

News Release: Great Lakes water levels still setting records

DETROIT -- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Detroit District, announces that Lakes Michigan, Huron, St. Clair and Erie set new monthly mean water level records for May 2020. These water level records were previously set in 1986 on Lakes Michigan and Huron and just last year in 2019 on Lakes St. Clair and Erie. As we enter the summer months, all of the lakes are either in their period of seasonal rise or are reaching their peak, except Lake Ontario, which will likely begin its seasonal decline this month.

Although most of the month was dry, the middle of May brought heavy rainfall to some areas of the basin, resulting in a wetter than average month for the Michigan-Huron and Erie basins. In the coming months, water levels are projected to continue to be near or above record high water levels on all of the lakes, except Lake Ontario. Significant erosion and flooding continues in many locations as water levels remain extremely high.

"The water level of Lakes Michigan and Huron has now risen above the peak level that was reached last year," said John Allis, chief of the Great Lakes Hydraulics and Hydrology Office, Detroit District.

The Corps most recent forecast projects that Lake Michigan-Huron will likely continue to set new record high monthly mean water levels throughout the summer and the peak July level could come close to surpassing the record high water level for all months in the period of record, which occurred in October 1986. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers urges those impacted by the high water levels last year to be preparing for similar or worst impacts over the next few months.

During response operations, Detroit District, Emergency Management Office conducts emergency operations to save lives and protect public facilities and communities. The Corps can provide technical assistance in the form of advice and expertise in the construction of temporary flood protection measures such as sandbagging, or direct assistance by providing flood fight supplies to state, county, or local public officials. Assistance is supplemental to local and state efforts and at the request of the state.

The Detroit District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has conducted many on-site assessments under our technical assistance authority in 16 approved counties, and has provided flood fight supplies under our direct assistance authority in two counties. To date we have given out 350,000 sandbags to counties to assist them in their flood fighting efforts.

In addition, citizens of Indiana and Michigan may decide to work on personal construction projects to alleviate erosion or flooding, which could potentially impact the nation's rivers, streams, wetlands and other aquatic resources that may require a permit from the Corps of Engineers' Regulatory Office.

To find more information about Great Lakes high water, emergency management and the permit process visit this link: <https://www.lre.usace.army.mil/About/Great-Lakes-High-Water/> which includes information about how to protect property and investments along the coast and related Corps programs and authorities.