

August 8, 2011

Control Board continues with regulation plan

The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control (Board) recently reviewed conditions in the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system. The Board has decided for the next several weeks to release outflows specified by the regulation plan. Although levels on Lake Ontario are slightly above those specified by the Plan, with the hot, dry weather, the water levels have been dropping at a faster than normal rate. The Board may vary from plan outflows to meet critical needs.

From July 2 to 8, outflows were increased above those prescribed by Plan 1958-D to remove the previous under-discharge deviations. At that point, Lake Ontario had fallen 19 cm from its June 6 daily peak for this year, of 75.38 m (247.31 ft.). Since July 9, outflows were those specified by the regulation plan or slightly lower to accommodate maintenance at the power plants. Thus some water was retained on Lake Ontario (1.8 cm [0.7 in] currently). As the supply of water received by Lake Ontario in July was below average, Lake Ontario is at 75.05 m (246.23 ft) on Thursday, July 27, 7 cm (3 in) above its long-term average for this time of year and 5 cm (2 in) above its level a year ago. Lake Ontario levels are expected to continue to follow the seasonal decline. Water levels on Lake St. Lawrence have been below average during the last month, and are currently 27 cm (11 in) below average for this time of year. Levels of the St. Lawrence River near Montreal have fallen since June. The level at the Port of Montreal on July 27 was 6.33 m (20.77 ft) which is 6 cm (2 in) below the long term average for this time of the year.

The Board, in conjunction with its staff, continues to monitor the situation carefully and is prepared to take further action as required.

Water levels on both Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River can vary considerably from year to year. The Board urges everyone to be prepared to live within the range of levels specified in the Orders of Approval. For Lake Ontario, the upper limit for monthly mean levels is 75.37 m (247.3 ft) and the lower limit (from April to December) is 74.15 m (243.3 ft), a range of 1.22 m (4 ft). Levels on the river tend to vary more widely.

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The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control was established by the International Joint Commission in its 1952 order of approval. The Board's main duty is to ensure that outflows from Lake Ontario meet the requirements of the IJC order; it also develops regulation plans and conducts special studies requested by the IJC. For more information, visit http://ijc.org/conseil_board/islrbc/en/main_accueil.htm. To receive a weekly e-mail about water levels and flows in the Lake Ontario–St. Lawrence River system, please send a blank e-mail message to stlaw-L-subscribe@cciw.ca, with the word 'subscribe' in the title and body of your message.