainfall near month-end. Lake Erie's level remained about the same in June rather than rising as it usually does at this time of year. Lake Ontario experienced much less than normal supplies in June, but due to the low outflow its level rose in June rather than declining slightly as it does on average.

Montreal Harbour's mean level of 5.56 m in June was 0.11 m below the level of the previous month, and 1.27 m lower than the 1967-98 average for June. The daily mean level at the harbour was below chart datum for 16 days of the month.

While last month's level at the harbour set a new record low for the month of June in the post-1967 period, readers should note that lower levels occurred in 1964-65 about the same time record low water levels also occurred on the Great Lakes. For water level comparison at Montréal, water level data beginning in 1967 is used because the last major channel changes took place in the St. Lawrence River at Montréal just prior at that time.

June Outflows From the Great Lakes

As a percentage of the long-term June average:

Lake Superior	96%
Lake Erie	92%
Lake Huron	92%
Lake Ontario	84%

Note: These figures are preliminary.

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Lake Ontario Outflow Strategy

The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control continued its regulation strategy during June to offset the over-discharge deviations, by releasing from Lake Ontario outflows less than specified by the regulation plan. The over-discharge deviations (that is, outflow more than specified by the regulation plan) took place last fall to alleviate the very low water level conditions at the Port of Montréal. Further very small reductions below plan flows are expected over the next few weeks in order to totally offset the remaining over-discharge deviations, which amount to about a one centimetre lowering on Lake Ontario at the end of June.

Lake St. Lawrence Boaters See Higher Levels

While boaters and marinas throughout the Great Lakes are experiencing lower water levels, boaters on Lake St. Lawrence just above the Moses-Saunders dam are enjoying levels well above average thanks to very low flows at the dam. But as with our advice to all boaters everywhere, caution is advised whenever and wherever you venture. Increased water levels on Lake St. Lawrence have submerged some high spots which otherwise can be seen with the naked eye.

Public Meeting Draws Large Crowd

The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control held its annual public meeting to discuss the regulation of outflows and water levels of Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River on June 2, 1999 at the Cornwall Civic Complex in Cornwall, Ontario. The meeting was attended by over 160 people who came to share their views and concerns with the Board.

Open House Scheduled

The International Niagara Board of Control is holding an open house on Tuesday, September 14 at 7:30 p.m. at the Old Stone Inn, 5425 Robinson Street, Niagara Falls, Ontario (905) 357-1234.

The purpose of this open house is to inform the public of the Board's current activities, discuss plans to modify the IJC Order of Approval for installation of the Lake Erie - Niagara River Ice Boom and to hear public comments and suggestions regarding the Board's work. In addition, information will be presented on Great Lakes' water levels.

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