

September 24, 2009

Control Board to help Lake St. Lawrence boaters

The International St. Lawrence River Board of Control (Board) recently reviewed conditions in the Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River system. The Board has decided to continue to release outflows in accordance with the regulation plan as much as possible, but will release outflows less than specified by the regulation plan this weekend, September 26-27. This will help recreation boaters on Lake St. Lawrence with their haulouts. During this 2 day period water levels on Lake St. Lawrence are expected to be about 15 cm (6 in) higher than they would be if the Board did not take this action. Boaters on Lake St. Lawrence are advised that the river levels this weekend will likely be at their highest point for this autumn and will provide an opportunity for hauling out boats that may have been stranded by the recent fall in levels. This flow reduction is expected to cause the levels of the St. Lawrence River in the Montreal area to be as much as 10 cm (4 in) lower over the weekend. The outflow reduction is expected to increase Lake Ontario levels by about 0.3 cm (0.1 inch) compared to what they would be by strictly following the regulation plan. After this weekend's outflow reduction, outflows will be in accordance with the regulation plan, but may be adjusted for downstream conditions and to meet critical hydropower and navigation needs. The water retained on Lake Ontario by this action will be released by outflows above those specified by the regulation plan at a later date, most likely in October.

The supply of water received by Lake Ontario was above average in each of the previous ten months. However, the first 3 weeks of September have been very dry, resulting in a sharp water level decrease. Lake Ontario's level is presently at 74.70 m (245.08 ft) which is very near long-term average, and slightly below last year at this time. Water levels in the international section of the St. Lawrence River have generally been above average the past several months, but fell below average at the end of August. Levels in the St. Lawrence River near Montreal have been fluctuating near average this summer.

The Board, in conjunction with its staff, is monitoring the situation carefully and is prepared to take action if required. The Board will assess the situation again in about 4 weeks, or earlier if there is a significant change in conditions.

Contacts:

Gail R. Faveri: (905) 336-6007; gail.faveri@ec.gc.ca

John Kangas: (312) 353-4333; John.W.Kangas@usace.army.mil

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 www.islrbc.org/ or www.ijc.org (> Boards > International St. Lawrence River Board of Control). 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.